

Funding for Fish and Wildlife Conservation

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**National Caucus of Environmental
Legislators**

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Funding for Fish and Wildlife Covers:

- Management/monitoring of game and fish
- Nongame species protection and conservation
- Endangered species recovery, conservation
- Protection and restoration of habitat
- Critical habitat for species
- Fish hatcheries
- Wildlife corridors
- Climate adaptation and other new issues
- Recreation, education and access
- Research
- Law enforcement

Funding for F/W: Urgent Need Today

- Rapidly growing responsibilities and issues
 - Climate change: drought, fire, flooding, erosion, changes in water temperature, salinity, changing phenology etc.
 - Invasive species: terrestrial and aquatic
 - Pollinator declines
 - Human population and development
 - Disease vector health threats
- Rapidly growing and ongoing costs
- Declining state budgets
- Declining hunting and fishing licenses



National Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Fish and Wildlife

- State F/W agencies ID'd thousands of species needing immediate conservation. Only a small fraction being addressed because of limited \$.
- As species decline and habitats deteriorate, benefits such as water purification, pollination, recreation, food and fiber production that are essential to human health and economic prosperity are compromised.

Funding Needed to Fully Implement ODFW's Mission

□ **Expand conservation efforts (\$46.7 million / biennium)**

- Oregon Conservation Strategy/Nearshore Strategy
- Research, monitoring, and inventories of species and habitats to fill data gaps
- Improve data management, analysis, and distribution
- Restore ecosystems to resiliency
- Increase enforcement of wildlife laws to protect and conserve natural resources
- Establish conservation partnerships with landowners, agencies, industry, and others

□ **Improve fishing/hunting opportunities and eliminate fee increases (\$22.3 million / biennium)**

- Reduce the need for license fee increases
- Target new funding and marketing to improve hunting and fishing opportunities
- Provide additional fishing opportunities for urban and underserved communities
- Improve research, monitoring, and management of game/non-game species
- Expand collaborative efforts to improve and restore habitat
- Expand enforcement, focusing on areas currently with limited enforcement presence

□ **Connect Oregonians with the outdoors (\$8.3 million / biennium)**

- Expand conservation education with emphasis on urban areas and partnerships
- Develop wildlife viewing opportunities and facilities
- Develop new communication strategies to reach broader, more diverse audiences
- Increase volunteers and “citizen scientists”
- Expand marketing and outreach to increase participation in wildlife recreation
- Increase diversity in participation and the workforce

□ **Deferred maintenance (\$9.6 million / biennium)**

- Respond to Secretary of State audit
- Adopt multi-biennial bonding approach
- Undertake additional assessment of funding needs
- Additional spending in rural communities

Total Funding Need = \$86.9 million

- 23% increase in current budget
- 15% increase in FTE
- Scalable

State Fish and Wildlife Agencies are Key to Saving All Species

- State wildlife agencies employ thousands of highly qualified biologists
- Manage millions of acres of habitat
- Close relationships with private landowners
- State Wildlife Action Plans aim to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered
- Federal funds are decreasing



Major State Sources of F/W Funding

- All states: Hunting, Fishing and/or Trapping Licenses & Permits
- All states: Nonresident Licenses – “Big Bucks”
- General Funds (not all states)
- Interest income on deposited funds
- Federal wildlife programs

Lesser Funding Sources:

- License plates (40 states)
- Income tax check-off (35 states)
- Habitat and wildlife stamps
- Donations, grants, partnerships and agreements



Other Sources of “Alternative Funding” for F/W

- Fines for wildlife violations
- Restitution for lost resources
- Sales of forfeited equipment
- Registration fees (watercraft, ATVs, RVs)
- Outdoor recreation equipment sales tax (VA)
- General obligation bonds
- Other: Public user fees, severance taxes, real estate transfer fees, meal/fuel/gas/hotel taxes



Examples of Effective State Wildlife Funding

- **Missouri:** 1/8 of 1% sales tax – since 1976 - \$120 m
- **Arkansas:** 1/8 of 1% sales tax – 1998 – Wildlife, Parks, Heritage, Anti-Litter
- **Minnesota:** 3/8 of 1 cent – 2008 - Wildlife Habitat, Parks and Trails, Clean Water, Arts - \$300 m (\$200 for conservation)
- **Virginia:** sales tax on gear – 1998 - \$13 m
- **Texas:** sales tax on gear – 1993 - \$38 m

New: Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act

- 2018 Legislation passed with overwhelming, bi-partisan support
- BALLOT NOV 2018
- Dedicates up to 80% of the existing sales tax on outdoor sporting goods as classified by the North American Industry Classification System
- Initial amount approved by legislature is \$20 million annually (can go as high as \$40M with legislative approval)
- Sunsets in 10 years

To be Used For:

- State/local parks and trails
- Stewardship of conservation land (maintenance/restoration)
- Acquire critical areas for wildlife, clean water, hunting/fishing, military base buffering, natural resource-based outdoor recreation



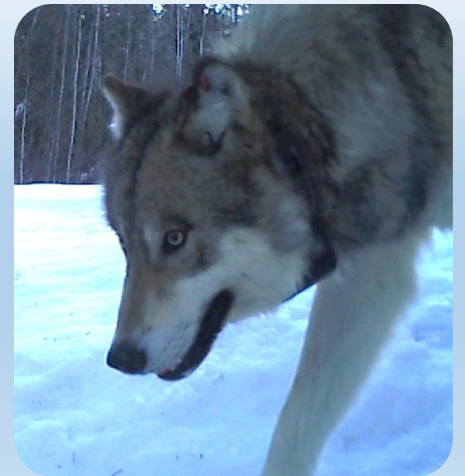
F/W Funding Sources: Bipartisan Solutions?

- Increased fines for wildlife violations
- Restitution for poaching, resource damage
- License plates - more variety, increased fees
- Stamps, decals, emblems
- Grants and agreements
- Donations for projects
- User fees?
- Increased hunting and fishing license fees?
- Creative programs such as “Citizen Science”

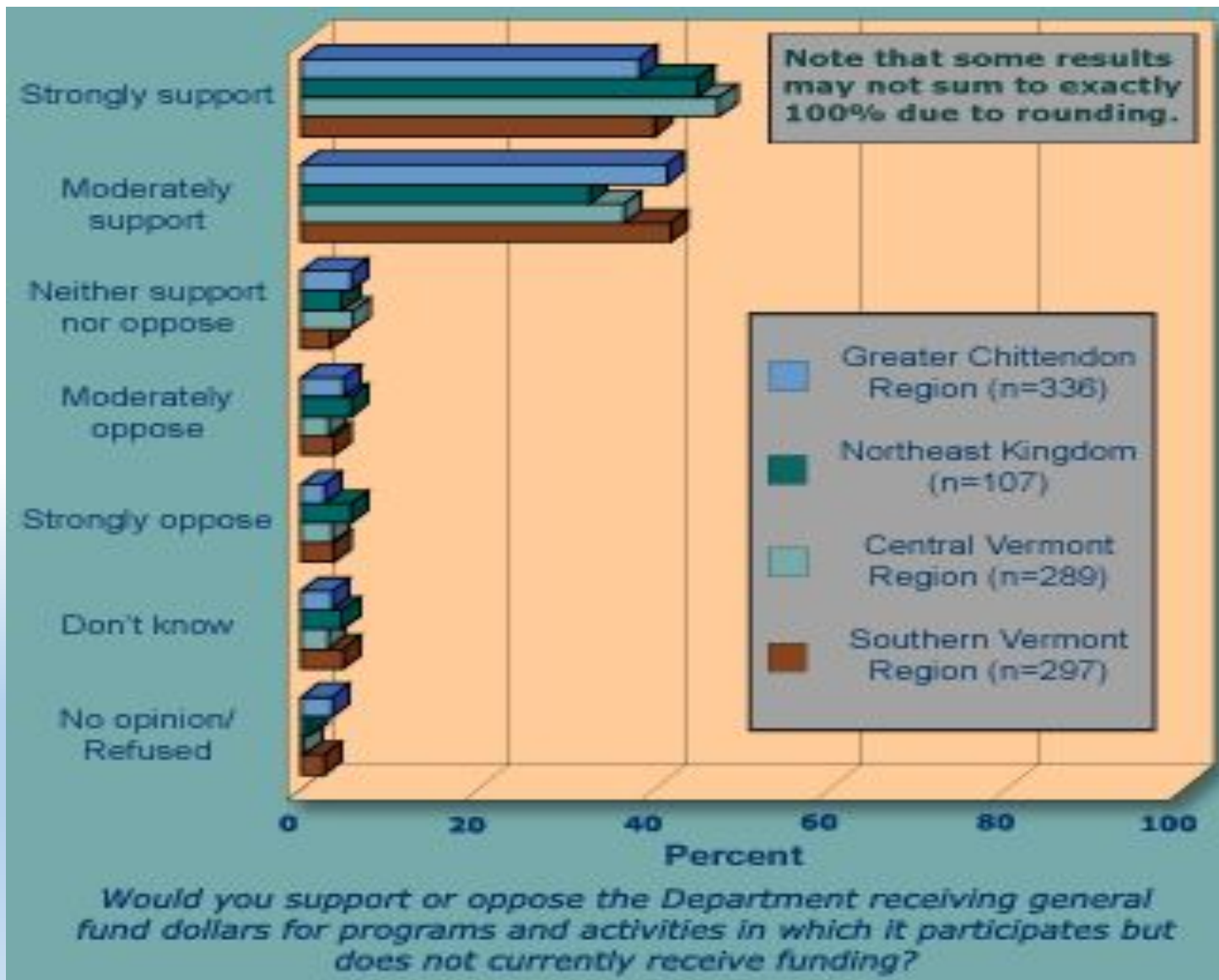


Funding for Conservation is Popular!

- 87% sportsmen don't want cuts to conservation
- 80% Republicans, 77% Democrats want offshore drilling fees to pay for conservation and public land access
- 83% Americans support the Endangered Species Act; only 10% Oppose - Bruskotter, Conservation Letters July 2018



PUBLIC SUPPORTS
GENERAL FUNDS for WILDLIFE DEPARTMENTS
VERMONT SURVEY:



How to Get New Funding Approved – According to F/W Directors

- Do public opinion surveys
- Invest in public relations and education
- Get legislators educated and involved
- Engage appropriate leg committees
- Develop accurate budgets and projections
- Plan for ongoing support needs
- **Work with state coalitions**

- Midwest Assn. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies 2009



Critical to State Funding Campaigns: The Legislature and the Public

Table 4b: Factors Critical to the Outcome. The legislature appeared to be highly influential to the outcome of the campaigns, as it was considered critical to the outcome in 11 of the 15 campaigns examined. The public was also a highly influential group, as it was considered critical to the outcome in ten of the 15 campaigns. The agency played a critical role in seven of the 15 campaigns, and the business community played a critical role in five of the 15 campaigns. The governor played a critical role in four of the 15 campaigns.

State	Legislature	Governor	Agency	Public	Business community	NGO community
Alaska	yes	yes				
Arizona	no	no		yes		yes
Arkansas	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Colorado	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Georgia (license plate)	yes	no	yes	yes		no
Georgia (real estate transfer fee)	yes	no	no		yes	
Maine	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Minnesota	yes	no	yes	yes	no	no
Missouri	no	no	no	yes	no	yes
Nevada	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Pennsylvania	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
Texas	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Virginia	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Washington	no	no		yes		yes
Wyoming	yes	no			yes	no

Where do Pacific Northwest States OR and WA Stand?

- Better than many states
- Both OR and WA Fish and Wildlife get about 1/3 of their funds from federal sources
- Both get about 1/3 funds from sportsmen's license fees and stamps
- Both receive General Fund monies
- Both have alternative funding sources, good partnerships and grants

But both are in crisis – both have lost nearly 40% of their General Fund monies

Funding Sources Selected for OR Legislative Consideration

☐ Oregon Income Tax Return Surcharge Rate of 0.62%

Applied to individual (non-corporate) tax returns.
Exemption for low income filers.

Annual cost to family of 4: \$50,000 = \$17.64;
\$75,000 = \$29.47; \$100,000 = \$42.08

☐ Wholesale Beverage Surcharge Rate of 2.19%

Applied to cost of beverages subject to the Bottle Bill;
not a beverage container deposit.

6 pack of soda = 7 cents;
6 pack of domestic beer = 11 cents;
6 pack of microbrew beer = 19 cents

More Than 100 Funding Options Considered

- Marijuana Tax
- Recreational Equipment Tax
- Beverage Container Surcharge
- Unredeemed Bottle Deposits
- Wildlife License Plate
- General Fund/Lottery Fund Allotments
- Income Tax Return Surcharge
- Agricultural Chemical Fee
- Wild Bird Seed Tax
- Recreational Vehicle Tag
- Real Estate Transfer Tax
- Rental Car Fee
- Lodging Fee
- Donations



Washington Wildlife Leaders Forum November 2016



- 50 stakeholders: Public agencies, Governor's office, environmental/wildlife/recreation groups, tribes
- **Long term goal:** Improve stewardship, citizen participation, and funding for conservation and management of all of the State's fish and wildlife
- Expert speakers from WA, nationwide
- Forum produced **4 priority challenges:**
 - **Raising public awareness** of importance of conserving F/W
 - **Funding** wildlife and habitat programs
 - Building a **broad coalition** of multiple stakeholders
 - Building **trust** of the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Conclusion

- Funding for fish and wildlife and land conservation is more critical than ever
- Federal sources are at risk
- States need to support federal efforts for funding for state F/W agencies
- Creative partnerships, alternative funding programs are critical
- Legislative and public support are very important for funding campaigns
- IMHO: Agency policy will follow the funding

