



# Wildlife Management Reform in New Mexico



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# Agenda

- Background
- Game Commission
  - HB 254
- Scope of Species
- Funding
- Overarching Lessons



# Background

- Efforts began in 2015 following a series of alarming decisions by New Mexico's state game commission
  - Cougar trapping on state trust lands
  - Increased quotas for black bear hunting
  - Requiring and then denying a permit for FWS to release endangered Mexican wolves
- Coalition of environmental and conservation organizations met in December 2015
- Initial focus was solely on the game commission





# Game Commission

## Current Structure

- 7 commissioners
  - 5 geographical representatives (4 quadrants plus Bernalillo County)
  - 1 agricultural representative
  - 1 conservation representative
    - “At least one member shall have a demonstrated history of involvement in wildlife and habitat protection issues and whose activities or occupation are not in conflict with wildlife and habitat advocacy.”
  - All nominations are made by the governor
  - No scientific knowledge is required
- Dismissal without cause
- No more than 4 commissioners from the same political party



# Game Commission

## HB 254

- 7 commissioners
  - 4 appointed by the Legislative Council
    - 1 agriculture representative
    - 1 sportsman/woman representative
    - 1 scientist
    - 1 non-consumptive conservationist
  - 3 appointed by the governor
    - Representing New Mexico's 3 congressional districts
- No dismissal without cause
- Expanded terms from 4 years to 6 years



# Game Commission

## Issues and Lessons Learned

- Definition of non-consumptive representative
- Legislative Council?
- Geographical boundaries
- Delayed the enactment of the bill until January 2019
- What happens with a bad governor?





# Scope of Species vs. Funding

- Chicken vs. Egg dilemma
- New Mexico's part-time legislature meets, at most, for 60 days making large, complicated pieces of legislation difficult to pass, so....
  - Should we generate new sources of funding that will later make expanding its authority possible?

OR

- Should we give the Department more authority, which will create the need for additional funding?



# Scope of Species

<i>Taxa</i>	<i>Total native subspecies protected</i>	<i>Total native subspecies found in NM</i>	<i>Percentage protected</i>
Mammals	49	245	20%
Birds	382	534	72%
Fish	30	78	38%
Amphibians	27	27	100%
Reptiles	112	112	100%
<b><i>Total vertebrates</i></b>	<b><i>600</i></b>	<b><i>996</i></b>	<b><i>60%</i></b>





# Scope of Species

- The Department will require additional funding to be able to adequately manage ALL of the state's wildlife
- Currently, does not have the funds to sufficiently protect and recover species under its authority:
  - \$10-15 million to fully fund and implement the Wildlife Conservation Act
  - ~\$27 million to fully implement SWAP
- Fill gaps vs. blanket authority
  - i.e. all birds or all fish species
- Mitigation policy



# Funding

- General Fund allocation
- Other possibilities
  - General Sales Tax
  - Real Estate Transfer Tax
  - Lottery
  - Speeding Fines
  - Methane Capture Rule
  - Lodgers Tax
- Considerations
  - Urgency compared with other issues?
  - What will be palatable to legislators?
  - Other legislative priorities?



# Overarching Lessons

- Spend only as much time as needed harping on the problems before figuring out the solution
- What constituency are you serving? Is there a way to broaden your audience?
- Long-term vs. short-term goals
- Form better relationships with commissioners and department staff

