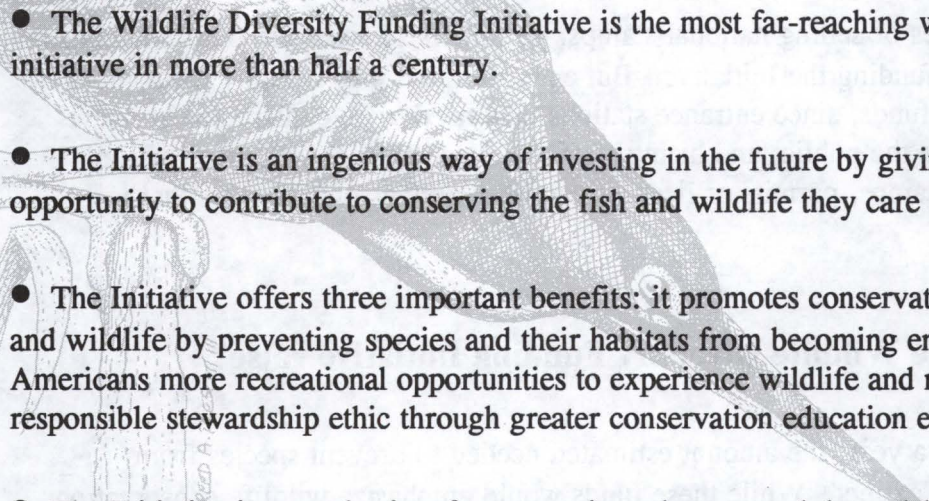

THE WILDLIFE DIVERSITY FUNDING INITIATIVE

What is the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative?

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- The Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative is the most far-reaching wildlife conservation initiative in more than half a century.
 - The Initiative is an ingenious way of investing in the future by giving Americans the opportunity to contribute to conserving the fish and wildlife they care so deeply about.
 - The Initiative offers three important benefits: it promotes conservation of our nation's fish and wildlife by preventing species and their habitats from becoming endangered; it gives Americans more recreational opportunities to experience wildlife and nature; and it fosters a responsible stewardship ethic through greater conservation education efforts.
 - The Initiative is a mechanism for generating adequate and dependable sources of funds specifically dedicated for the conservation and enjoyment of wildlife and the habitats they depend upon.

Who Benefits from the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative?

- The more than 1,800 wildlife species for which no reliably funded conservation programs exist. These species include songbirds, herons, ospreys, fish, turtles, frogs, salamanders, butterflies, chipmunks, and others. By acting now, we can prevent many of these familiar species from becoming a rarity.
- Each of the 160 million Americans who now enjoy the outdoors -- including backpackers, hikers, campers, canoeists, nature photographers, mountain bikers, bird watchers and those who appreciate wildlife in their own backyards.
- The various industries that earn \$18 billion a year from Americans' love for wildlife -- particularly outdoor recreation equipment manufacturers and distributors, and tourism related to wildlife viewing. A healthy future for wildlife means a healthy future for outdoor recreation and the businesses that depend on it.

(over)

How Would a Wildlife Diversity Initiative Work?

- A growing coalition of conservation groups strongly favors a dedicated user fee in the form of a modest surcharge on outdoor recreational equipment, similar to the user fees hunters and anglers have long paid on their equipment and accessories under the Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Acts. By modeling the Initiative after programs that are already in place, we can ensure that the cost of administering the funds would be low; all of the funds would be dedicated for state-based wildlife conservation, recreation, and education -- nothing else.
- Charging entrance fees or selling national stamps, permits or licenses are other methods that have been proposed for funding the Initiative. But entrance fees may actually incur more costs than they generate funds, since entrance stations may need to be constructed at many areas that are now free to the public, and hiring staff to collect the fees will incur major expenses. And selling stamps, permits or licenses can be a cumbersome process that is difficult to enforce.

How much would the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative raise?

- At least \$350 million a year, the amount estimated needed to prevent species from becoming endangered or extinct. While these funds would emphasize wildlife conservation, they would also enhance hiking, canoeing and nature trails, wildlife viewing blinds and towers, and nature centers, and the availability of on-site naturalists, brochures, viewing guides, and other educational materials for schools, nature centers, parks, museums, and wildlife management areas.

Who Supports the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative?

- The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is spearheading the Initiative. IAFWA represents public fish and wildlife agencies throughout North America; all 50 state fish and wildlife agencies are IAFWA members.
 - Along with IAFWA, seven other national conservation organizations have joined to act as a steering committee for the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative. Additional members include: World Wildlife Fund, National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, Wildlife Management Institute, American Fisheries Society, The Wildlife Society, and Defenders of Wildlife.
 - We need you! Become a part of the Wildlife Diversity Coalition and join with us to secure reliable and adequate funding to protect the nation's diversity of fish and wildlife and the recreational and educational opportunities associated with them.
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Narrowing the Gap Nongame Wildlife Program, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

In 1994-95, Idaho received nearly \$6.3 million in federal excise taxes paid by sportsmen and women on hunting and fishing equipment through the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts. While all types of wildlife benefit from the programs made possible by this money, the main benefactors are the more than 100 species commonly hunted and fished in our state.

In contrast, approximately \$300,000 in federal money was available for conserving the more than 400 other vertebrate species -- known collectively as "nongame wildlife" -- that we pursue with binoculars and cameras rather than firearms and fishing rods. Even then, the use of most of this federal money was limited specifically to work on federally listed threatened, endangered, and candidate species. Virtually no federal money was available for management of nongame species, such as songbirds, frogs, and small mammals, many of which are declining in numbers.

The reason for this vast disparity in funding is plain and simple. Years ago, hunters and anglers took it upon themselves to foot the bill for game and sportfish conservation programs through license fees and surcharges on sporting equipment. The results have been remarkable.

Game populations once critically depleted -- such as the California bighorn sheep and white-tailed deer -- have been restored to historic levels of abundance, and elk populations have reached all-time highs. Hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat have been purchased, safeguarded, and enhanced, and opportunities for hunting and fishing are today widely available to the public. Today, most people have more opportunities to see game animals than at any other time in their lives. Fortunately, many projects whose main thrust was improving game or sportfish populations have also benefited many species not hunted or fished. The fact remains that hunters and anglers have been the principle financial supporters of a broad array of programs benefiting a variety of wildlife species.

Now the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA), along with state wildlife agencies and conservation groups, including the National Wildlife Federation, the Audubon Society, and others, hope to achieve for all wild creatures what has been accomplished for game and sportfish. IAFWA is spearheading a nationwide campaign to create an adequate and reliable funding source that will not only address the needs of nongame wildlife, but also lead to more and better wildlife viewing sites, photo blinds, observation towers, hiking trails, and other sorely needed recreational facilities. This money would also be used to fund the wildlife education programs for youth and adults to ensure the future of conservation. These funds will not only strengthen every facet of the wildlife program in Idaho, but they will also reduce the need to divert funds from ongoing programs to finance new programs desired by a growing number of outdoor enthusiasts.

The goal is to generate \$350 million a year through a small surcharge (0.25 - 5%) on recreational equipment and supplies commonly used by birders, outdoor photographers, hikers, and others who enjoy feeding and observing wildlife. Taxable items could include bird seed and feeders, camera gear, binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, hiking boots, and camping equipment. The average Idahoan who participates in wildlife recreation would likely spend less than \$5 per year on this surcharge, or less than the cost of a fishing or hunting license. The program would be administered just like the very successful Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds, with all monies dedicated to wildlife projects.

A recent public opinion survey commissioned by the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation reveals strong interest and participation in nonconsumptive recreation among Idaho residents. More than half of Idaho's resident's main purpose for outdoor excursions was to observe, feed, or photograph wildlife.

The success of the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative hinges on gaining the support of Congress, as well as the backing of companies that manufacture and sell outdoor equipment. This will only happen if you, their constituents and customers, make your wishes known.

We urge you to voice your strong support for this far-reaching conservation endeavor by writing letters to outdoor manufacturers and congressional representatives to let them know that you are willing to pay a small surcharge to ensure the future of wildlife.



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Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative Fact Sheet

The goals of the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative (WDFI) are to improve and enhance the conservation, management, and enjoyment of the diverse array of fish and wildlife in the United States and to increase the opportunity for the public to observe and appreciate these animals and their habitats.

The objective of the WDFI is to secure \$350 million annually for state fish and wildlife agency **conservation, recreation, and education programs** by establishing a user-pay, user-benefit funding mechanism similar to the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Funds (Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Funds).

Funds from WDFI will be earmarked for **wildlife conservation, recreation, and education**. The money will be used to prevent wildlife species from becoming threatened or endangered, to meet the growing demand for outdoor recreational opportunities, and to educate the public about the importance of wildlife.

This funding initiative is being spearheaded by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA). This Association is comprised of all state fish and wildlife agencies in the United States plus several other partners. The World Wildlife Fund, National Audubon Society, The Wildlife Society, Defenders of Wildlife, American Fisheries Society, The Wildlife Management Institute, and the National Wildlife Federation have already joined in the effort to pass this legislation.

In fiscal year 1994, only \$192,000 was available to Idaho's Nongame Wildlife Program for management and protection of federally-listed threatened and endangered species; however, there is currently only a very limited amount of federal money available for management of most nongame species, such as songbirds, turtles, and small mammals, that we pursue with binoculars and cameras rather than firearms and fishing poles.

Funds for Idaho's nongame and watchable wildlife program are largely limited to voluntary contributions from citizens through the Income Tax Checkoff or the purchase of a wildlife license plate. Unfortunately, checkoff funds have declined, with less than \$47,000 received in 1994.

The WDFI will give state agencies an opportunity to work with conservation organizations, outdoor recreational enthusiasts, and others to conserve and protect wildlife. Hunters and anglers already provide funding for game and sport fish programs, so the Initiative will fill the funding gap and allow protection and management of other species.

Specifics of the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative:

Summary

Modest surcharges on a spectrum of outdoor products will serve as a user fee for outdoor enthusiasts to raise \$350 million needed for wildlife diversity programs. The funding initiative is an ingenious way of investing in the future by giving more Americans the opportunity to contribute to conserving wildlife. Three important benefits will result: 1) fish and wildlife will be conserved; 2) additional wildlife recreation experiences will be provided to the public; and 3) additional wildlife educational opportunities will be available for youth and adults.

What outdoor products are being considered for the surcharge?

Outdoor recreation equipment, including backpacks, sleeping bags, tents, and hiking boots.

Optical equipment, including binoculars and spotting scopes.

Photographic equipment, including film and cameras.

Backyard wildlife supplies, including bird seed, bird feeders, bird houses, and bird baths.

Recreational vehicles, including ATVs.

Field guides, including identification guides and wildlife viewing guides.

How much surcharge?

A surcharge of between 0.25 and 5% would be assessed on the wholesale value of a product with the lowest rate applying to the most expensive products. For example, a 5% surcharge on a \$100 tent that wholesales for \$50 would be \$2.50. The average Idahoan who participates in wildlife recreation will likely spend less than \$5 per year, or less than the cost of a fishing license or hunting license, on this surcharge.

How will customers know they are supporting wildlife with this surcharge?

IAFWA is developing a logo which will be placed on all surcharged items with the fund's logo and a short explanation of how funds are dedicated for wildlife conservation, recreation, and education.

How will administrative costs be minimized?

The Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative will be administered the same way as the Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration Programs. This has proven to be a highly efficient and effective system for collecting and distributing funds. Administrative costs will be prohibited from exceeding 8%, and all monies will be restricted for use on the stated wildlife conservation, recreation, and education programs.

How will the funds be distributed?

The U.S. Treasury will collect the surcharge from manufacturers or through import duties. These monies will be passed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be distributed to states through grants. Grants would be available to states and territories as a 75% federal and 25% state match. Funds would be allocated using a formula based on population (2/3) and the land area (1/3) of each state. No state or territory would receive less than .5% or more than 5% of total funds available.

Assuming a \$350 million annual appropriation using the formula of 1/3 area and 2/3 population, Idaho would receive a federal grant of approximately \$3.9 million each year.

How will Idaho provide state matching funds?

Similar to all Idaho Department of Fish and Game programs, the Nongame, Endangered, and Watchable Wildlife Program receives no general state revenue. Funding is raised almost entirely through voluntary contributions from the Income Tax Checkoff. However, at present, contributions received through the Income Tax Checkoff are declining, falling from \$90,047 in 1981 to less than \$47,000 in 1994. As a result, a special bluebird wildlife license plate became available to motorists in July 1993, with a portion of the sales going directly to the Nongame, Endangered, and Watchable Wildlife Program. Together, funds raised from the Income Tax Checkoff, the sale of wildlife license plates, and direct donations would provide state monies to match any new federal funds received from the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative.

How can we ensure the funds will be used for wildlife diversity programs?

The funds will be dedicated by law for wildlife diversity projects focused on conservation, recreation, and education. There can be no diversion of these funds for other purposes. New revenues for wildlife diversity purposes will be administered separately from the revenues already collected by the Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration Funds.



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WILDLIFE DIVERSITY FUNDING INITIATIVE

Benefits to Hunters and Anglers

The goals of the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative (WDFI) are to improve and enhance the conservation, management, and enjoyment of the nation's wildlife and to increase the opportunity for the public to observe and appreciate these animals and their habitats. The WDFI would secure \$350 million annually for state wildlife agency conservation, recreation, and education programs by establishing a user-pay, user-benefit funding mechanism similar to the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Funds (Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds). These two programs have successfully provided for management of game animals and sport fish with support of hunters and anglers.

The WDFI will benefit hunters and anglers in several ways:

- **Supporting the Wildlife Funding Initiative will allow hunters and anglers to be once again recognized as leaders in wildlife conservation.** Some wildlife enthusiasts have the impression that hunters and anglers are only interested in taking game and fish. They do not realize that most hunters and anglers are knowledgeable about nature and have made large contributions to wildlife conservation during the past 50 years. Support of the WDFI by hunting and fishing enthusiasts will clearly show other conservationists that they all share some important values. Hunters and anglers once again can take a leadership role in establishing a program that will benefit wildlife for generations to come.
- **Working with wildlife users who neither hunt nor fish creates a broader coalition, with more political influence, to support wildlife conservation.** Hunters and anglers have always been active and effective conservationists. Although, hunter numbers are just holding steady in Idaho, and angler numbers are slightly increasing, overall numbers of hunters and anglers per capita are decreasing, which means that they are becoming a smaller percentage of the population. Currently, about 38% of Idaho's population are licensed hunters, but more than half of Idahoans actively enjoy watching wildlife, either afield or in their own backyards. Hunters and anglers will benefit from the political support these other wildlife enthusiasts bring to conservation issues.

- **People who neither hunt nor fish will help pay the bill for protecting wildlife habitat.** At present, most state wildlife lands are managed with funds from state hunting and fishing license fees or with dollars from federal programs for restoring wildlife and sport fish. Although they use the lands and enjoy the wildlife, people who do not buy hunting and fishing licenses or equipment do not contribute significantly to wildlife management through these programs. The WDFI will provide a regular source of funding from these other wildlife enthusiasts.
- **Lands managed for nongame wildlife species also benefit game animals and sport fish.** Managing land to benefit some nongame species improves the populations of many game and sport fish species that require similar habitat. For decades, songbirds, raptors, small mammals, and other species not hunted or fished have benefitted from management practices designed for game species. With funding from the WDFI, the reverse can also happen, for the benefit of all wildlife. In addition, a portion of this new funding can be spent for wildlife law enforcement activities which will also protect and conserve many species.
- **The WDFI will increase funding available for public-use facilities on wildlife lands.** Needed facilities for public lands include parking areas, restrooms, trails, camping areas, and river access sites. Increased funding for facilities will benefit all users of wild lands, including hunters and anglers. The WDFI will make additional funds available for these facilities and will allow hunting and fishing funds to be spent on programs which directly benefit hunters and anglers.
- **The WDFI will provide funds for conservation education.** Idahoans will not support wildlife conservation unless they understand the need for it. In the past, most Idahoans lived in rural settings and learned first hand about the need to conserve wildlife habitat as they learned to hunt and fish. Now that many Idahoans live in urban areas and children grow up with little or no outdoor experiences, conservation education programs are necessary to preserve the state's natural heritage. The WDFI will provide the first significant source of funds for conservation education programs that are essential if future citizens are to recognize the importance of wildlife and natural areas to the quality of life in our state.



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Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative: Projects Needed in Idaho

RECREATION

- Provide increased wildlife viewing opportunities and increase wildlife education efforts through the construction of wildlife interpretive displays and observation towers on state-owned management areas, hatcheries, wildlife viewing sites, and other facilities.
- Enhance wildlife viewing opportunities by developing interpretive centers, wildlife displays, trails, and informational signs.
- Develop photographic blinds and other "watchable wildlife" viewing facilities for nature photographers, hikers, cyclists, and other outdoor enthusiasts to observe wildlife in their natural habitats.
- Build and enhance hiking and interpretive trails on wildlife management areas, public fishing areas, fish hatcheries, parks, and other state-owned lands.

EDUCATION

- Enhance wildlife education efforts in urban areas by expanding nature center services and conservation information distribution in cities.
- Develop additional urban wildlife education centers, like the Morrison Knudsen Nature Center, to demonstrate techniques for wildlife landscaping and wildlife management.
- Provide fellowships for Idaho students to study Idaho wildlife in the field.
- Provide teachers and other educators with teaching tools, such as films, videos, and literature, to help them educate their students about wildlife conservation.
- Expand the "Nose to Nose" program where classroom presentations are given to school children with real animals.
- Develop new wildlife education leaflets and other educational materials such as "Watchable Wildlife" videos for school children, students, and community groups.

- Develop programs that promote wildlife appreciation and provide opportunities for community involvement with wildlife like the "Kids Care" Poster Contest, Nursing Home Bird Feeder Program, and the Backyard Habitat Recognition Program.
- Provide homeowners with information on how to turn their backyards into top-notch wildlife- and bird-watching areas, and provide them with information on the best ways to view wildlife.

CONSERVATION

- Determine the status of nongame species, such as songbirds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, whose populations may be declining, and develop methods to prevent these species from becoming threatened or endangered.
- Identify critical habitat and unique communities where wildlife might be protected, yet suitable as wildlife viewing areas to the public.
- Enhance wildlife conservation efforts by surveying, inventorying, and monitoring wildlife populations and habitat needs of little-known species.
- Protect key wildlife habitats and plant communities through conservation easements, landowner incentives, and other mechanisms.
- Improve wildlife habitats for nongame species on wildlife management areas, state parks, and other state-owned lands.
- Monitor key species or groups of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians and maintain an up-to-date database to ensure healthy populations and species diversity.
- Conduct research on neotropical migratory birds (those that nest in Idaho and winter in the tropics) to determine why populations are declining and how these trends can be reversed.
- Continue research on key species such as the wolverine in the Sawtooth Mountains, harlequin ducks, trumpeter swans, and others in an effort to identify factors affecting the welfare of these populations.
- Work with individuals and local governments to reduce conflicts between development projects and nongame wildlife populations.
- Provide a small grants cost share program to individuals and groups wanting to cost share on projects beneficial to nongame and other wildlife.