

PARTNERSHIP TO CONSERVE BIG GAME HABITAT IN WYOMING

The pilot program – A collaborative success story

In 2021, the USDA and other federal partners approached Wyoming stakeholders to see how they could help with Wyoming wildlife. In response to stakeholder feedback, a pilot program was created through a locally led, ground-up initiative. The state of Wyoming formally partnered with private landowners and the USDA in May of 2022. The collaborative success has had significant impacts on Wyoming's big game migrations.

PROGRAM CONTRIBUTIONS



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Game and Fish provides technical expertise, additional funding, and on-the-ground guidance for program implementation. Their funding contributions include additional federal dollars through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the Game and Fish Commission. They work across private, state, federal and tribal land and provide technical expertise and guide the implementation of projects and priorities. Game and Fish has mapped five priority areas using GPS collar and migration data gained over the last 20 years.



United States Department of Agriculture

The USDA provides funding and resources that benefit migratory big game. USDA's umbrella includes Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Forest Service. USDA also provides technical assistance and plays a key role in implementation. The collaboration and nexus to federal opportunities benefit the state and individuals that participate in the programs, which leads to greater benefits for Wyoming's citizens and big game.



The WYldlife Fund

The WYldlife Fund created a Pooled Migration Fund and secured charitable contributions from private donors to support the initiative. Investments from this fund have facilitated the hiring of additional NGO personnel to connect producers and Tribal partners with federal resources, as well as to implement on-the-ground wildlife projects. Total contributions secured by the WYldlife Fund through private donors were over \$1.5 million for the benefit of big game migration.

PRIMARY COMPONENTS



Fence Modification Work



Cheatgrass/Invasive Annual Weed Treatments



Conservation Easements

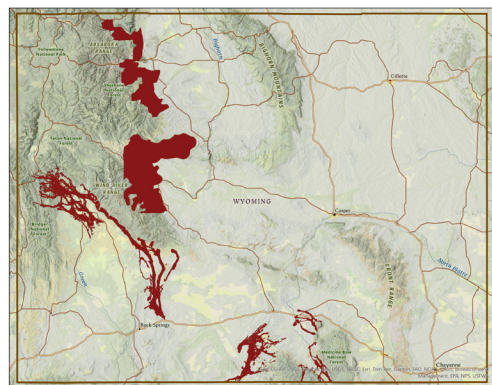


Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) (habitat leasing)

Other work is being done, including treatments for aspen, shrubs and wet meadows.

PRIORITY AREAS

- Game and Fish has mapped out five priority areas:
- Three designated mule deer migration coordinators
 - Sublette, Baggs, Platte Valley
 - Wind River Indian Reservation area
 - Absaroka Front near Cody



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510,016 ACRES

The pilot program resulted in 510,016 acres conserved through \$16,676,200 in Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) investments, with practices like fence modification and weed control.



\$500,000 GRANT

Through a \$500,000 grant, USDA's Farm Service Agency partnered with the University of Wyoming's Haub School of Natural Resources and Environment to research the potential for the Grassland CRP and evaluate the effectiveness of these conservation practices.



\$14,650,700 EASEMENTS

\$14,650,700 in Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP-ALE) secured 20 conservation easements encompassing over 29,504 acres of working lands, perpetually maintaining open space for migratory wildlife.



30% INCREASE

USDA increased staff for the big game program and witnessed a 30% increase in Grassland CRP participation in Wyoming, with 25% in the big game corridor priority area.



\$33,751,508 TOTAL

Total dollar amount allocated from various funding sources for the pilot program with the Partnership to Conserve Big Game Habitat in Wyoming.

\$300,000 RESEARCH

NRCS allocated \$300,000 to the University of Wyoming for technical and scientific support, which was directed to NRCS Wyoming, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and other partners.



\$18/ACRE /YEAR

Cost-share opportunities for grazing infrastructure is available, and participants within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem priority area receive a higher rental rate of \$18/acre/year, compared to \$13 for those outside the area.



\$100,000 FENCING

An additional \$100,000 has been provided to assess the effectiveness of wildlife-friendly fencing at the University of Wyoming.



\$1,524,608 WYLDLIFE FUND

The WYldlife Fund has allocated \$1,524,608 to support the pilot program through their Pooled Migration Fund, thanks to the contributions of several generous donors.



Acres conserved/conservation easements



Weed and invasive control



Wildlife-friendly fencing



Investments and funding



Participation and partnerships