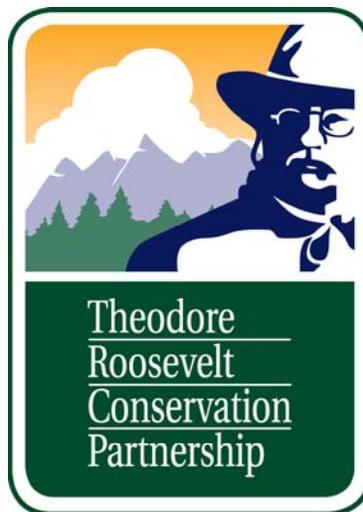


2012 Conservation Policy Agenda

January 2012



Theodore Roosevelt
Conservation Partnership

www.trcp.org

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Introduction

“It is not what we have that will make us a great nation; it is the way in which we use it.”

Hunting Trips of a Ranchman and The Wilderness Hunter

“Defenders of the short-sighted men who in their greed and selfishness will, if permitted, rob our country of half its charm by their reckless extermination of all useful and beautiful wild things sometimes seek to champion them by saying the ‘the game belongs to the people.’ So it does; and not merely to the people now alive, but to the unborn people. The ‘greatest good for the greatest number’ applies to the number within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction. ... The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method.”

A Book-Lover’s Holidays in the Open, 1916

“There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country.”

Confession of Faith Speech, Progressive National Convention, Chicago, Ill., Aug. 6, 1912

— Theodore Roosevelt

Inspired by the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) is a coalition of organizations and grassroots partners working together to preserve the traditions of hunting and fishing. By building consensus among the TRCP’s individual and organizational partners, we work to advance policy solutions on natural resource management issues of common concern.

Please visit www.trcp.org to learn more about the TRCP’s mission, partners and staff.

The following document contains short and long-term suggestions for each of the TRCP’s major policy initiatives for 2012. We look forward to our continued work with the Obama administration and Congress to expeditiously address problems of great concern to the nation’s sportsmen-conservationists.

While resolving and transcending immediate concerns to America’s natural resources, we must continue to maintain our outdoor heritage as a top priority. The TRCP is ready to seize opportunities and explore new ideas that can benefit fish, wildlife and their habitat and ensure a brighter future for the American outdoor way of life.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency Programs

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program remains our nation's largest and most successful private lands conservation program. Farmers and ranchers are making a major difference in restoring and enhancing their lands through the CRP, which has resulted in the conservation of millions of acres of wetland, grassland and forest habitats – benefiting both fish and wildlife species and sportsmen. However, enrollment in the CRP has declined in recent years as millions of acres have been withdrawn from the program due to contract expirations and economic competition from other land uses.

Short-term Action

- A robust and economically competitive CRP must remain a top priority for the administration. Regularly scheduled (at least once per year) general sign-up periods, continuous sign-up opportunities and additional sign-ups for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program are crucial.

Long-term Actions

- Ensure that, as market forces lead to the inevitable reduction of acreage enrolled in the CRP, the most ecologically sensitive and fish and wildlife productive acres are an enrollment priority. Less-than-productive acres should not be re-enrolled.
- Expiring CRP acres that are especially valuable, including riparian buffers that help maintain water quality, should be a priority for subsequent enrollment in other Farm Bill conservation programs to help ensure that years of taxpayer investment are not marginalized and that the most critical benefits are maintained.

Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPAHIP)

The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program was authorized by Congress for the first time in the 2008 Farm Bill. This program provides states with funding to enhance or create voluntary hunter-access programs on private lands. Agricultural producers can enroll their lands in one of these state- or tribal-access programs and receive a financial incentive in exchange for opening it to the public for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. Thus far, 25 states have received funding through the program, and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) estimates that 3 million acres have been made available for recreational access.

Short-term Action

- The program received no funding in the FY2012 Agriculture appropriations bill. The program must be reauthorized in the 2012 Farm Bill and funded in the next round of appropriations bills.

Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs

Native Prairie Protections

Once covering about 1 billion acres, the nation's native prairies have been reduced to a few million acres and are being plowed to produce corn, soybeans, wheat and other crops. As a result, native grassland birds and other wildlife that depend on these prairie habitats are declining faster than any other wildlife community in North America.

Short-term Actions

- The Obama administration must establish financial incentives and enhancement payments within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program to encourage farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers to conserve and enhance native prairies.
- Ensure authorization and implementation of the Sodsaver program to reduce federal incentives for breaking natural habitat for new cropland.

Long-term Actions

- The administration must work with Congress to modify Conservation Title programs to make conserving native prairies a priority.
- Ensure that agricultural conservation programs like the Grassland Reserve Program and Wetlands Reserve Program receive sufficient baseline funding in the next Farm Bill.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Wetlands on private lands support a diverse array of fish and wildlife, and help to maintain water quality and retain flood water. But due to high crop prices and inflated land values, many wetlands across the nation are being drained in order to make room for additional row crop production. The Wetlands Reserve Program has helped to stem this tide, providing an incentive to landowners to restore wetlands and conserve them via long-term conservation easement.

Short-term Action

- The WRP has zero baseline funding as we head into the 2012 Farm Bill, and the program will expire without action. The WRP must be permanently reauthorized in the next Farm Bill. The program should be modified from an acreage-based program to a dollar-based program given the differences in per-acre values in different sections of the country.
- WRP contracts must be modified so that the wetland riparian zone is included in the incentive payments.

Conservation Compliance

Crop insurance has replaced direct payments as the largest source of federal support to the nation's farmers. However, unlike direct payments, crop insurance does not have a conservation compliance component. Conservation compliance is a way to ensure that farmers and

landowners do not plow marginal lands, highly erodible lands, native grasslands and/or wetlands without sacrificing federal payments. The current system often works at cross purposes with the goals of the Conservation Title. Conservation compliance helps manage financial risk on behalf of taxpayers and helps to prevent federal payments from incentivizing ecologically harmful activity.

Short-term Action

- Ensure that any Commodity Title reform in the next Farm Bill maintains existing compliance requirements.

Long-term Action

- Until passage of the 1996 Farm Bill, the federal crop insurance program included conservation compliance requirements. This link between conservation compliance and crop insurance must be restored.

U.S. Forest Service Programs

Aspen Management

Aspen forests are considered second only to riparian and wetland areas in their contribution to biological diversity. The habitats provided by aspen are important to many species of game and non-game forest wildlife. Aspen forests help sustain sport hunting traditions by providing critical habitats for game wildlife in the eastern and western United States. Sportsmen-conservationists are concerned that aspen stands in our national forests are unhealthy due to a lack of active management.

Short-term Actions

- Recommend that the Obama administration direct the U.S. Forest Service to develop aspen management plans for each national forest where active management is needed.
- Urge the administration to establish a task force of public and private partners that would identify and prioritize aspen forests located on lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service that require immediate treatment based on their value as important habitats for wildlife and sport hunting.

Long-term Action

- Advise the administration to request adequate funding in the annual budget recommendation to Congress that would provide for implementation of the aspen management plans completed by each national forest. Then work with Congress to get the maximum funding level possible.

National Forest Roadless Area Management

Our nation's public lands encompass almost 193 million acres of national forests, including approximately 58.5 million acres of "inventoried roadless areas" in 38 states. Commonly known as backcountry, roadless areas are defined as areas within national forests and grasslands that encompass more than 5,000 contiguous acres without roads. These lands provide important range and habitat for elk, bighorn sheep and mule deer, plus clean water for wild trout, salmon and other desirable fish species.

Our national forests contain more than 386,000 miles of classified roads. While ensuring access to existing roads is important, building new roads often impacts key habitat for fish and wildlife. Too many roads can result in reduced cover for big game, often leading to shorter hunting seasons and decreased hunter opportunity. Too many roads also can diminish the quality of fish spawning habitat, curtailing opportunities for anglers.

Sportsmen, fish and wildlife have benefited from the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, a federal public lands management policy that provides multiple-use guidelines for roadless area management with an eye toward conserving the valuable qualities of these areas. This "roadless rule" was adopted following more than 600 public meetings and 1.7 million citizen comments nationally, with more than 95 percent of comments advocating roadless area conservation. Yet despite strong support from wide-ranging interests, including sportsmen, certain legislative efforts in Congress are working to undermine this successful management rule.

One bill, the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act would permanently eliminate the Forest Service's authority to administratively conserve nearly all roadless areas through any means other than individual forest plans. It would effectively overturn the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, the Idaho Roadless Rule, the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule and any other state or national rule that attempts to conserve roadless areas with a system-wide approach. Another bill, the "Sealaska Act," would eliminate public ownership of more than 70,000 acres of some of the finest public lands fish and wildlife habitat in southeast Alaska. This legislation would make it difficult for the southeast Alaska economy to transition into second growth timber production, threatening roadless lands that provide winter range for Sitka black-tailed deer and habitat for wild salmon.

Short-term Actions

- Stop the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act (H.R. 1581/S. 1087).
- Prevent or fix the Sealaska legislation, which would eliminate public ownership of the best fish and wildlife habitat in the Tongass National Forest.
- Ensure that Colorado's 4.4 million acres of roadless areas are administered at a level that is equivalent with the management strength afforded by the national roadless rule.

Long-term Action

- Maintain strong support for the administration and other decision makers to uphold and defend the Roadless Area Conservation Rule as the law of the land for roadless area management.

Forest Service Planning Regulations

The U.S. Forest Service is finalizing new regulations to govern the revision, amendment and development of national forest and grassland management plans under the National Forest Management Act of 1976. These regulations will significantly influence fish and wildlife populations, habitat restoration and management, watershed management, road building and timber management – and affect fish and wildlife population sustainability and future opportunities for sportsmen to enjoy hunting and angling in and around public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

These planning regulations must be developed in a way that assures productive fish and wildlife habitat and high-quality outdoor experiences for hunters and anglers.

Short-term Action

- Ensure development of a Forest Service planning rule that sustains significant hunting and fishing opportunity, fish and wildlife populations, conservation and restoration of key fish and wildlife habitat, species adaptation to the effects of climate change and retention of roadless area values.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration

Marine Recreational Fisheries Conservation

Deeply engrained in America's cultural heritage, recreational fishing is a tradition passed down through generations. Not only one of the most popular outdoor recreational activities in the country, it is also a significant contributor to local economies and conservation efforts nationwide. Recreational saltwater fishing drives an enormous economic engine, and contributions of the more than 14 million saltwater anglers to the national, regional and local economies cannot be denied. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, anglers' annual contributions include the following:

- More than \$16 billion in total angler expenditures
- More than \$34 billion in total economic activity
- Nearly 360,000 full- or part-time jobs
- More than \$13.5 billion in income
- More than \$3.4 billion and \$5.4 billion in federal and state tax revenues, respectively

Today, a smarter approach to marine fisheries management – one that accurately and appropriately factors in impacts of recreational fishing – is critical. Recreational anglers have embraced the necessary measures to sustain diverse and abundant fish populations. We stand

ready to work with the Department of Commerce to find and implement those measures that solve the various problems confronting our marine fisheries management system.

Short-term Actions

- Enhance the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). The purpose of the registry is to obtain better data about who is fishing and what is being caught so that policymakers can increase their understanding of saltwater fishing's relationship to fisheries conservation.
- The MRIP must address the timeliness of data collection and analysis for managing marine recreational fishing. The analysis of recreational fishing data often takes place after the fishing season has ended. Fishery managers need the tools and opportunity to make in-season adjustments necessary to help recreational anglers stay within their annual catch limits.
- Accelerate restoration efforts in the Gulf of Mexico. Implement policies and direct funding to target conservation of marine fisheries affected by the Deep Water Horizon oil spill, and incorporate the needs and input from recreational anglers when doing so.

Long-term Actions

- Maintain abundant fisheries populations and recreational use opportunities with a strong and effective Magnuson-Stevens Act.
- Support recreational angling access to America's waters. A long-standing policy of the federal government allows public access to public lands and waters for recreational purposes consistent with sound conservation. This policy is reflected in the principles of our wildlife refuges, national forests, national parks and wilderness areas and should be promoted throughout the country. Traditional fisheries management practices align with these principles in that recreational anglers are subject to the regulation of season, number and size limits to ensure conservation of fish populations.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Bristol Bay, Alaska

Alaska's Bristol Bay is a place of internationally recognized importance for fish, wildlife and sportsmen. The area's lakes and streams host trophy rainbow trout and all five species of Pacific salmon, including the largest run of sockeye salmon in the world. Moose, caribou and brown and black bear also populate the Bristol Bay region. Commercial fishing in the area generates \$450 million and recreational fishing generates \$160 million to the Alaska economy every year. In fact, the Bristol Bay commercial fishery is the most valuable in the world, providing 30 percent of all Alaskan salmon harvest and 52 percent of all private sector jobs in the region.

A proposal to develop a massive gold, copper and molybdenum mine in the headwaters of the Kvichak and Nushagak rivers threatens this important resource area and the recreational and commercial fishing opportunities it provides. The proposed Pebble Mine Complex would cover

54.5 square miles and could produce as much as 10 billion tons of mine waste that would have to be treated and stored in perpetuity.

The Pebble Mine would cause unacceptable adverse effects to the Bristol Bay area's fisheries.

Short-term Action

- Work to stop the development of this mine by strongly urging the EPA, under its authority granted by section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act, to prohibit the Kvichak and Nushagak river drainages from being used as disposal sites for dredge or fill material from mining activity.

Chesapeake Bay

The Chesapeake Bay provides highly productive spawning habitat for 70 to 80 percent of all Atlantic striped bass and is a critical migratory stopover for more than 1 million waterfowl, one third of the wintering waterfowl in the Atlantic flyway. Home to 4.5 million hunters and anglers, the Bay region is rich in opportunities for sportsmen, but a variety of challenges threaten to degrade the Chesapeake's bounty of fish and wildlife. Development, habitat loss, invasive species and water pollution have led to reductions in some fish and wildlife numbers, such as brook trout in the Chesapeake's tributaries, and could cause further declines in the future.

Short-term Actions

- Ensure the reduction of pollution from urban and agricultural development and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Pursue legislation that will improve recreational access and focus restoration efforts on habitat for fish and wildlife.

Wetlands and Clean Water Protections

The United States loses roughly 80,000 acres of natural wetlands every year. To make matters worse, recent Supreme Court decisions (*SWANCC*, 2001; *Rapanos*, 2006) have weakened the federal protections for our nation's wetlands and waters as provided by the Clean Water Act. These decisions removed protections for isolated wetlands and intermittent and ephemeral streams, respectively. The EPA estimates that approximately 20 million acres of wetlands and streams no longer are protected as a result of these Supreme Court decisions.

These wetlands and streams have a tremendous impact on the lives of all Americans and offer numerous societal benefits. In addition to providing essential habitat to numerous plant, fish and wildlife species that benefit sportsmen, wetlands also perform critical flood control functions, recharge groundwater, filter pollutants from drinking water sources and help control erosion.

Short-term Action

- Urge the Obama administration to implement proposed guidance released in April 2011 and to continue with the rulemaking necessary to restore Clean Water Act protections permanently. We support regulations that most strictly adhere to the original intent of the

Clean Water Act and that provide the greatest amount of protections for our nation's wetlands, rivers, lakes and streams.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

Backcountry Lands Conservation

For too long the debate over public lands management has been framed as a choice between two opposites: high-intensity development and use or wilderness preservation. Millions of acres of public land are not appropriate for either, yet a successful alternative designation that conserves Bureau of Land Management administered backcountry habitat – while also enjoying widespread support from both the sportsmen's community and citizenry at large – does not exist. Consequently, the current system of land management leaves valuable fish and wildlife habitat vulnerable to poorly planned development and a source of frustration on both sides of the table.

Much of the reason sportsmen continue to experience high-quality hunting and fishing on public lands is because of the backcountry lands administered by the BLM. Unfragmented backcountry areas offer key habitat for numerous fish and wildlife species, including those enjoyed by the public such as wild trout and salmon, upland game birds, mule deer, elk, pronghorn and wild sheep. These lands also contribute to America's \$821 billion outdoor recreation-based economy. Despite their importance, however, these places and the resources they sustain are facing mounting development pressures across the West.

Sportsmen want to see a middle-ground conservation designation that conserves unfragmented fish and wildlife habitat and our hunting and fishing traditions from uncontrolled off-road vehicle use and inappropriate energy development while allowing reasonable exceptions that benefit our pastimes and the American public. Such a designation also will ensure that the BLM meets its obligation under Executive Order 13443, Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation.

Short-term Action

- The U.S. Department of the Interior should work with sportsmen to establish a multiple-use designation that conserves backcountry BLM lands with high-quality fish and wildlife habitat and/or hunting and fishing opportunities. This designation should be applied through local BLM land use planning processes to conserve lands and should integrate input from affected stakeholders, including hunters and anglers.

Long-term Action

- The BLM should work with sportsmen and other stakeholders through the land use planning process to conserve high value backcountry BLM lands across 11 Western states outside of Alaska using a BLM backcountry administrative designation.

Energy Development

Domestic energy development has become one of the most controversial subjects facing land managers today. With the new push to harness the sun, wind and other forms of renewable energy, including “shale gas,” the necessity of balancing production of domestic energy with the needs of fish and wildlife – and continuing to support traditional sporting activities – will be even more critical.

Sustaining fish, wildlife and sporting resources during energy development activities poses a great challenge. The first step toward its resolution is revision of the current paradigm that prioritizes energy development over all other values and uses and recommitment to a true multiple-use approach to managing lands and resources. The TRCP “**FACTS for Fish and Wildlife**” provides the foundation for changes and reforms that could facilitate balanced and responsible energy development while conserving our fish, wildlife, and sporting resources – and integrating renewable energy development in our national energy policy.

We will work toward true multiple-use, sustained-yield policy for public lands and advise state and private managers how to balance development of energy resources with other values and resources, particularly fish, wildlife and hunting and angling.

Short-term Actions

- Successfully implement the revised federal mineral leasing policies to better address conservation of fish and wildlife in important and crucial wildlife habitats (e.g., big-game crucial winter ranges and migration corridors, wetlands/floodplains and core areas for prairie grouse). This includes the use of Master Leasing Plans, evaluation of impacts before leasing and more public involvement.
- Complete policies that will guide renewable energy development, particularly solar and wind energy, on public lands. An “energy roadmap” for where, when and what type of energy development (including renewable energy) will take place on public lands should be a priority so that other uses can be balanced and sustained during energy development.
- Ensure federal and state management strategies and planning for sage grouse and other prairie grouse adequately conserve the birds and their habitats in order to avoid listing under the Endangered Species Act. Science-based changes are critical to the long-term survival of sage grouse and to maintaining sage grouse as a game species with ample hunting opportunities.
- Ensure adequate funding for the management of fish and wildlife by providing necessary resources for fish and wildlife biologists and habitat management. Require mitigation funds from those uses that adversely impact fish and wildlife.
- Ensure mitigation and monitoring are effective in reducing or avoiding impacts to fish, wildlife and sporting resources and are based on current science or knowledge.

- Require disclosure and reduction of toxic substances used for hydraulic fracturing, and reinstate storm water protections for oil and gas drilling.
- Work with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Western states' fish and wildlife agencies to ensure conservation of mule deer during energy development and the implementation of recommendations for conservation of mule deer and their habitats.

Long-term Actions

- Restore balance in the management of public lands and resources through implementation of true multiple-use, sustained yield practices as mandated by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act.
- Advocate for legislative action ensuring the sustainability of abundant and diverse fish and wildlife populations and recreational opportunities.
- Demonstrate proper, balanced energy development on lands important to fish, wildlife and sportsmen through coordination and collaboration with TRCP partners.

The TRCP advocates responsible energy development but believes a better way exists to manage energy resources in important fish and wildlife habitat. Conflicts with wildlife and our fishing and hunting heritage can be minimized to ensure a lasting conservation legacy.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements

Conservation easements provide landowners a means to receive fair compensation for development rights without having to sell their farms and ranches. Easements also are valued by the sportsmen's community because many easements encourage or allow access for hunters and anglers. In the 2008 Farm Bill, Congress extended provisions in the tax code that increased the availability of conservation easements, improved their tax advantages and made them financially attractive to a far broader swath of the public. These incentives were extended at the end of 2010, but expired on Dec. 31, 2011. Action is needed in 2012 if this important conservation program is to continue. If it is neither extended nor made permanent, a powerful tool for protecting the landscapes on which we hunt and fish may be lost forever.

Short-term Action

- Advocate making the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent via recommendations in the fiscal year 2013 budget proposal.

Long-term Action

- Support legislation making the enhanced tax incentive permanent.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Legislation

Not usually thought of as a vehicle for conservation, the legislation commonly called the “Highway Bill” nevertheless can have immediate and lasting benefits for America’s fish and wildlife populations. When forging the 2005 Highway Bill, our leaders had the foresight to include an unprecedented \$2 billion in projects that benefited American sportsmen by conserving our fish and wildlife resources. Wildlife friendly culverts, invasive species control, refuge roads, trails, and highway construction mitigation all received much-needed funding boosts.

Short-term Actions

- Publicly affirm the need to include significant funding for fish and wildlife conservation in the next Highway Bill while communicating to Congress that expanded fish passage, wetlands protection, water quality improvement and wildlife collision reduction measures are to be considered matters of urgent national priority.
- Expand the highway trails program to provide funding for sportsmen access to landlocked public lands.

Long-term Action

- Support congressional efforts to pass a new Highway Bill during the 112th Congress.

INTERAGENCY – CRITICAL ISSUES

Climate Change

Global climate change threatens to disrupt generations of plant and fish and wildlife evolution and the abundance and well-being of species and their habitats. Gradually increasing worldwide temperatures will result in changes in amounts and patterns of precipitation, frequency and intensity of weather events, distribution and duration of drought, levels of snowpack and when it melts, runoff and flooding patterns and the timing of animal and plant life-cycles. These factors alone and combined can affect plant growth, structure and distribution, as well as species’ abilities to reproduce and survive.

As shown in the publication [*Seasons’ End*](#), the geographic ranges of fish, wildlife and their habitats are shifting. Species like moose, elk, mule deer and pronghorn will have to adapt to changes in forage and alter their migration patterns. Changing water quality and quantity will affect aquatic ecosystems and fisheries. Wetland losses in the Prairie Pothole Region will severely reduce waterfowl productivity in this region known as North America’s duck-breeding “factory.” Invasive species, parasites and disease-causing organisms may flourish in warmer temperatures, profoundly affecting the habitat and survival of upland game birds. Combined with increasing human populations and the impact human demands have on the environment, these natural-world changes threaten to take an unprecedented toll on America’s landscapes.

Sportsmen have been the first to experience the repercussions of climate change as declining populations of game species result in shortened seasons and fewer hunting permits. If fishing or hunting exists in the lifetime of our children and theirs, it may take on an entirely new face. How we address the challenges of global climate change now will dictate whether future generations will continue to enjoy our time-honored sporting traditions.

Sportsmen-conservationists believe that wildlife management agencies must monitor wildlife species now to detect and adapt to changes in populations and distribution as a result of climate change. Government agencies must work to mitigate the effects of such change by protecting crucial habitat and adapting management programs that conserve fish and wildlife populations.

Consequently, congressionally-mandated State Wildlife Action Plans, implementation of which currently are funded by State Wildlife Grants, are being revised to serve as the fundamental set of strategies to help fish and wildlife adapt to and survive climate change.

Short-term Action

- Urge the Obama administration and Congress to increase the annual appropriation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the State Wildlife Grants Program to fund the full implementation of congressionally mandated State Wildlife Action Plans that address the challenge of climate change.

Long-term Actions

- Advocate for a new Natural Resources Adaptation Fund to include substantial dedicated funding for state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies and federal environmental and land-management agencies to help fish and wildlife adapt to climate change.
- Advocate for new dedicated funding for state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies through the existing Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Account of the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, the Coastal Management Act of 1972, state and tribal wildlife grants and the Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965.

Conservation Funding

Conservation funding is perhaps the single most critical issue facing sportsmen today. Federal involvement, support and funding will be needed if we hope to properly conserve, restore and manage America's natural resources. This conservation tradition is vital if we want to maintain healthy populations of wildlife and fish.

In an effort to reduce the federal deficit and alleviate the nation's dismal financial situation, in 2012 Congress threatens to significantly reduce spending on conservation programs on which sportsmen rely. The TRCP is helping lead a broad coalition to resist this effort. In 2011, America's Voice for Conservation, Recreation and Preservation (AVCRP) was born. The AVCRP coalition includes more than 1,000 organizations ranging from the Defenders of

Wildlife to the Boone and Crockett Club, all of which coalesced around a very broadly worded letter to Congress.

Activity related to hunting and fishing produces significant economic impact; in fact the sporting community is part of an outdoor recreation, natural resource conservation and historic preservation sector that generates more than \$ 1 trillion for the U.S. economy every year. This sector also produces \$107 billion in tax revenue annually and supports 9.4 million jobs. Sound conservation practices clearly produce substantial economic benefits. As we face an uncertain budgetary future, we must leverage the combined weight of the outdoor community (especially hunters and anglers) to ensure continued funding for conservation.

Short-term Actions

- Partner with other conservation, outdoor recreation and historic preservation organizations to signal to Congress the economic influence our community exerts.
- Codify a set of basic principles that all partner organizations can endorse, effectively forming a coalition driven by the singular purpose of preventing cuts to overall funding for conservation-related programs.
- Work to maintain current conservation funding levels, expand funding if possible, and ensure that, if cuts are required, they are as small as possible.

Long-term Actions

- Conservation funding must be considered a high priority in the federal budget, and funding levels must be set at the highest levels possible. Validation of the outdoor industry's role as an engine of economic improvement will play a major role in this objective. The TRCP and partner organizations must continue to show that funding for conservation issues is not an expenditure, but rather as an investment in the U.S. economy and in the future of our outdoor traditions and our natural resources.
- The TRCP must work with other organizations, agencies and lawmakers to develop new incentives to conserve our precious natural resources and wildlife habitat. We also must work to sustain and expand public access for hunting and fishing.