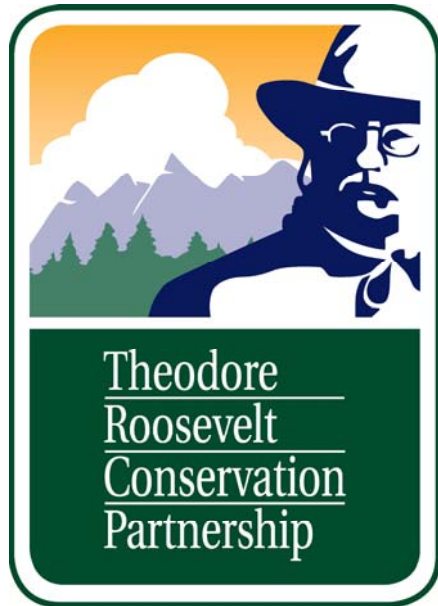


2010



Policy Recommendations
Theodore Roosevelt
Conservation Partnership

www.trcp.org

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Department of Agriculture | |
| Farm Service Agency Programs | 4 |
| Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs | 6 |
| U.S. Forest Service Programs | 7 |
| Department of Commerce | |
| Marine Recreational Fisheries Conservation | 9 |
| Environmental Protection Agency | |
| Wetlands and Clean Water Protections | 12 |
| Department of the Interior | |
| Energy Development on Public Lands | 13 |
| Hard-rock Mining Reform | 15 |
| Department of Transportation | |
| Transportation Legislation | 16 |
| Internal Revenue Service | |
| Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements | 17 |
| Interagency | |
| Climate Change | 18 |

Introduction

Inspired by the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, the TRCP is a coalition of organizations and grassroots partners working together to preserve the traditions of hunting and fishing. By building consensus among our individual and organizational partners, we work to advance policy solutions on natural resource management issues of common concern. Please visit our Web site at 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 our seven major policy initiatives. We look forward to our continued collaboration with the Obama administration to expeditiously address immediate problems of great concern to the nation's sportsmen-conservationists.

While resolving and transcending immediate concerns to our natural resources and outdoor heritage, the TRCP also remains poised to seize opportunities to explore new ideas that can benefit fish, wildlife and their habitats and ensure a brighter future for the American outdoor way of life.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency Programs

Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 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. Due to economic factors, however, enrollment in the CRP has declined in recent years as millions of acres have been withdrawn from the program due to contract expirations, limited opportunities to enroll new lands, and competition from other land uses.

Short-term Action

- Urge the Obama administration to make a strong and competitive CRP a priority. Steps should be taken to ensure continued enrollment opportunities, including 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 (CREP).

Long-term Actions

- Modernize the payment structure for the CRP to compete with the many land-use challenges faced by landowners. We support establishment of an annual CRP rental-rate review and adjustment process to ensure these rates are competitive and accurately reflect local rates.
- Promote the addition of carbon offset payments to conventional CRP contract payments to make the CRP a more financially attractive option for farmers.

“Open Fields” Funding and Implementation

The Voluntary Access and Habitat Incentive Program, or “Open Fields,” was authorized by Congress for the first time in the 2008 Farm Bill. This program provides states \$50 million in federal money to enhance or create voluntary hunter-access programs on private lands. Landowners can voluntarily enroll their lands in one of these state-access programs and receive a financial incentive in exchange for opening it to the public for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation.

Short-term Action

- Urge full support by the Obama administration to implement Open Fields immediately.

Long-term Action

- Promote full funding of the program over four years in the administration's budget requests as well as appropriate apportionment of those funds from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Farmed Wetlands Enhancements

The Farmable Wetlands Program allows landowners and operators to enroll small wetlands and adjacent buffers in the continuous signup of the CRP. This program provides financial incentives to landowners and agricultural producers for up to 15 years, while helping to improve water quality, sustain and enhance wetland functions and values, and enhance wildlife habitat. We are concerned, however, that demands for alternative land uses will force agricultural producers to begin farming these important wetlands once again and that many of the values they have provided will be lost.

Short-term Action

- Urge the administration to expand the use of this program to protect important wetlands and adjacent buffers throughout the United States, particularly in the Prairie Pothole Region, Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley and the Playa Lakes Region of the Southwest.

Long-term Action

- Recommend that the administration provide willing landowners with the option to conserve and enhance these important wetlands and adjacent buffers through a program with permanent (perpetual) or at least long-term (30-year contracts or easements) safeguards.

Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs

Native Prairie Protections

One of the great ecological disasters of modern times is unfolding as an ethanol-fuelled gold rush engulfs the Great Plains, jeopardizing what little remains of North America's most endangered ecosystem, our native prairies. Once covering about 1 billion acres, the last few millions of acres of native prairie are being plowed to produce corn, soybeans, wheat and other agricultural crops. As a result, native grassland birds and other wildlife that depend on these prairie habitats are declining faster than any other groups of wildlife in North America. Sportsmen-conservationists are concerned that little is being done by the federal government to conserve these remaining native prairies and the wildlife populations they support.

Short-term Action

- Recommend that the Obama administration establish financial incentives and enhancement payments within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) to encourage farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers to conserve and enhance native prairies.

Long-term Action

- Urge the administration to work with Congress to modify and expand the Grassland Reserve Program with a primary focus of encouraging private landowners to conserve and enhance native prairies.

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 that would provide active management.
- 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

- Recommend that the administration request adequate funding in the annual budget recommendation to Congress that would provide for the implementation of the aspen management plans completed by each national forest.

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." Defined as areas within national forests and grasslands that encompass more than 5,000 contiguous acres without roads (see www.trcp.org/issues/roadless.html), roadless areas provide important range for elk, bighorn sheep, and mule deer, plus clean water for wild trout, salmon and other desirable fish species.

Currently, our national forests contain more than 386,000 miles of classified roads. While ensuring access to existing roads is important, building new roads could impair vital habitat for fish and wildlife. Roads can result in reduced cover for big game, often resulting in 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, the future of the

national roadless rule remains unsettled, largely due to ongoing litigation that is likely to conclude in late 2010.

Overall, the roadless rule has been a balanced and successful conservation policy, with only seven miles of roads built since its implementation eight years ago. The administration can assure that the public will continue to enjoy the backcountry characteristics of these irreplaceable roadless forests for generations to come.

Short-term Actions

- Work to implement the renewal, for one year, of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack's May 2009 "Roadless Directive," which requires secretarial-level review of road construction and forest management projects in roadless areas.
- Encourage the administration to uphold and defend the Roadless Area Conservation Rule in court – specifically, to overturn the U.S. 10th District Court decision in the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals.
- 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

- Support and actively promote congressional legislation that codifies the conservation of national forest roadless areas. Such legislation should specify restrictions on, prohibitions of and allowances for road building, timber cutting and other commercial development within roadless area boundaries.

Forest Service Planning Regulations

The U.S. Forest Service is developing 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 population sustainability, 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

Marine Recreational Fisheries Conservation

Recreational fishing is deeply engrained in America's traditions and cultural heritage. It is a pastime 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

If fishing were ranked as a corporation, it would be listed No. 47 on the 2007 Fortune 500 List of America's largest companies based on total sales.

Today, a smarter approach to marine fishery management is critical – one that accurately and appropriately factors in impacts of recreational fishing. Recreational fishermen 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 (NOAA) 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 policy makers 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 helping recreational anglers stay within their annual catch limits. The TRCP intends to convene a blue-ribbon panel of scientists and fisheries management experts to assist in designing the enhancement of MRIP. Its charge would be to develop an enhanced system to augment MRIP that would provide more timely and accurate data to support implementation of new conservation accountability measures of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Long-term Actions

- 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.

- Support funding for fish and wildlife adaptation to climate change. America's anglers are likely to be among the first to experience the impacts of climate change. Their fishing opportunities in those places where they have enjoyed past successes and great memories are likely to be altered. How we address the challenges of climate change now will dictate the angling opportunities for future generations. Securing funding for fisheries managers to help fish adapt to climate change will be critical. The proper tools and resources will enable fish and wildlife management agencies to take steps to monitor fish and wildlife resources and mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Create an open public participation process for the designation of no-take areas, establish a clear management objective for the closure, and use sound scientific research. Marine protected areas (MPAs) – “no take” and other types – can function positively as a management tool by safeguarding spawning areas, helping restore populations with little connectivity to stocks in nearby unprotected areas, and conserving critical habitat that may be damaged by certain fishing methods. The majority of fish stocks in need of protection, however, are too mobile to benefit more from permanent no-take areas than from traditional management techniques. Executive Order 13474 was issued in Sept. 26, 2008, to ensure this approach was used for the implementation of any no fishing zones under federal authority.
- Instead of relying on MPAs to serve as an umbrella for protection for our marine resources, the TRCP recommends policies that focus on developing appropriate catch levels, both for commercial and recreational fisherman, to maintain sustainable stock levels. Further development of individual fishing quotas (IFQs) and the development of a buyout program of economically marginalized commercial fishing fleets should take precedence over the creation of an institutionalized MPA system. IFQs combined with a reduction in the overall impact from commercial fishing will have a greater long-term impact on fish stock populations than complete closures of selected portions of the marine environment to fishing of any type.
- The TRCP and our partners recognize the need for both renewable and nonrenewable domestic energy production. Yet we believe strongly that energy development and transmission can and must be conducted responsibly to conserve the nation's fish and wildlife legacy for the benefit of all Americans. To this end, we maintain that energy legislation must ensure fish and wildlife sustainability.
- The TRCP has compiled recommendations concerning federal management of energy development to conserve fish populations on public waters known as the CAST principles – guiding principles that must be followed for energy development that takes place on the outer Continental Shelf.

The CAST Principles:

Conservation

Conservation concerns must top all others be a top priority. A network of conservation areas –

places simply too valuable to drill – must be established before offshore energy leasing and development proceed. Those places crucial to the vitality of fish populations, recreational anglers and coastal economies should be placed off-limits to leasing. Concurrently, the Minerals Management Service, the agency responsible for overseeing offshore development, must adopt and adhere to a new standard operating procedure that strives to balance the concerns of all ocean users.

Allocation

Allocations of the royalties paid to the federal government by industry for offshore energy development must be used in ways that benefit fish and wildlife resources, including expanded marine research and fisheries management initiatives, via state and federal programs.

Science

Science-based, adaptive management strategies that respond continually to emerging information should be required for all offshore energy development projects. These strategies should begin with species inventory, include population monitoring and analysis, and carry through to the mitigation phase. Where gaps in data exist, they must not be used to justify development. Rather, they must serve to highlight areas where additional study is immediately necessary.

Transparency

Transparency must characterize the management of all public trust resources. Not only does this mean that the decisions affecting our shared aquatic species must be made in a manner that allows public oversight, it also means that public comment must be addressed and integrated during the decision-making process.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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. In fact, the EPA estimates that approximately 20 million acres of wetlands and streams are no longer protected as a result. Moreover, joint guidance issued by the EPA and Corps of Engineers in 2007 did little to resolve confusion over which waters are protected and which are not.

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

- Support legislative action to directly remedy the confusion created by the courts. We have supported similar legislation in past Congresses that seek to clearly define "waters of the United States" and restore those federal protections that have been lost. We urge the administration to work with Congress to pass clean water legislation that will accomplish this and sign it into law in 2010.

Long-term Action

- Urge the Obama administration to direct the EPA and Corps of Engineers to revisit the guidance issued in 2007 for reviewing permit applications and assessing what waters are jurisdictional under Clean Water Act protections. We support regulations that most strictly adhere to the original intent of the Clean Water Act and ones that provide the greatest amount of protections for our nation's wetlands, rivers, lakes and streams.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Energy Development on Public Lands

Energy development on public lands has become one of the most controversial subjects facing federal land managers today. With the new push to harness the sun, wind and other forms of renewable energy the necessity of balancing production of domestic energy with the needs of fish and wildlife – and fulfilling the government’s promise that our public lands will continue 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 gives energy development priority over all other public-lands values and uses and a recommitment to a true multiple-use approach to managing these lands. 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.

Short-term Actions

We will urge the administration to immediately begin to fix a broken process and redirect us toward multiple use of the public’s lands:

- Revise the federal mineral leasing process 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). These areas should be identified and managed in coordination with state wildlife management agencies.
- Revise the practice of granting relief from wildlife protection measures for energy development activities (i.e., waivers, modifications and exceptions) and update BLM policy concerning how and when such relief may be afforded. The BLM also must ensure and document coordination with state wildlife management agencies when evaluating requests for relief and require public notice of such deliberations.
- Establish a process for formal input from sportsmen into policy, plans and projects that is more effective than current processes in place under NEPA or FLPMA, as well as less intimidating to the public.
- Develop an “energy roadmap” for where, when and what type of energy development (including renewable energy) will take place on public lands. This approach should include objectives or goals regarding the extent of energy development in any given area so that entire landscapes are not consumed by some form of development. It also should facilitate identification of a landscape-level strategy for fish and wildlife in which habitats can be identified and managed to sustain populations and sporting resources at current or improved levels.
- Consistent with other programmatic evaluations recently completed for wind energy, oil shale and tar sands, assess oil and gas development potential on public lands throughout the West and prioritize energy production potential to avoid conflicts with

fish and wildlife resource values. Develop a matrix and interim policy that allows for development to continue in certain areas but conserves sensitive areas.

- Establish a process for immediate review and implementation of federal land-use plans and major energy projects to ensure compliance with the spirit and intent of Executive Order 13443 (Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation).
- Initiate rule-making proceedings for sage grouse and other prairie grouse as requested by the TRCP, North American Grouse Partnership and The Wildlife Society in their petition for rule-making, dated June 27, 2008, and pending before the Department of the Interior. The rule is critical to the long-term survival of sage grouse and to minimizing the risk of litigation concerning its status as threatened or endangered.
- Establish an interagency agreement between the BLM and state fish and wildlife agencies establishing, clarifying and strengthening the coordination and collaboration among agencies during review of energy development plans and projects.
- Prohibit the practice of using or transferring funding intended for fish and wildlife management (or other renewable resource management) to energy programs and/or activities.
- Establish a mitigation trust fund to provide financial support and stability to the management of fish and wildlife resources affected by energy development. Funding could be derived from fees, royalties, rents or voluntary contributions to support agencies, local actions and other activities that directly mitigate losses or degradation of fish, wildlife and sporting resources from energy development.

Long-term Actions

- Congress must re-examine policies used to develop domestic energy resources, many of which are outdated, inadequately address the current state of need and fail to address renewable energy development, including interpretations the 2005 Energy Policy Act and related laws as a mandate to promote energy development at the expense of other public resources. The balance articulated in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act can be restored to public lands. Restoration of the “multiple-use, sustained yield” mandate must come from the top down. It must begin in Washington and be conveyed to all state directors within the BLM, who then must be tasked with ensuring their local field offices carry out the mission as Congress originally envisioned.
- The TRCP advocates legislative action to recommit public-lands agencies to manage lands for multiple use, ensuring the sustainability of abundant and diverse fish and wildlife populations and recreational opportunities. A fish and wildlife sustainability act or provision in law would signal a commitment to the American public that our conservation heritage will not be sacrificed.

The TRCP advocates responsible energy development but believes a better way exists to manage energy resources on public lands. Conflicts with wildlife and our fishing and hunting heritage can be minimized. But this new approach must start in Washington, and it must start now.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Hard-rock Mining Reform

The 1872 Mining Law, which governs hard-rock mining (gold, copper, silver, etc.) on America's public lands, was signed into law more than a century ago. While the economies, cultures, and politics of the West have changed since 1872, the mining law has not. More than 270 million acres of federal land are open to hard-rock mining under the law. Because the law has never been meaningfully reformed, many of America's most treasured public lands are at risk, including important wildlife habitat and hunting areas, valuable fisheries, popular recreation sites, vital municipal water supplies and sensitive roadless areas.

Since 1872, certain modifications have been made to the law. But these basic doctrines remain public law:

- Public lands are available for private mineral claims;
- Miners on public lands are entitled to exclude the public from their claims;
- Mining takes precedence over all other uses on public lands including hunting and fishing;
- The public receives no payment for this private use of the lands or the value of the minerals removed; and
- Miners can eventually own both the minerals and the land for a nominal fee.

Short-term Actions

- Build Senate cosponsors for S. 796, The Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act.
- Persuade Senate decision makers to facilitate and schedule passage of S. 796 in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee in 2010.

Long-term Action

- Persuade Congress to pass meaningful 1872 mining law reform legislation that would end mining's priority status on public lands, thus balancing mining with other public-land uses such as hunting, fishing, timber harvest and water quality; recover a reasonable royalty on minerals taken from public lands, similar to royalties that oil, gas, coal and timber interests already pay; establish an abandoned mine cleanup fund, with a portion of those funds dedicated to fish and wildlife habitat restoration to address impacts of past mining; and prohibit patenting or sale of public lands, keeping public lands in public hands for all Americans to use and enjoy.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Legislation

Not usually thought of as a vehicle for conservation, the legislation commonly called the “Highway Bill” 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 benefiting our fish and wildlife. Critter-friendly culverts, invasive species control, refuge roads, trails and highway construction mitigation all received much-needed funding boosts. An even greater opportunity exists this year, as a new bill stands poised to advance.

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.
- Challenge Congress to identify regional roadside conservation efforts that merit an increased national investment, empowering struggling local economies and infrastructure alike.

Long-term Action

- Spur and support congressional efforts to pass a new Highway Bill in 2010.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements

Conservation easements allow landowners 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 encourage access for hunters and anglers. In the 2008 Farm Bill, Congress extended provisions in the tax code that widened the availability of conservation easements, making them attractive to a far broader swath of the public. But these incentives last only through the end of 2009. If they are not made permanent soon, 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 coming year's budget proposal.

Long-term Action

- Support legislation making the enhanced tax incentive permanent.

Climate Change

America's anglers and hunters enjoy a profusion of outdoor pursuits, including tarpon fishing in the Florida Keys, stalking elk in the Rocky Mountains, hunting waterfowl in the hardwood bottoms of Louisiana, fishing for eastern brook trout in the Appalachians, and chasing pheasants in the Great Plains.

The country's diverse habitats and conservation actions by hunters, anglers and conservationists of the last century have delivered abundant and widely distributed populations of fish and game. Global climate change threatens to disrupt generations of plant and animal evolution and the abundance and well-being of animals 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 they melt; 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 [*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 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 likely will be 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 species now to detect and adapt to changes in abundance and distribution as a result of climate change. They also believe that these 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 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

- Urge Congress to pass climate-change legislation that generates substantial new dedicated funding for a natural resources adaptation program;
- 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.
- 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.