

Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Commits to Protecting Wildlife Corridors with Landmark Resolution

Two organizational partners in wildlife protection advance toward a resolution calling for the Protection of Wildlife Corridors.

THORNTON, CO, U.S., June 20, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On May 23, 2019, the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS), in partnership with the National Wildlife Federation, made a milestone commitment to protect habitat connectivity by passing the "[Protection of Wildlife Corridors Resolution](#)" at the society's national conference in Chandler, Arizona.



Elk in the wildlife corridors

Tribal lands and waters provide vital habitat for hundreds of wildlife species, many of which move considerable

distances to meet their daily, seasonal and ecological needs. These movements often span several jurisdictional boundaries, including tribal, public and private lands. Fragmentation such as roads, fences, development and other barriers continue to make it increasingly difficult for wildlife to migrate and move safely across large landscapes. The passage of this resolution integrates wildlife management strategies across the larger intertribal landscape while establishing a framework for advancing on-the-ground and cross-jurisdictional efforts to protect migration corridors and iconic wildlife species.

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Elveda Martinez, President of the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society

“For years, tribal voices have been stifled and excluded from major conservation initiatives and decisions. Now is the time for tribal voices to be heard in order to protect the future of wildlife on our lands and beyond,” said Elveda Martinez, President of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society and a member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe of Nevada. “This resolution is the first step in

affirming our commitment to advocate for the protection of habitat connectivity, preserve ecological diversity and represent our people across the country.”

The resolution comes on the heels of the introduction of U.S. Senator Tom Udall and Rep. Don Beyer’s bipartisan [Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019](#) which aims to reverse the tide of habitat loss and fragmentation for America’s fish, wildlife and plant species. Among other aspects, it includes a grant program to fund conservation projects on state and tribal lands to encourage wildlife connectivity. Tribal leaders were crucial in crafting that legislation and have been very engaged with the U.S. Forest Service as it drafts new land management plans for the

Upper Rio Grande region of Colorado and New Mexico.

This collaboration is in stark contrast to how the tribes were treated in 2018 when then-Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke issued the landmark Secretarial Order 3362 to protect big game migration corridors in the West. In doing so, he completely excluded tribes from strategic planning and conservation efforts. The NAFWS and National Wildlife Federation now call on Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to revise Secretarial Order 3362 to be inclusive of the nation's federally-recognized tribes and to further prioritize tribal collaboration in protecting and managing habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors.

"The wildlife corridors resolution passed by the Society calls for tribal leaders to get seats at the table that they've been denied for far too long," said Garrit Voggesser, director of the Tribal Partnerships Program at National Wildlife Federation. "It promotes collaboration among tribal, state and federal natural resource managers to protect habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors to ensure thriving ecosystems for generations to come."

The NAFWS, a non-profit organization provides conferences, youth education, and training for tribal conservation law officers. The organization's mission is to assist Native American and Alaska Native Tribes with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of their fish and wildlife resources.

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