



**TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE**  
*a natural investment*

**NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE**

AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY ▪ AMERICAN ZOO AND AQUARIUM ASSOCIATION  
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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY ▪ WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

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July 22, 2005

The Honorable Conrad Burns  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Byron Dorgan  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Taylor  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

**As leading supporters of the 3,000 member strong Teaming With Wildlife Coalition, we urge you and the Interior Appropriations conferees to accept the Senate appropriation of \$72 million for the State Wildlife Grants Program in the Fiscal Year 2006 Interior Appropriations bill.** Earlier this year, 55 Senators and 128 Representatives from both parties and every region of the country joined us in calling for at least \$85 million for State Wildlife Grants, and the President's budget calls for \$74 million. Given this level of broad, bipartisan support, we hope you will maintain the momentum behind this critical program by supporting the Senate language.

**State Wildlife Grants is the nation's core program for preventing wildlife from becoming endangered in every state.** Wildlife conservation has always been a partnership between the federal government and the states. As part of that partnership, State Wildlife Grants provides essential resources to support practical, on-the-ground conservation efforts aimed at declining fish, wildlife, and habitat. The program helps restore degraded lands and waters, reintroduce native species, and encourage the effective stewardship of private lands. Through early, strategic investments, the State Wildlife Grants program helps save taxpayer dollars by avoiding costly conflicts over endangered species listings.

**Over only a few years, the State Wildlife Grants program has funded practical, non-regulatory, cooperative conservation projects in every state and territory.** As a coalition of conservation organizations, wildlife management professionals, outdoor enthusiasts, and other supporters of wildlife conservation, we've seen the tangible benefits of these projects in the communities where we live and work. No other program in the Interior Department's budget has had the same effect for declining wildlife across North America.

The House of Representatives provided \$65 million for the State Wildlife Grants program in the FY 2006 Interior Appropriations Bill, and the Senate provided \$72 million. **Splitting the difference between the House and Senate bills would result in a cut from last year's \$70 million appropriation. This would signal a lack of federal commitment to the goal of preventing wildlife from becoming endangered.**

**Although the budget is tight, reliable and adequate funding is essential for the continued success of the State Wildlife Grants program.** Uneven funding for State Wildlife Grants has a profound impact on the ability of wildlife agencies and their partners to take action to conserve wildlife before they need endangered species listings and costly recovery efforts. Cutting funding for State Wildlife Grants is penny-wise and pound-foolish. Now more than ever, we should be focusing limited resources on this kind of smart, effective investment.

**Please join us in our commitment to the long-term goal of keeping wildlife from becoming endangered by supporting \$72 million for State Wildlife Grants in the Fiscal Year 2006 Interior Appropriations bill.**

Sincerely,

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