



Why Care?

The Urgency of Saving Endangered Species

The threat to our nation's imperiled wildlife is immediate and real. Over the next 50 years, up to one third of the world's plant and animal species may be lost forever.

Real Estate Benefits of Endangered Species

Protecting endangered species is not just the right thing to do, it makes economic sense, too.

* In 2004, real estate brokers and sales agents held approximately 460,000 jobs.¹⁸

* A recent poll by the National Association of Realtors found that 88 percent of voters think that it is important to preserve stream corridors and other natural areas such as forests, wetlands, or deserts from development.¹¹ Such natural places provide important habitat for endangered species.



* Wildlife is not restricted to just the last remaining pristine habitats. A NatureServe analysis of rare and endangered species data finds that more than half of our nation's rarest and most imperiled species occur in designated metropolitan areas.⁴

* Conservation biologists regard this as the first mass extinction since the dinosaurs.¹ In the United States alone, 30 percent of the nation's plant and animal species are at risk of disappearing, and more than 500 species are missing or may already be extinct.² For 85 percent of these imperiled species, the loss or degradation of their habitats is the principal threat to their continued existence.³



* Living in close proximity to natural areas has also been linked to improved health. Due to the rise in recent years in the percentage of Americans who are overweight or obese, and the chronic disease it causes, the national Centers for Disease Control is collaborating with urban planners to explore how urban form, green space and park proximity can encourage walking and biking and improve overall health.⁶

* Studies have determined that having trees and green space in public housing neighborhoods lowers levels of fear and contributes to less violent and aggressive behavior. School related studies show that children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder show fewer symptoms if they have access to natural areas.⁷ Another study showed that green space is part of a portfolio of urban amenities that can attract creative workers and the businesses that hire them.⁸



* Beyond safe-guarding individual species, protecting natural areas from over-development can generate major economic and environmental benefits – particularly in regard to protecting water quality. For example, New York City acquired watershed lands in the Catskill Mountains for \$250 million in the 1990's and subsequently avoided having to spend over \$6 billion on new water filtration and treatment plants.⁵



* Another study showed that appraised property values of homes that are adjacent to parks and open spaces are typically about eight percent to 20 percent more than comparable properties elsewhere.¹⁰

* Between 1999 and 2003 there were 828 local and state ballot measures for land conservation. Of these, 644 passed – 78 percent – increasing spending by almost \$15 billion on conservation.¹³



*The Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land found that 65 percent of voters would support a “small increase in taxes” to fund state and local land purchase programs to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and neighborhood parks.¹²

* In a recent poll, the National Association of Realtors found that 57 percent of voters would be more likely to purchase a home close to green space and 50 percent said they would be willing to pay ten percent more for a home located near a park or other protected natural area.⁹

* Wetlands in western Washington provide a flood protection benefit worth between \$7,800 and \$51,000 per acre.¹⁵

* A study in the Portland Oregon area found that residential property values increased if they were in closer proximity to wetlands. For every 1,000 feet closer a property was to wetlands, the property’s value increased by \$436.¹⁴



* The Puget Sound basin study claimed that tree cover in the county’s urban growth boundary area had reduced stormwater storage costs by \$910 million and generated annual air quality savings of \$19.5 million.¹⁷

* To replace the natural pest control service provided by birds in forests would cost an estimated \$7 per acre.¹⁶

References

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