

TESTIMONY OF GREG KNADLE, VICE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION
BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES REGARDING
**FY 2015 BUDGET FOR THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE
SERVICE, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND FOREST SERVICE**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding FY 2015 funding on behalf of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). **NFWF's FY 2015 appropriations request will be matched at least dollar for dollar with non-federal funds to conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats through local partnerships.**

We believe that NFWF is a sound investment in a time of constrained budgets because of our proven track record and statutory requirement to leverage federal funding with private contributions to maximize conservation benefit. We appreciate the Subcommittee's past support and respectfully request your approval of funding at the following levels:

- **\$ 7.022 million through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Resource Management appropriation;**
- **\$ 3.0 million through the Bureau of Land Management's Management of Lands and Resources appropriation; and**
- **\$ 3.0 million through the Forest Service's National Forest System appropriation.**

Since its inception, NFWF has leveraged nearly \$620 million in federal funds into more than \$2.1 billion in on-the-ground and in-the-water conservation with less than a 5% cost to the federal government and 130 staff nationwide. In 2013, NFWF supported a total of 537 projects. We obligated \$49.7 million in federal funds as a springboard to leverage an additional \$147.4 million in private contributions and grantee matching funds, for a total investment of more than \$197.2 million.

In FY 2013, NFWF partnered with 15 federal agencies or departments to support implementation of federal conservation priorities. These efforts focused on coastal resiliency, private landowner outreach, ecosystem conservation and supporting community-based restoration in urban areas.

In FY 2013, an independent accounting firm audited NFWF and they issued an unqualified report with no material weaknesses and no deficiencies identified. In addition, NFWF qualified as a low risk auditee under OMB Circular A-133.

Congress established NFWF in 1984 to catalyze private investments to conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats. In addition, every dollar provided directly to NFWF by Congress goes to on-the-ground conservation projects. NFWF raises private funds to support the associated management costs.

NFWF is required by law to match each federally appropriated dollar with a minimum of one non-federal dollar. We consistently exceed this requirement by leveraging federal funds at a 3:1

average ratio while building consensus and emphasizing accountability, measurable results, and sustainable conservation outcomes.

The goal of NFWF is to ensure abundant wildlife species in order to allow the economic health of our nation to continue. The key elements of our approach include: (1) leverage, (2) efficiency, (3) partnerships, (4) transparency, and (5) measurable outcomes.

I want to highlight a couple of NFWF programs that you may have heard about recently.

Hurricane Sandy Response: Hurricane Sandy surged up the Eastern Seaboard in October 2012, devastating coastal communities in eight states. The storm was catastrophic in the mid-Atlantic, causing 199 deaths and \$200 billion in property damage from North Carolina to New England. NFWF was chosen by the Department of the Interior to serve as the fiduciary and grant manager and the program will award more than \$100 million in grants throughout the region affected by Hurricane Sandy including Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and West Virginia—the states that officially declared a natural disaster as a result of the storm event. Grants will be awarded to projects that assess, restore, enhance or create wetlands, beaches and other natural systems to better protect communities from the impacts of future storms and naturally occurring events, while also creating habitat for fish and wildlife species. These projects represent win-win strategies that help protect communities from future storms, while strengthening ecological systems for the benefit of people, fish and wildlife.

BP/Transocean Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Settlement: In early 2013, a U.S. District Court approved two plea agreements resolving the criminal cases against BP and Transocean that arose out of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. The agreements direct a total payment of \$2.544 billion to be paid out over five years to NFWF to fund projects benefitting the natural resources of the Gulf Coast that were impacted by the oil spill. NFWF will carry out the plea agreements through its newly established *Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund* (Fund). In less than year from the approval of the plea agreements by the Court, NFWF had obligated more than half of the first year's payment and on-the-ground conservation projects were being implemented.

NFWF Partnerships

With the Subcommittee's support, FY 2015 funds will support our long-standing partnerships and initiatives with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service. Some of our priority initiatives for FY 2015 are described below:

Next Generation of Conservationists Program: Last December, the third Request for Proposals was announced to solicit projects for NFWF's Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists Program. This program is designed to introduce America's youth to careers in conservation while they are employed by youth corps or other private entities. During the first two-years of the program, conservation employment opportunities were provided to approximately 1,300 individuals. This year, NFWF received 95 applications for funding through this program requesting nearly \$5 million that would be leveraged into over \$13.8 million. Four federal agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation are providing a combined \$1.4 million to support the Program this year. Award announcements are anticipated in May.

In addition to employing youth, NFWF is working to employ veterans in implementing conservation projects. As part of Request for Proposals for the recent \$100 million Hurricane Sandy Resiliency program, we worked with the Department of the Interior to include preference points for those projects that involve youth and veteran employment or participation. NFWF is currently exploring options with the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense to expand conservation employment opportunities for our Nation's veterans.

Western Water Program: The NFWF Western Water Program (WWP) works in geographies around the west including the Columbia Basin, Walker, Rio Grande, Klamath, and Lower Colorado Delta. NFWF is also looking into prospective programs Central Valley of California and Yellow Cutthroat Trout watersheds in Idaho and Wyoming. NFWF's Western Water Program and Stanford's Center for Water in the West co-hosted a 1½ day workshop on how to improve enabling conditions for water transactions and increasing the pace and scale of such efforts.

Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Long Island Sound: Watershed health plays an important role in fish and wildlife conservation and has been a feature of NFWF's grantmaking since establishing our partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1998. In the last decade, NFWF has formed strategic public-private partnerships to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat while improving water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Long Island Sound. Federal partners in the programs include EPA, Department of the Interior agencies, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and others. NFWF leverages various federal funds for these partnerships but, more importantly, has attracted private contributions from corporations and other private foundations. Through these partnerships, federal agencies are able to leverage resources with NFWF's corporate sponsors and private contributions to increase the impact any one of them could have alone. This spring, NFWF announced a new partnership with CSX deemed the "Oyster Express", which will deliver 120,000 cubic yards of fossilized oyster shell from Florida through CSX-donated rail transportation to assist oyster reef restoration in the Chesapeake Bay. The partnership was made possible through CSX's largest-ever in-kind donation valued at \$2.4 million and will support the largest oyster restoration project in the history of the Chesapeake Bay and perhaps the continental US.

Jobs and Economic Benefits from Conservation Investments

In 2012, NFWF commissioned a study, *The Conservation Economy in America: Direct investments and economic contributions*, to determine the economic impacts of federal, state, local and private investments in natural resource conservation. The minimum total investment in natural resource conservation in the U.S. is \$38.8 billion annually. This is a conservative figure given that data on the local and private investments is limited. More importantly, the total economic activity and jobs created by this spending is \$93.2 billion and 660,000 respectively. When this data is combined with the economic output from outdoor recreation and historic preservation, the total economic impact is \$1.7 trillion, returning \$211 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue, and supporting 12.8 million jobs annually. This economy is largely

dependent on federal investments in public lands, recreation and conservation programs that are funded in the Interior and Environment appropriation.

NFWF Reauthorization

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Reauthorization Act (H.R. 263) was introduced in the House in February 2012 and a companion bill (S. 51) was introduced in the Senate, both with strong bipartisan support. Both bills renew NFWF's direct appropriations authorization at a level of \$25 million, a reduction in authorization of \$5 million, for an additional five years. The \$25 million authorization includes \$15 million annually through the Department of the Interior; \$5 million annually through the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and \$5 million annually through the Department of Commerce. The bills affirm the original purposes of NFWF and strengthen NFWF's ability to raise private dollars, working with federal agencies more effectively, reducing bureaucratic burdens, and maximizing conservation outcomes. Importantly, the reauthorization will ensure NFWF's ability to save money for the federal government through efficient grant administration, effective collaboration, and significant leverage through private sector contributions.

H. R. 263 is sponsored by Congressman Grimm (NY) and Congressman Dingell (MI). S. 51 is sponsored by Chairman Boxer and Ranking member Vitter and include the following co-sponsors: Baucus (MT), Cardin (MD), Cochran (MS), Collins (ME), Roberts (KS), Stabenow (MI), Tester (MT), Udall (NM), and Whitehouse (RI). NFWF is working with the appropriate authorizing committees to pass the legislation this year.

Conclusion

For nearly three decades, NFWF has been at the forefront of national conservation activity. With our partners, NFWF has contributed to some of the nation's most important conservation programs, invested millions in worthy and successful projects, and spearheaded programs to conserve our nation's most treasured natural resources. We have a successful model of coordinating and leveraging federal funds and attracting support from the private sector to address the most significant threats to fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. NFWF currently has partnerships with 15 federal agencies and more than 50 corporations and private foundations.

Meaningful and measurable outcomes, evaluation, and accountability are NFWF's building blocks to ensure maximum conservation impact. We are working directly with the federal agencies and our other partners to maximize results and produce sustainable conservation outcomes. To that end, NFWF is incorporating monitoring and evaluation into our programs to measure progress, promote adaptive management, demonstrate results, and continuously learn from project investments. We look forward to building on our partnerships with our federal agency partners in FY 2015 and appreciate the Subcommittee's continued support of these collaborative efforts.

Mr. Chairman, we greatly appreciate your continued support and hope the Subcommittee will approve funding for the Foundation in FY 2015.