

THE BLUE RIBBON PANEL

ON SUSTAINING AMERICA'S DIVERSE FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES

WE BELIEVE

America's fish and wildlife are
resources worth sustaining.

The diversity of wild species that inhabit our nation's lands and waters is one of America's greatest treasures. These resources belong to every American to experience, use and enjoy. Our quality of life, outdoor heritage and fiscal prosperity are intrinsically tied to the future of fish and wildlife.

Conservation means balancing the sustainability of fish and wildlife resources with the many needs of humans for clean air and water, land, food and fiber; dependable energy and economic development; and recreation.



WE BELIEVE

That collaboration—not regulation—is the best path toward securing a future where fish and wildlife and natural resource-based enterprise thrive.

Industries, businesses and landowners nationwide are facing ever-mounting pressures from new and potential land use regulations that impact their capacities to provide a growing

world with food, fiber, energy and other essential commodities.

At the same time, the number of species petitioned for federal endangered species listing has increased by more than 1,000% over the last five years. Thousands of additional species could be listed in the coming years—leading to more expensive recovery attempts; reduced access; increased regulation and compliance costs; and further polarization of business, energy, conservation and environmental interests.

It costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year to try to save a single species. That price tag does not even include the significant financial and regulatory consequences for natural resource-dependent businesses or the resulting economic impacts.

The key is to keep species off the list altogether. State Wildlife Action Plans are the blueprints state fish and wildlife agencies have developed to conserve the 12,000 species that are at risk of federal endangered species listing. Yet, Congress has repeatedly cut the primary source of funding to implement these congressionally mandated plans—the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program.



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JESSE LEE VARNADO PHOTO

WE BELIEVE That it's time to launch the *Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources.*



We need action now to sustainably fund conservation of the full array of fish and wildlife to maintain balance between natural resource diversity and economic development.

The 50 state fish and wildlife agencies, through its Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, are inviting 20 visionary leaders representing the outdoor recreation retail and manufacturing sector, the energy industry, conservation organizations and sportsmen's groups to chart a course toward a resource-full future.

The bipartisan Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources will recommend funding solutions and Congressional policy options that mutually benefit America's industries, agencies and our shared fish, wildlife and economic heritage.

WE BELIEVE

That by working together, we can advance a solution for funding a 21st century model of conservation.

In the 1930s, the times were as economically bleak as the country had ever known, and the bounty of wildlife that once graced the landscape was rapidly dwindling. The need for wildlife restoration was urgent; but funding was scarce.

The hunting and shooting sports industries united with state fish and wildlife interests and agencies to advance a national funding solution to restore hundreds of imperiled game species such as elk, deer, wild turkeys and waterfowl by creating the bold integrated system supporting what we now call the “North American Model of Conservation”. The sport fishing and boating industries followed suit to establish a similar funding model for restoring depleted striped bass, trout and other important game fish.

This historic collaboration between private industry, hunters and anglers, and state fish and wildlife agencies is unparalleled in the world. And, it is this remarkable partnership that forms the backbone of today’s \$260 billion wildlife-related recreation market force.

Now is the time to revive this kind of innovation through partnership. Urgent work remains to safeguard the 95% of all species that are neither hunted nor fished, and the stakes are high for all of us.



Members of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources will use their insight, ingenuity and personal passion for the outdoors to move forward a 21st century system of funding conservation that will generate both a rich conservation legacy and a vibrant economic future.

It is time to create certainty for both industry and conservation by building systems of conservation and not wasting our precious resources of time and energy haggling over project by project mitigation.

It’s time for new visions, it is time for the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources. For more information about the Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustaining America’s Diverse Wildlife Resources, contact Ron Regan, Executive Director for the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, at rregan@fishwildlife.org or call 202/838-3474.



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The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies – the organization that represents North America’s fish and wildlife agencies—promotes sound resource management and conservation, and has been speaking on important fish and wildlife issues since 1902.