

New Mexico Chapter of
The Wildlife Society



Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Week of Friday, April 12th and 19th 2013

Check out the chapter on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wildlife-Society-New-Mexico-Chapter/122478411098284>

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1. Please submit NM TWS Newsletter Items by May 17th

The deadline for NM TWS Newsletter items is **May 17, 2013**, please send all info to Renae Held at rheld@hotmail.com.

In addition to the regular announcements, articles, etc., we would like to start soliciting citations of books and other publications pertaining to New Mexico wildlife and natural resources from our readership. If you know of a wildlife or natural resources book that you think our readership would be interested in, please submit its citation to rheld@hotmail.com for consideration/inclusion in the next newsletter.

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2. REI's Sally Jewell wins confirmation as Interior secretary

Posted by Juliet Eilperin on April 10, 2013 at 5:39 pm

By a vote of 87 to 11, the Senate approved Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) chief executive Sally Jewell on Wednesday as the next Interior secretary.

Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), who chairs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, told his colleagues Wednesday that Jewell had demonstrated “the kind of leadership” that could reconcile the competing environmental and energy interests any Interior secretary must manage.

A former oil engineer and commercial banker who has spent several years at the helm of REI, the 56-year-old Jewell has never served in public office. But Wyden said she boasts the “professional track record of actually bringing people together on these sorts of issues.”

While Republicans have frequently criticized the Obama administration's environmental policies — and the officials who have carried them out — Jewell won praise for her business background and openness to working with different constituencies.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, the top Republican on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said the fact that Jewell has not “run the full gamut” of Interior Department issues in her career could be an asset.

“Perhaps that's a good thing, because perhaps she is able to look through these issues with a fresh perspective, a different lens,” said Murkowski, who initially held up the nomination because of the Interior Department's opposition to putting a road through Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

For several years, Murkowski has sought the construction of a gravel road through the wilderness area to ensure that residents of the remote community of King Cove have reliable access to a neighboring all-weather airport for medical emergencies. As part of the agreement to move Jewell's nomination through, outgoing Interior Secretary Ken Salazar agreed to send the department's assistant secretary of Indian Affairs to hold additional meetings with King Cove residents in Alaska and prepare a report on “whether and to what extent the road is needed to meet medical emergency requirements of King Cove.”

“This wasn't a parochial issue that I was raising here on the Senate floor,” Murkowski said during Wednesday's floor debate, adding that when it came to Alaska residents, “For them, it was not just about a road — it was an issue of overreach, it was a symbol of federal overreach on far too many issues.”

Jewell's two home state senators, Washington Democrats Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, said that the nominee's business experience and passion for the outdoors could help Interior navigate the fiscal and policy challenges that lie ahead.

"Sally's going to come to the Interior Department at a difficult time for our country," Murray said. "Mr. President, I can think of no one better prepared for this task than Sally."

While some Republican senators, such as John Barrasso (Wyo.), remained opposed to Jewell and voted against her confirmation, none of them spoke against her during Wednesday's floor debate.

Article link: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2013/04/10/reis-sally-jewell-wins-confirmation-as-interior-secretary/>

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3. President Requests \$1.6 Billion In Fiscal Year 2014 For U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

The President's fiscal year (FY) 2014 discretionary budget request provides \$1.6 billion for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an increase of \$76.4 million over the 2012 enacted level, to fund the agency's high priority needs. The budget also includes approximately \$1.2 billion available under permanent appropriations, most of which will be provided directly to States to support fish and wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation.

"The Service's budget reflects the tough choices all federal agencies must make as we seek to shrink federal spending while continuing to meet our critical commitments and fund high priority programs," said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. "It focuses our resources on transforming the agency to meet the conservation challenges of the 21st century and remain relevant in a changing American society. By building science capacity and focusing on strategic, partnership-driven landscape conservation, this budget will enable us to be more effective and efficient with the funding we receive."

The Service's 2014 budget request contains costs in a number of areas by identifying administrative efficiencies, program reductions, and other savings, while proposing select increases.

America's Great Outdoors

The budget request includes funding for projects in support of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative, such as the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, that will conserve and protect wildlife and working lands on a landscape level while creating jobs through travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation activities. Working through public-private partnerships and locally-supported conservation strategies, the initiative seeks to protect and restore the nation's most important ecosystems and natural areas and to reconnect Americans, especially young adults, to America's natural heritage.

The Administration's 2014 budget requests \$600.0 million in current and permanent funding across the government for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and includes a total of \$106.3 million within the Service – a net increase of \$51.7 million from the FY 2012 enacted level – for land acquisitions that the Service has identified as having the greatest conservation benefit.

In addition, the budget seeks increases for several grant programs administered by the Service that support AGO goals and leverage Federal funds with significant partner contributions. These grant programs include the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund (a \$36.3 million increase over FY 2012 enacted level of \$47.7 million) and the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund (a \$3.9 million increase over the FY 2012 enacted level of \$35.5 million). The Service's budget also provides funding for natural resource jobs for America's youth, including Youth Conservation Corps positions on wildlife refuges and elsewhere.

New Energy Frontier

In support of the President's Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future, which calls for safe and responsible development of our nation's domestic energy resources, the Service's budget includes an additional \$7.4 million to support energy development including funding for enhanced studies of renewable energy projects, technical assistance in project design, and Endangered Species Act consultation. The Service will also pursue scientific information that identifies the impacts of energy transmission infrastructure on important habitat and species, such as the desert tortoise.

Other specific areas of the budget proposal include:

Cooperative Landscape Conservation

The Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) program would be funded at \$17.6 million, a program increase of \$2.1 million. The program will continue to act as a forum for collaborative development and dissemination of applied science products and tools for resource management decisions across landscapes. The initiative enables managers to target limited resources toward

the greatest conservation benefit for fish and wildlife. Within the Service, LCCs help support and augment many ongoing programs, including Endangered Species Recovery Plans, Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans, fish passage programs, and habitat restoration.

National Wildlife Refuge System

Funding for the operation and maintenance of the national wildlife refuge system is requested at \$499.2 million. The request includes an increase of \$12.7 million for National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges) operations, enabling Refuges to complete additional habitat improvement projects. The budget request includes \$3.2 million for the Cooperative Recovery initiative to address current threats to endangered species on and around wildlife refuges and \$3.8 million for the Challenge Cost Share program, which funds a variety of small-scale projects with partners. The request for Refuge Inventory and Monitoring is \$3.0 million above the FY 2012 enacted level and will be used to continue building the landscape scale, long-term inventory and monitoring network that the Service began in FY 2010. An additional \$2.7 million will be used for Refuge law enforcement to respond to drug production and smuggling, wildlife poaching, illegal border activity, assaults, and a variety of natural resource violations. It will also be used to assess the Refuge law enforcement radio communications infrastructure.

In FY 2014, the Service will extend a landscape level conservation approach to river systems throughout the Country under the Administration's National Blueways System. The National Blueways System, established by Secretary Salazar in May, 2012, provides a new emphasis on the unique value and significance of a comprehensive "headwaters to mouth" approach to river management and creates a mechanism to encourage stakeholders to integrate their land and water stewardship efforts. The budget request includes a program increase of \$3.3 million for the Service to lead Department-wide implementation of this collaborative program. Funds will be available to land management bureaus in the Department as grants and cooperative agreements. Projects will be selected via a joint decision-making process of the National Blueways Committee, consisting of members from the Department's land management bureaus.

Law Enforcement

The budget provides \$68.3 million for the law enforcement program to investigate wildlife crimes and enforce the laws that govern the Nation's wildlife trade, an increase of \$6.1 million over the FY 2012 enacted level. The request includes a program increase of \$1.0 million to strengthen enforcement of conservation laws such as the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act in areas featuring energy development and a general program increase of \$4.2 million for enforcement of the Lacey Act, to address technical challenges in wildlife science forensics, and

support partnerships with foreign governments to reduce demand for illegal wildlife products.

Endangered Species

The FY 2014 budget includes \$185.4 million to administer the Endangered Species Act, an increase of \$9.5 million when compared with the FY 2012 enacted level. This increase includes \$1.5 million for renewable energy consultation, \$1.0 million for science for pesticide consultations, and \$1.9 million for cooperative endangered species recovery on National Wildlife Refuges and in surrounding ecosystems.

Fish and Aquatic Conservation

The budget request includes a total of \$140.9 million for the Fish and Aquatic Conservation program, an increase of \$5.6 million over the 2012 enacted level. Facilitating the Service's role and responsibility in promoting ecosystem health, and fisheries and aquatic resource conservation, the budget includes increases of \$5.9 million for Asian carp activities, \$1.5 million for fish passage improvements, \$1.6 million for fisheries management and restoration actions to facilitate currently authorized activities under the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, as well as \$1.5 million for the Service's cross-programmatic cooperative recovery initiative.

Ecosystem Restoration

The 2014 budget continues the Service's commitment to ecosystem restoration on a landscape level by requesting \$87.2 million for several priority ecosystems. This funding supports restoration work in the Everglades (\$16.0 million); California Bay-Delta (\$4.9 million); Gulf Coast (\$10.2 million); Chesapeake Bay (\$10.3 million); and Great Lakes (\$45.8 million).

Migratory Birds

The request for funding of the Service's responsibilities for the conservation of migratory birds is \$50.1 million, \$1.4 million below the FY 2012 enacted level. The North American Wetlands Conservation Fund is funded at \$39.4 million, \$3.9 million over FY 2012.

International Affairs

The budget request provides the International Affairs program with \$13.5 million, an increase of \$535,000 above the 2012 enacted level. The budget request for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund is \$9.8 million, an increase of \$321,000 over the FY 2012 enacted level. Increases are directed at targeting market and consumer demand countries for illegal wildlife products, which is

driving a rapid increase in poaching of flagship species as tigers, elephants, and rhinos.

To learn more about the President's FY 2014 budget request, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget>.

Article link: <http://www.chattanooga.com/2013/4/10/248642/President-Requests-1.6-Billion-In.aspx>

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4. Merlot vs. moose: Global warming pits wine against wildlife

4/10/13 | By James Eng of MSN News

Global warming could lead to increased competition for land between wine grape growers and wildlife, with potentially disastrous results, scientists say.

Merlot or moose?

Wine aficionados and wildlife lovers could soon butt heads as global warming forces vineyard owners to look for new, ecologically sensitive areas to grow their succulent grapes.

"Climate change is going to move potential wine-producing regions all over the map. These global changes put the squeeze on wildlife and nature's capacity to sustain human life in some surprising places," said Lee Hannah, an ecologist with Conservation International and lead author of a study analyzing the impacts of climate change on wine production and conservation.

"Climate change will set up competition for land between agricultural and wildlife — wine grapes are but one example. This could have disastrous results for wildlife," added co-author Rebecca Shaw, a climate scientist with the Environmental Defense Fund.

The study, published this week in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, concludes that as global temperatures rise, the area suitable for grape-growing will shrink dramatically by 2050 in many traditional wine-producing regions, including the Bordeaux and Rhone valley regions in France, and Tuscany in Italy. Meanwhile, other cooler or higher-elevation areas, like the northern U.S., mountainous parts of China and northern Europe, will become increasingly sought after by vineyard owners as they search for the climatic conditions that are ideal for growing wine grapes.

That script, if played out, could put winemakers and wildlife on a collision course, as shown in a narrated video by the Environmental Defense Fund.

According to the study, the greatest area of increasing wine production suitability is in the Rocky Mountains near the Canada-U.S. border. The area is hardly a traditional wine-growing region, but a few degrees of warmth could make it a hotspot — and that could encroach on land used by the grizzly bear, moose, gray wolf, pronghorn and other species, researchers say.

"Right now you're looking at open ranch land which can be quite friendly to wildlife movement," Hannah told National Geographic. "But if you start getting vineyards put in that area, bears would love to come in and eat wine grapes and browsers will eat the vines. So that's a concern for the growers, and if vineyards are fenced or animals shot, a potential barrier to wildlife movement."

Vineyards already dot nearby areas of the Columbia River basin in eastern Washington, the Snake River Valley of Idaho and the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia. Expansion to the U.S.-Canada border area could complicate efforts by the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, a joint Canada-U.S. organization, to preserve and maintain the wildlife and native plants in the region, the researchers say.

Another area of concern is China, where wine consumption is soaring and winemaking is emerging. Vineyard expansion in the central mountainous part of the country could endanger the sensitive habitat of the giant panda, the study says.

Other species whose habitat could be affected by wine-growing changes include the Iberian lynx in upslope areas of the Pyrenees and owls, freshwater frogs and toads in Chile.

So what to do about the competing interests?

Hannah suggested to National Geographic that China might be able to use a current forest buyback program to purchase panda habitat that is also zoned for vineyard use. "If the industry can plan with conservation, there are ways both wine and wildlife can win," he told the magazine.

More generally, the scientists recommend:

- Joint planning of vineyard expansion between business managers and conservationists to avoid areas of high environmental importance.
- Investment in new varieties of grapes that offer similar flavors but with altered climate tolerances.
- Consumer awareness by purchasing bottles with natural cork, and buying from vineyards that adopt sustainable practices.

Some such collaborative action is already under way.

In South Africa, the World Wildlife Fund has established a Biodiversity & Wine Initiative, a partnership between the wine industry and the conservation sector to protect wildlife in the Cape Winelands region and to encourage sustainable farming.

In the U.S., California has a Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance that promotes vineyard and winery practices that are sensitive to the environment.

Though world wine production dipped last year, the wine industry remains a multibillion-dollar business and the U.S. is the largest wine-consuming nation. Total wine sales in the U.S. in 2012 from all production sources — domestic and foreign — reached a record of 360.1 million 9-liter cases with an estimated retail value of \$34.6 billion, according to wine industry figures.

Wine isn't the only commodity that could take a hit. Global warming could impact the chocolate industry as well. A recent report, citing research by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, said the amount of suitable land in major cocoa-growing regions could halve by 2050.

(Bill Gates is the chairman of Microsoft Corp. Microsoft publishes MSN News.)

Article link: <http://news.msn.com/science-technology/merlot-vs-moose-global-warming-pits-wine-against-wildlife>

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5. How Open-Source Software Could Help Save Endangered Animals From Poachers

By Jason Bittel

Posted Thursday, April 11, 2013, at 8:49 AM

No one is going to tell you we've been winning the battle against the illegal wildlife trade. In most cases, we're outmanned, outgunned, and probably most of all, out-spent. That's why an alliance of six conservation organizations have come together to build an anti-poaching tool designed to bridge the technological gap between poachers and wildlife rangers.

"Poaching is becoming a lot more organized and technologically advanced," Barney Long, Asian species expert for the World Wildlife Fund, told me. "We have examples of rhino poachers in Africa using night vision and helicopters, while our rangers on the ground are lucky if they have GPS and a weapon."

He's only half-joking. Wildlife managers are often local organizations with shoestring budgets, but the trade they battle is global. To combat this disparity, conservation corps in the field can get a much-needed tech upgrade with the open-source Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool, nicknamed SMART. Released in February, SMART is a way for wildlife managers to better track illegal activity in their parks. As rangers patrol the field, GPS units keep constant tabs on their movements; coordinates can also be tethered to special events, like discovering a snare or arresting a poacher. Back at HQ, this information is loaded into SMART for overlay on maps. When combined with information from other sources, like tips from locals or historical experience, managers using SMART are able to visualize and plan for threats more efficiently. Long calls this "adaptive management."

Such technology may sound obvious or rudimentary, as many of us work in offices with three supervisors and a never-ending flow of TPS reports. But wildlife conservation is a business run out of the bush.

"These guys are on the frontlines getting into gun battles with poachers," says Emma Stokes, a conservation scientist for the Wildlife Conservation Society who has had more than her share of tents trampled by elephants in the night. "The idea is also to try to motivate and encourage rangers in day to day work, collecting info on where they are and what they're doing to calculate incentives and bonus systems to reward those rangers doing a very good job under extremely difficult circumstances"—like spending up to a month at a time on patrol.

So far, SMART is up and running in 22 test sites across the globe, including Latin America, Central and East Africa, Southeast Asia, Russia, and China. Just last week Stokes helped train officials from Gabon, Congo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. (Stokes Skyped with me from Gabon. Long called from Cambodia.) The goal is to keep rolling out improvements to the software based on need. Version 1.1 is slated to release in May, with powerful new functionality, including the ability to upload data from the field via smart phone. Since it's open-source, users are also encouraged to improve SMART and upload plugins back to the community. It will probably be a few months yet before we learn how it's working, but word is spreading fast thanks to agents in the field like Long and Stokes.

SMART is the product of an unprecedented coalition of organizations. The Avenger-like super group currently includes CITES-MIKE, the Frankfurt Zoological Society, the North Carolina Zoo, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Wildlife Fund, and the Zoological Society of London. (Who gets stuck being Ant-Man?)

Certainly, endangered species need all the help they can get and it's encouraging to see animal activists adopting drone technology and fighting

rhinoceros poaching with unmanned surveillance aircraft. But the most powerful weapon at a conservationist's disposal may just be un-flashy, data-collection software.

Article link:

http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2013/04/11/smart_open_source_conservation_software_could_foil_poachers.html

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6. Will Synthetic Biology Benefit or Threaten Wild Things?

April 12, 2013, 11:30 am
By ANDREW C. REVKIN

Please look below for a “Your Dot” missive on an emerging force that will, in ways both direct and indirect, shape the face of what we used to call “nature” or “wildlife.” The post was sent by Cristián T. Samper, the president of the Wildlife Conservation Society, from a meeting held this week at Cambridge University to examine this question: “How will Synthetic Biology and Conservation Shape the Future of Nature?”

There's a superb and detailed framing paper for the meeting posted here.

Here's the note from Samper, which accurately notes that this meeting was the beginning of a long and important conversation, in which more questions were raised than answered:

Will synthetic biology help or hinder conservation efforts?

This was the question asked at a symposium organized by the Wildlife Conservation Society at Cambridge University this week, attended by about 80 synthetic biologists and conservationists. These are two communities that have never come together and, like a first date, we were examining each other and building some trust.

It was clear that synthetic biology — which involves the engineering of life — was advancing rapidly and inevitably could impact the world's biodiversity — and could be either a positive or negative. The conservationists from WCS, The Nature Conservancy, WWF, Fauna & Flora International, and other leading groups and academic institutions, all wanted to know more.

There were a lot of questions flying: Could genetic manipulation allow species to adapt to climate change or control an invasive species? Could scientists change

the biology of an organism to be more productive or enable it to grow in new environments? Could we manufacture wildlife products like ivory in a lab? Could this emerging science bring back species that have gone extinct like the passenger pigeon?

When the synthetic biology experts spoke, they focused on how their field is currently addressing the potential needs for food, energy and medicine. These could all have major impacts on conservation, improving agricultural yields or reducing the demand for wood, thus reducing deforestation. None of that has a direct impact on conservation but all could have an indirect effect. For example, what if there was an unintentional release of a synthetic organism and it destroyed all the fauna in an ecosystem? The scenarios are endless.

As a tropical biologist, the symposium became my first lesson in synthetic biology. The field was not around when I was a graduate student, and engineers approach the world very differently from scientists. I could easily see how the current focus of the synthetic biologists will affect our lives as humans very directly, but how will it evolve and affect the rest of the species on our planet?

When the conservationists left the meeting, we could see the potential of synthetic biology to help conservation. We left, however, with questions and hopes that this new science might ultimately be another one of the tools that we could use to save our threatened natural world – which some surmise is approaching its sixth episode of extinction. Could we pool our intelligence with this new group of colleagues to finally turn back the clock on the demise of Earth's great diversity of life?

Ed Yong, who blogs on science for National Geographic, has filed "Can We Save the World by Remixing Life?" — a great post surveying this nascent field and offering insights from those who attended the meeting.

The meeting was largely conceived by Kent Redford, a biologist who until recently was at the Wildlife Conservation Society and now is an independent consultant on conservation strategies. Redford was the lead author of a new paper in PLoS Biology that laid the groundwork for the meeting, which ended Thursday. [Here's a link to the open-access paper: Synthetic Biology and Conservation of Nature: Wicked Problems and Wicked Solutions, Kent H. Redford, William Adams, and Georgina M. Mace].

You can learn more from him in a fascinating podcast (part 1, part 2) posted earlier this month by Scientific American.

There's much more on synthetic biology here on Dot Earth and over at The Loom, the National Geographic blog of science writer Carl Zimmer.

11:43 a.m. | Addendum | Just one of the many secondary issues in this arena is “de-extinction” — the prospect of bringing vanished species — say, the passenger pigeon — back to life now that we know better. A recent Nature news article provides a good start.

And don’t miss Stewart Brand’s TED talk from earlier this year, titled, “The dawn of de-extinction. Are you ready?”

Are you?

Article link: <http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/12/will-synthetic-biology-benefit-or-threaten-wild-things/>

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7. Russian forests and tigers left floored by illegal logging

Posted on 16 April 2013

Gland/Moscow - The forests of the Russian Far East are being pushed to the brink of destruction due to pervasive, large-scale illegal logging, largely to supply Chinese furniture and flooring manufacturers, according to a new report by WWF-Russia.

This widespread timber theft is threatening the long-term survival of the endangered Amur tiger, while providing a conduit for illegal timber to find its way into the United States, Europe and Japan.

In the report, *Illegal Logging in the Russian Far East: Global Demand and Taiga Destruction*, WWF-Russia synthesizes more than 10 years of on-the-ground field observations and highlights a sobering reality: Russia’s forest sector has become deeply criminalized, with poor law enforcement, allowing illegal loggers to plunder valuable timber stocks of oak, ash, elm and linden with impunity.

“The scope and scale of illegal logging in the Ussuri Taiga is imperiling the long-term survival of the Amur tiger and the livelihoods of thousands of forest villagers and indigenous peoples,” said WWF-Russia Forest Policy Projects Coordinator Nikolay Shmatkov.

“With minimal resources in place to detect and prosecute illegal logging throughout the region, the sheer scale of violations has reached epidemic proportions.”

WWF analysis of Russian customs data revealed that in 2010, the volume of Mongolian oak logged for export was twice the amount legally authorized for harvest from the region--meaning that at least half of the oak shipped across the border to China was stolen. Further analysis of export data showed that 2010 was a mild year: in 2007 and 2008 the oak harvest was four times as large.

The report also finds that, although there are a few positive examples of successful Russian forest law enforcement actions, the proportion of registered illegal logging violations brought to trial is extremely low. In 2011, only 16 percent of the 691 registered cases of illegal logging in Primorsky Province were brought to trial – the lowest figure in the past 10 years.

Illegal logging degrades vital habitat for Amur tigers and their prey. Scientists estimate around 450 Amur tigers remain in the wild. Over harvesting limits the supply of pine nuts and acorns—a main food source for their prey. As timber supplies dwindle, ecologically sensitive forests like wildlife reserves are increasingly threatened.

While WWF is working in Russia to suggest measures the government can take to end illegal logging from the supply side, importing nations must take action as well.

In particular, the report highlights the need for strengthened collaboration between Russia and China to ensure better timber tracking between the two countries.

In addition, the United States, European Union and other countries with timber legality legislation must ensure that those laws are adequately enforced. Companies in importing countries must be sure of the forest origin, legality and traceability of their wood products.

“There is a significant risk that US and EU companies and consumers could be purchasing furniture and flooring made with wood from illegal sources,” said Linda Walker, forest program manager for WWF-US. “It’s critical for companies to ensure that they are sourcing wood products from legal and responsible sources, or they risk violating their customers’ trust and seriously degrading habitat.”

The report urges importers of Chinese or Russian hardwood furniture and flooring to confirm the species and country of wood origin, as Russian species can be mislabeled as originating from other countries. For products made with Russian oak, ash, elm, or linden, companies should exclusively purchase Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified products.

If FSC-certified products are not available, companies should establish rigorous legality and traceability confirmation systems. If neither approach is possible,

buyers should avoid any products made from Russian Far East hardwoods due to the high risks of illegality.

Article link: <http://wwf.panda.org/?208263/Russian-forests-and-tigers-left-floored-by-illegal-logging>

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