



Southwest Section
of
The Wildlife Society

March 11, 2015

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4305

Subject: Request Support for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program in FY16

Dear Senator Cornyn:

We respectfully request your support for robust funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program in Fiscal Year 2016. The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program is the nation's core program that assists states in preventing species from becoming endangered and requiring federal listing under the Endangered Species Act.

The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit scientific and educational association of approximately 9,000 professional wildlife biologists and managers dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation. The Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society extends this mission to wildlife professionals working for various state, federal, and private organizations in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program allocates funds to states, territories, and federally recognized tribes to support activities that contribute to the conservation of over 12,000 species nationwide. Funds, which must be matched from non-federal sources, are used by wildlife professionals to address conservation needs outlined in each state's individual comprehensive wildlife action plan. These plans, such as the Texas Conservation Action Plan, are developed collaboratively with scientists, sportsmen, wildlife viewers, conservationists, and private landowners. The Texas Conservation Action Plan has strong public support. It provides a "roadmap" for development of projects focused on research and restoration to conserve rare species and to keep native species from becoming rare. State Wildlife Grants are an essential component of funding for future project work under the Action Plan.

Examples from elsewhere in the Southwest include State Wildlife Grants funding of research into recent declines of the Arizona Toad in New Mexico so that agencies may intervene before federal listing under the Endangered Species Act becomes necessary. Likewise, in Arizona

program funds were used for development and testing of a treatment for sylvatic plague in wild populations of black-tailed prairie dogs.

In addition to State Grants, Tribal Wildlife Grants support wildlife conservation programs on lands managed by Native American tribes. No less than 15 tribes and Indian pueblos have benefited from grants in the Southwest including: the Hopi, San Carlos, Quechan, Cocopah Tribes, the Navajo Nation and Tohono O'dham Nation in Arizona; the Pueblos of Ohkay Owingeh, Jemez, Picuris, Sandia, Santa Ana, and Tesuque, the Navajo Nation, and the Mescalero Apache Tribe in New Mexico; as well as the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas.

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program facilitates partnerships between state, federal, and non-governmental agencies to collaboratively contribute to conservation within the nation. With a proven track record of success and support of the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition, which includes over 6,400 organizations representing millions of Americans, the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program is an effective tool to conserve the nation's at risk species and their habitats.

We ask you to support the budget request for FY2016 by submitting a programmatic request of at least \$70 million to the Senate Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations.

Respectfully,

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President SW Section TWS

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