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THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FISH  
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THE ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE AT  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# Investing in Wildlife

*State Wildlife Funding Campaigns*

Summary of Findings

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**THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES**  
**ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE AT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL  
OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ENVIRONMENT**

**Investing in Wildlife**  
*State Wildlife Funding Campaigns*  
Summary of Findings

Throughout 2004 and 2005, a research team from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment, in conjunction with the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, performed extensive research on state-level wildlife funding mechanisms and the campaigns to enact them. The objective was to describe a number of innovative approaches that states have taken to secure funding for wildlife conservation programs, and to highlight the key attributes of successful funding mechanisms. This summary document provides an overview of the research and findings, and is intended to concisely convey the critical information more fully described in the full report, which is available from the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the University of Michigan. This document includes the abstract written for the full report, an introduction that describes the impetus behind and objectives of the research, summaries of the 15 case studies that formed the bulk of the research, an analysis of the findings, and recommendations for how states can successfully secure additional wildlife funding.

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<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Case Study Selection.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Case Study Analysis .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Factors Considered in Choosing a Mechanism ...	8
Process Followed in Choosing a Mechanism and Planning a Campaign .....	10
Building Support .....	11
Dealing with Challenges and Opposition.....	14
Factors Relating to Administration .....	16
<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Factors Considered in Choosing a Mechanism .	17
Process Followed in Choosing a Mechanism and Planning a Campaign .....	19
Building Support .....	21
Dealing with Challenges and Opposition.....	24
Factors Relating to Administering the Mechanism .....	24
<b>Supplemental Information: Case Study Summaries.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Alaska Wildlife Viewing Pass .....	25
Arizona Heritage Fund.....	26
Arkansas Conservation Sales Tax .....	27
Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund.....	28
Georgia Nongame Wildlife Tags .....	29
Georgia Heritage Fund Amendment .....	30
Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund .....	31
Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Checkoff Fund ..	32
Missouri Conservation Sales Tax.....	33
Nevada Mining Program .....	34
Pennsylvania Conservation License Plate.....	35
Texas Sporting Goods Sales Tax .....	36
Virginia House Bill 38 .....	37
Washington Personalized License Plates .....	38
Wyoming Legacy Trust .....	39
<b>About the Project Team.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>For Additional Information.....</b>	<b>41</b>



River otter. Photo courtesy of the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

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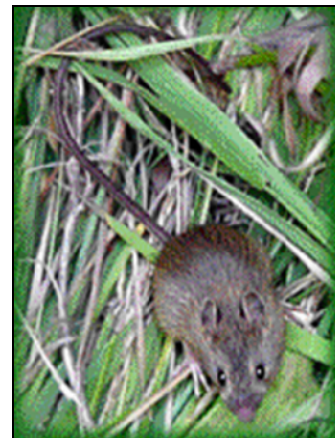
## Abstract

In order to help states create and implement funding mechanisms to meet the State Wildlife Grants match requirement, this report describes a number of innovative approaches that various states have taken to secure funding for wildlife conservation, and highlights the key attributes of successful funding mechanisms. The report is based on case studies of 15 different funding mechanisms, representing 14 different states and eight different mechanism types. These specific case studies were recommended by professionals familiar with conservation funding and by staff at the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The cases highlight the attributes of innovative and successful mechanisms, their campaigns, and provide important lessons for future attempts to create new funding mechanisms. A cross-case analysis revealed several factors that have led to successful funding mechanisms which were grouped into five categories. These categories include: factors considered in choosing a mechanism; process followed in choosing a mechanism and planning a campaign; building support; dealing with challenges and opposition; and factors relating to administering the mechanism. From the analysis, recommendations were developed to provide guidance for natural resource managers interested in creating and implementing wildlife funding campaigns.

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*This report describes a number of innovative approaches that states have taken to secure funding for wildlife conservation, and highlights the key attributes of successful funding mechanisms.*

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Prebles jumping mouse.  
Photo courtesy of the Colorado  
Division of Wildlife.

## Introduction

State fish and wildlife agencies have faced consistent challenges obtaining adequate funding sources for wildlife conservation. Historically, funding for state wildlife agencies has primarily come from various user fees, including state hunting and fishing licenses, which are collected on the basis of the “user-pay, user-benefit” concept. In addition, funding has come from federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing gear. Together, these sources account for almost \$1 billion in state wildlife agency funding nationwide.

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*In a 1998 survey of state wildlife agencies, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies found that funding for wildlife diversity totaled just \$134.9 million, far short of IAFWA's estimated need of \$1 billion.*

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On the other hand, little funding has been available for the management of wildlife diversity because state wildlife agencies have traditionally focused conservation efforts on game species. In fact, there is a serious gap in wildlife conservation funding, and thousands of species do not receive the funding they need. In a 1998 survey of state wildlife agencies, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) found that funding for wildlife diversity totaled just \$134.9 million, far short of IAFWA's estimated need of \$1 billion. As a result, state fish and wildlife agencies have been reactive rather than proactive in their approach to wildlife diversity management and have only been able to focus on high priority species once they become endangered.<sup>1</sup>

In recognition of the funding gap for wildlife diversity, Congress passed the State Wildlife Grants program (SWG) in 2001. The intent of SWG is to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered and to conserve their habitats. The SWG program will allow states to be proactive in their approach to managing wildlife diversity while saving wildlife and taxpayer dollars. Through this program, states receive matching federal funds for “on-the-ground” dollars spent on wildlife conservation. To remain eligible for this funding, each state must complete a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy by October 2005. The strategies are intended to serve as a roadmap for all state conservation efforts. They are to target species with the greatest conservation need and will provide an essential foundation for the future of wildlife conservation, allowing for unprecedented conservation of wildlife diversity and non-listed species across state and political boundaries.





Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Nongame Program.

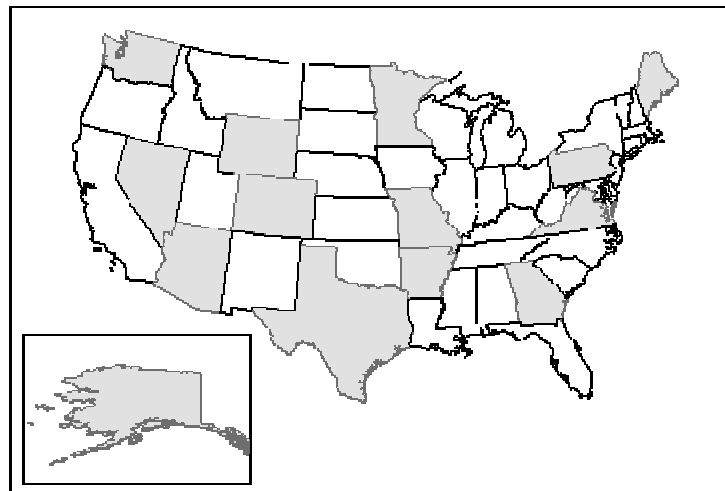
However, once these plans are approved, states will face the enormous challenge of raising the money needed to match federal funding and making the implementation of their wildlife management strategies a reality. Helping states to create and implement successful funding mechanisms for wildlife conservation is important for the success of the SWG program.

In recognition of this need, this summary describes a number of innovative approaches that states have taken to secure funding for wildlife conservation and highlights the key attributes of successful funding mechanisms and campaigns. To achieve this objective, 15 different state wildlife diversity funding mechanisms were profiled. Through a careful analysis of this data set, the factors that appeared to influence the funding mechanisms' level of success were identified. Once these factors were identified, the project team integrated the common elements into a series of recommendations for state agencies. It is hoped that through this process, the project identified a number of insights and lessons that will help state wildlife agencies address the funding constraints that currently prohibit effective wildlife conservation at the state level.

## Case Study Selection

*The selection criteria included geographic diversity, mechanism diversity, level of innovation, successful mechanisms, and failed mechanisms. Fifteen examples, representing eight mechanism types, were eventually selected for inclusion.*

Several criteria were considered when selecting the set of funding mechanisms to be used as case studies. The objective was to portray a diverse set of mechanisms that would highlight the flexibility that state agencies have when choosing potential funding mechanisms. The selection criteria included geographic diversity, mechanism diversity, level of innovation, successful mechanisms, and failed mechanisms. Fifteen examples, representing eight mechanism types, were eventually selected for inclusion.



**Figure 1:** The states highlighted in gray were selected for inclusion.

State	Mechanism Type	Date
Alaska	Non-Consumptive User Fee	n/a
Arizona	Lottery	1990
Arkansas	General Sales Tax	1996
Colorado	Lottery	1992
Georgia	Vehicle License Plate	1996
Georgia	Real Estate Transfer Fee	n/a
Maine	Lottery	1995
Minnesota	Tax Check-off	1980
Missouri	General Sales Tax	1976
Nevada	Natural Resource Extraction Funds	1989
Pennsylvania	Vehicle License Plate	1992
Texas	Outdoor Equipment Sales Tax	1993
Virginia	Outdoor Equipment Sales Tax	1998
Washington	Vehicle License Plate	1974
Wyoming	Natural Resource Extraction Funds	n/a*

\* Wyoming's attempt to pass the Legacy Trust in 2000 failed. A subsequent attempt passed in 2005. It is the failed first attempt that is documented in this report.



## Case Study Analysis

Analysis of the case studies revealed that there were five primary questions that state agencies and involved organizations considered as they created and implemented wildlife funding mechanisms: how to choose a mechanism, what processes to follow in choosing a mechanism and planning a campaign, how to build support, how to deal with challenges and opposition, and how to administer the funding mechanism. Consequently, this section is organized around these five considerations.

- **Factors considered in choosing a mechanism:** In every case study there was a distinct choice to proceed with a particular funding mechanism over other alternatives. This section explores some of the factors that states specifically considered in choosing a specific mechanism.
- **Process followed in choosing a mechanism and planning a campaign:** The analysis revealed that most successful campaigns developed and used a plan that guided their decisions. This section considers some of the tools and techniques that were used in this planning process. It includes the tools and techniques used to inform the selection of the funding mechanism, as well as the campaign process.
- **Building support:** After mechanisms were chosen, states worked to build support at a variety of levels, including with the public, with the legislature, with the governor, with outside organizations, and within the agency. Factors were examined which led to the support of various groups and organizations, including the general public, the agency, the governor, the legislature, and other outside organizations, such as the business community and nongovernmental organizations.
- **Dealing with challenges and opposition:** Agencies and involved organizations dealt with different challenges and opposition during their campaign efforts and following the mechanism's implementation. These challenges are discussed, followed by strategies states employed to deal with these challenges and opposition.



Black footed ferret. Photo courtesy of the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

- **Factors relating to administering the mechanism:** After the mechanism passed, administration involved strategic marketing and ongoing defense.

### ***Factors Considered in Choosing a Mechanism***

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*Factors typically considered in choosing a mechanism included the mechanism's constituency size, its level of appeal to the state, and the ease of its administration after implementation.*

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When it came to choosing a specific mechanism, it was found that states preferred mechanisms that had a broad constituency base. This preference tended to be true for two reasons. Mechanisms with broader constituencies seemed to have an easier time passing, regardless of whether they required the approval of the legislature or the public in a referendum or ballot initiative. Secondly, mechanisms that encompassed a variety of interests, from parks and recreation to historic preservation, could generally be counted on to be approved for higher funding amounts because the funding would be split among different programs. Several states that used mechanisms that specifically targeted wildlife diversity, a limited constituency, still chose mechanisms that would appeal to the broader public, especially when revenue generation depended on consumer purchases, such as vehicle license plates. States also considered the amount of funding that was desired. States that sought to broaden funding tended to use different mechanisms than did states wishing to specifically fund wildlife diversity. Mechanisms were also chosen based on their broad appeal to the state and the ease of the administration of the mechanism after it was implemented.

#### **Broader constituency leads to increased support**

In ten of the 12 cases that resulted in a successfully implemented wildlife funding mechanism, the choice of the mechanism was itself a strategic measure to achieve greater support. When mechanisms were chosen that had broad constituencies, states could count on a higher level of support throughout the state. States that chose mechanisms with broad appeal included Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Maine, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

#### **Amount and purpose of funding desired**

States that wished to broaden the agency's overall funding base tended to use different mechanisms than did states wishing to specifically fund wildlife. States that sought to

increase overall funding generally desired greater funding amounts and chose mechanisms accordingly. These states included Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado,<sup>†</sup> Missouri, Texas, and Virginia. The mechanisms chosen by these states included sales tax increases (Arkansas and Missouri), lottery diversions (Arizona and Colorado), outdoor equipment sales taxes (Virginia and Texas). Conversely, states that sought to only fund wildlife (either game and/or non-game) chose mechanisms that generated a lower level of funding. These states included Georgia, Minnesota, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wyoming. License plates were used by three of these states (Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Washington), while the other mechanisms included natural resource extraction funds (Nevada and Wyoming), and tax check-offs (Minnesota).

### **State-wide appeal**

The state-wide appeal of a mechanism was a factor considered by every state examined. States considered the potential popularity of the mechanism, as well as likely opposition at all levels, including with the public, with industry, with the legislature, and with the governor, in order to choose a mechanism with a high likelihood of passing. States also considered a mechanism's past success in generating funding for other states and other state programs.

### **Ease of administration**

As they contemplated various funding alternatives, states considered what would be required to administer mechanisms after they were implemented. Many states chose funding mechanisms that they believed would be easy to manage. These states included Alaska, Arkansas, Minnesota, Missouri, and Pennsylvania.



In Colorado, a portion of the funds obtained through the GOCO lottery grants are used to fund wildlife education programs. This is just one way in which Colorado broadened the mechanism's constituency and increased its support. Photo courtesy of the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

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<sup>†</sup> Even though the Division of Wildlife's GOCO funds are primarily used to fund wildlife diversity, the mechanism itself was used to broaden the funding base of four separate organizations: Colorado State Parks, the Division of Wildlife, open space interests, and local governments.

## **Process Followed in Choosing a Mechanism and Planning a Campaign**

Analysis revealed that most successful campaigns developed and used a plan that guided their campaign decisions. This section explores some of the tools and techniques used in this planning process, including the selection of the funding mechanism as well as the campaign process.

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*The Arizona Game and Fish Department and The Nature Conservancy were initially reluctant to consider the lottery as a mechanism for funding wildlife as gambling was generally unpopular with the Legislature. However, surveys of voters' funding preferences revealed that the lottery was significantly favored over other mechanisms. The subsequent ballot initiative was overwhelmingly approved by voters.*

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### **Use of public opinion research**

Several states conducted public opinion research to help inform their decisions of what mechanisms to use, what approval vehicle would provide the best chance for passage (i.e. legislative bill, ballot initiative, public referendum), and what marketing messages would improve the mechanism's chance of passage. For these states, this information gathering proved to be an important step in the selection and planning process. States that used public opinion research included Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Maine, and Wyoming.

### **Strategic planning**

In every state except Alaska, consideration was given to strategic planning. For the purpose of this analysis, strategic planning was defined as giving consideration to how to time the beginning of a campaign, how to generate positive publicity, how to access and use public opinion, who to involve in decision making processes, how to finance outreach and publicity, and how to conduct marketing.

### **Campaign fundraising**

Fundraising was an important step in the campaign planning process, as it not only generated money to put towards the campaign, but also increased public awareness about the upcoming campaign and the general need for wildlife funding. Of the four states where fundraising information was provided, fundraising was an important aspect in three (Arkansas, Missouri, and Colorado).

### **Planning length of campaigns**

The length of campaigns versus the amount raised by the various mechanisms suggested that the level of funding was independent of the time spent advocating for it. States that planned for longer campaigns did not necessarily end up generating higher levels of funding. For example, Arkansas took approximately 12 years to implement a mechanism that raises \$47 million per year, whereas Arizona spent about a year designing a mechanism and conducting a campaign that generates approximately \$20 million per year. These examples suggest that significant funding mechanisms for wildlife diversity can be instituted in relatively short periods of time.

### ***Building Support***

Building support for the chosen mechanism often occurred on several levels. Some support building strategies used by states worked at each level simultaneously (what here is termed building broad-based support), while others built support at different levels independently, such as with the general public, the agency, the governor, outside organizations, the legislature, and nongovernmental organizations. Strategies for building support ranged from strategically choosing the mechanism to finding ways to credibly demonstrate the funding need to involving the legislature early in the process.

### **Demonstrated need**

Six of the 12 states that passed funding mechanisms successfully demonstrated that there was an urgent need for increased wildlife funding. In some states, reports and documents supported the case for increased funding, and in others, the need for funding may have been evidenced by increased development and noticeably less wildlife. States in which the need was convincingly demonstrated included Arkansas, Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, Texas, and Virginia.



In Colorado, significant funds were necessary to successfully generate public support for the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) amendment. GOCO's supporters consequently placed a strong emphasis on fundraising and used the support of high-profile Coloradoans, including the Governor, to raise the necessary money.

### **Explicit connection between funding and expenditures**

In several of the cases, agencies or involved organizations that made an explicit effort to show a connection between the funding and how that funding would be used, received increased support at all levels. These states included Arkansas, Georgia, Missouri, and Washington.

### **Support in urban centers**

In two of the mechanisms for which data was available (Arkansas and Missouri) support was strongest in urban areas.



The Missouri Department of Conservation explicitly outlined its need for increased funding through the report, *Design for Conservation*. This campaign document was very easy to read and understand and outlined why the Department needed additional funding, as well as how the Department planned to spend the money.

### **Campaign publicity**

Focused, clear, and dispersed campaign publicity was an important aspect in several states, especially those that relied on public referenda and ballot initiatives to pass mechanisms. In all six states where mechanisms were publicly approved, publicity was either extensive or moderate. States with highly publicized ballot initiatives or public referenda included Arkansas, Colorado, and Missouri. States with moderately publicized ballot initiatives or public referenda included Arizona, Maine, and Washington.

The case study analysis suggested that the quantity of publicity needed was dependant on the type of mechanism involved. Specifically, it seemed that a non-voluntary mechanism, such as a sales tax, required significantly more public outreach than a mechanism that provided the public with the opportunity to decide whether to contribute to the funding program once approved. For example, license plates, lotteries, and tax check-offs allowed residents to decide to participate, whereas sales taxes affected everyone in the state. Additionally, anecdotal evidence from the cases suggested that the quality of publicity, rather than the number of publicity attempts, was also important. For instance, educating the public and decision makers about the agency's need for additional wildlife funding and clearly explaining how the funding would be used appeared to be as important, if not more important, than the sheer quantity of publicity.



**Motivated agency staff**

Having agency staff motivated and actively supporting the mechanism was especially critical in seven cases, including Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, Nevada, Virginia, and Washington. These states had the support and involvement of staff at multiple levels within the agency, as opposed to just individuals in leadership positions.

**Active gubernatorial support**

Having active gubernatorial support was found to be particularly important in cases that used public initiatives and referenda; although the support seemed to be beneficial regardless of the mechanism's approval method. In four of the six states (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, and Maine) that employed a publicly approved mechanism, the mechanism might not have passed without the governor's support.

**Business support**

In states that used a funding mechanism that directly affected business communities or specific industries, it was apparent that business or industry support was important for the mechanism to pass. Case studies that examined a mechanism that directly affected a business or industry included Alaska, Georgia, Nevada, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming. Conversely, it was apparent that when businesses sought to actively oppose mechanism, this opposition was often the primary reason for the mechanism's subsequent failure. This finding was true in Georgia and Wyoming.

**Active nongovernmental organization support**

The active support of nongovernmental organizations was important for eight of the 12 states that passed funding mechanisms, and was especially true for mechanisms that required public support (ballot initiatives and public referenda). States that had a high level of support from nongovernmental organizations included Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Maine, Missouri, Virginia, and Washington. This support ranged from assisting with legislative lobbying efforts to running the entire campaign.

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*In Arkansas, speakers were trained to ensure that the campaign message was consistent. Numerous presentations were given in each county. Additionally, the campaign ran television and newspaper ads, created literature that was distributed to the public, and ran a campaign hot line to answer the public's questions.*

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### **Legislative support**

The case study analysis revealed the importance of solid legislative support when the mechanism required the approval of the legislature during any point of the campaign process. Of the eight mechanisms that required legislative approval, the seven that passed had a high level of legislative support. States that exhibited strong legislative support included Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota, Nevada, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. In the two states that had low legislative support, Alaska and Wyoming, the mechanism failed.

A champion, whether individual or group, was one way legislative support facilitated the passage of a mechanism. The mechanisms in Arkansas, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming had legislative champions that had particular influence over the outcome. Of these states, all but the mechanism in Wyoming had a high level of support in the state legislature.



Perhaps the best example of business support was the collaboration between the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Nevada mining industry in the creation of the Mining Program. Cooperation was spurred by understanding that if action was not taken to remedy the effects mining had on wildlife, motilities would continue to occur.

### ***Dealing with Challenges and Opposition***

Through the course of campaigning for a mechanism, or in implementing a mechanism after its approval, states encountered a variety of challenges. While some challenges were specific to the type of mechanism chosen, others were more widespread and were found in a variety of states using a range of mechanisms.

#### **Legislative appropriation and variable funding**

Mechanisms where appropriations were controlled by the legislature seemed to provide less reliable funding over time. States that used a mechanism which dedicated a percentage of annual revenue, or received all revenue from a particular source, were guaranteed a more consistent funding stream. In contrast, two states, Texas and Virginia, developed mechanisms requiring annual legislative appropriation. For both states, this level of legislative involvement in administering the mechanism has proved challenging, making both recipient programs susceptible to unpredictable funding levels.

### **Legislative appropriation and ongoing support**

For mechanisms that involved legislative appropriations, the case studies suggested that continuing support for the funded programs was essential, and was a challenge to consistently maintain. Because legislative appropriations were variable, constant oversight and pressure on the legislature was necessary to ensure that programs received funding. Of the states examined, only the mechanisms in Texas and Virginia involved legislative appropriation.

### **Organized opposition**

Overcoming organized opposition during the campaign process proved exceptionally difficult. In two of the three mechanisms that failed, significant organized opposition appeared to be the root cause of the failures. Conversely, states that recognized opposition existed for their chosen mechanism and took steps to prevent the opposition from organizing, or simply chose mechanisms without significant opposition, were able to achieve passage.

### **Public perception of the agency**

Some agencies struggled with a negative public perception of their programs and the credibility of the agency's need for increased funding. This lack of credibility presented challenges as agencies sought to demonstrate the need for increased funding in the legislature and with the public. Conversely, states that were perceived as credible by the public had a far easier time demonstrating that their funding need was real. In six of the seven cases where the agency successfully demonstrated the need for increased funding, it was observed that agency credibility was also an important factor. These states included Arkansas, Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, Texas, and Virginia.

### **Quiet early discussions and strategic campaign planning**

In Arizona and Colorado, individuals interviewed for the case studies felt that keeping the early strategic planning process quiet kept opposition at bay and was critical to the mechanism's eventual passage. Strategies these states used also included keeping the campaign short to minimize the time opposition had to organize and counter the agency's message.



In Minnesota, an important factor that fed the success of the Nongame Wildlife Tax Checkoff was the high level of credibility associated with the state's Nongame Program. Part of this credibility resulted from the educational materials created and distributed by the Program. It was also derived from the Program's successful recovery efforts for high-profile species, such as the trumpeter swan and peregrine falcon.



To publicize Georgia's new wildlife license plate to the public, a publicity banner was hung in the county license plate office. Additionally county license plate office staff wore t-shirts with the license plate design, and literature was distributed to potential customers on the intended use for the funding. David Waller, State Wildlife Director, thought that the single most important thing that helped sell the license plates was the involvement of these county offices in the marketing efforts.

### **Outside involvement used to enhance credibility of need**

One way agencies overcame the challenge of credibly demonstrating their funding need was to involve outside organizations. Of the 12 case studies in which a funding mechanism passed, eight had noticeable involvement from outside organizations or individuals. Involvement from individuals outside the agency that could corroborate the agency's need provided more credibility to the agency's claims. States that involved outside organizations included Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Missouri, Nevada, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

### **Factors Relating to Administration**

All of these mechanisms, regardless of type, required some level of ongoing administration. Requirements ranged from continuing publicity to extensive marketing campaigns.

#### **Strategic marketing**

Mechanisms that depend on consumer purchases required extensive ongoing publicity to generate funding. These mechanisms included lotteries, license plates, and tax check-offs. States that employed these mechanisms included Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Maine, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

#### **Continued defense of mechanism**

A number of mechanisms faced ongoing opposition even after implementation and required continued defense in order to maintain adequate funding. These mechanisms included those in Arizona, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, and Virginia.

*The findings discussed in this section, which relate to choosing a mechanism, planning a campaign, building support, dealing with challenges, and administering the mechanism together formed the basis of the recommendations in the following section.*

## Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the findings of the analysis and provide guidance for natural resource managers to plan a successful campaign. The following set of recommendations is grouped into the five categories used in the analysis section: factors considered in choosing a mechanism, process followed in choosing a mechanism and planning a campaign, building support, dealing with challenges and opposition, and factors relating to administering the mechanism

### ***Factors Considered in Choosing a Mechanism***

#### **Choose a mechanism that has state-wide appeal**

As one of the first steps in thinking about which of the many different mechanisms to choose, it is important to consider the potential popularity of the mechanism, as well as likely opposition at all levels, including with the public, with industry, with the legislature, and with the governor. This careful planning will help the agency choose a mechanism that is more likely to be approved. In Texas, for example, the agency noticed the legislature supported the “user-pays, user-benefits” concept, and thus chose a mechanism which generated funding from a tax on outdoor equipment sales. According to Andy Sansom, former Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Executive Director, “There was a strong feeling in our Legislature that we should be self-funded, meaning that our users should be the ones who pay.”<sup>2</sup> The popularity of this funding strategy was important to TPWD’s ability to obtain legislative support.

#### **Craft a mechanism that attracts a broad constituency**

Do not limit your audience to wildlife diversity supporters—think about appealing to a broader audience. The more people that support the mechanism, the more money it is likely to generate. For instance, Colorado’s Great Outdoors Colorado amendment (GOCO) has a broad constituency base that includes wildlife, outdoor recreation, open space, and local government interests. Since it began awarding grants in 1994, the GOCO Board has awarded approximately \$400 million to eligible projects. Since GOCO’s inception, almost \$100 million has been provided to the Colorado Division of

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*Great Outdoors Colorado maintains a broad constituency that includes wildlife, outdoor recreation, open space, and local government interests. According to Rebecca Frank, former Colorado Wildlife Commissioner, “It was something that everyone could feel good about.”<sup>3</sup>*

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Wildlife and its partners for the protection of Colorado's wildlife. Although Colorado's method of "sharing the pie" among wildlife, recreation, open space, and local government interests reduced each agency's level of funding, it assured passage of the amendment. According to Rebecca Frank, former Wildlife Commissioner, "A slice of the pie is better than no pie at all."<sup>4</sup>

### **Choose a mechanism that will not have organized opposition**

Overcoming organized opposition will require extensive resources that may be too costly for an agency- or nonprofit-led campaign. For instance, the Georgia Wildlife Federation attempted to increase the state's real estate transfer fee in an effort to raise additional funds for wildlife diversity. They were unsuccessful in large part because of the Georgia Association of Realtors. The realtors had significant influence in opposing the amendment because they were well-organized and had an incentive to oppose the legislation. They also had the use of yard signs to advertise their opposition. Since realtors put "For Sale" signs on lawns everyday, it was easy for them to put up additional signs that said, "Vote no on doubling your property tax."<sup>5</sup>



In Pennsylvania, the Board of the Wild Resource Conservation Program decided that a license plate program would be the best solution for Pennsylvania because it would not take a lot of time to establish, it would also be simple to establish, and would not be difficult to administer.

### **Consider the administration requirements of the mechanism**

Some funding mechanisms require more administration and oversight than others. The agency should consider how much staff time they are willing to dedicate to the funding mechanism or whether the agency would need to hire additional staff to administer the mechanism. For example, in Pennsylvania, the Board of the Wild Resource Conservation Program decided that a license plate program would be the best solution for Pennsylvania because it would not take a lot of time to establish, it would also be simple to establish, and it would not be difficult to administer.

### **Recognize the shortcomings of potentially inconsistent legislative appropriations**

Mechanisms in which appropriations were controlled by the state legislature seemed to provide less reliable funding over time. For instance, in Virginia, a major challenge to the success of House Bill 38, a diversion of the sales tax on outdoor equipment, is that the amount generated each year can and does fluctuate. Because the revenues can go into other competing accounts within the General Assembly, the



challenge lies in ensuring that the mechanism provides a consistent source of money over time. Since its creation in 1998, the funding allocated by the Assembly through this mechanism has been limited during difficult budget year. For FY 2005, estimates of revenues are \$10.9 million, which is roughly \$2 million less than the cap of \$13 million.

### ***Process Followed in Choosing a Mechanism and Planning a Campaign***

#### **Be strategic**

Strategically choose the mechanism, and develop a campaign and marketing plan. Use polling and survey data to guide decisions. This type of strategic planning can help to overcome significant obstacles, such as political opposition and budget constraints. For instance, in Arizona, the choice to use the state's lottery as the vehicle for generating funding was based heavily on public opinion research. The meetings to plan the mechanism and the campaign were kept quiet in order to limit opposition. In the early stages of the Arizona Heritage Fund's campaign, involvement in the quiet meetings was limited to leaders of three organizations (Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Parks, and The Nature Conservancy) to further minimize opposition. In addition, once the mechanism was chosen, the strategic decision to keep the campaign short to prevent the opposition from organizing was made.

#### **Develop a plan for promotion**

Promoting the funding mechanism is critical to getting the mechanism on the radar screen. Agencies should have focused and widespread campaign publicity, especially for the mechanisms that rely on public referenda and ballot initiatives for approval.

Additionally, the quality of publicity, rather than the number of publicity attempts, is important. For example, in Arkansas, publicity efforts were extensive and consistent. The campaign created a video and a standard slideshow to ensure that the campaign message was clearly and consistently communicated. David Goad, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) Deputy Director, recalled that AGFC gave presentations to civic clubs, at county fairs, and "any other place that could draw a crowd."<sup>6</sup> According to Goad, "we [AGFC] talked to every Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, and canoe club in the state. We talked to anybody that would



In Arizona, the meetings to plan the Heritage Fund initiative and the campaign were kept quiet to limit opposition. In addition, once the mechanism was chosen, the campaign was kept short to prevent the opposition from organizing.



Arkansas promoted the Conservation Sales Tax extensively and consistently. Standard campaign presentations were given to numerous civic organizations across the state. Additionally the campaign ran television and newspaper ads, distributed literature to the public, and ran a campaign hot line to answer the public's questions.

listen.”<sup>7</sup> The other agencies involved in the campaign also responded similarly, contacting constituents at fairs, museums, historical meetings, and conferences. Conservation partners placed ads supporting the initiative in their publications. In addition, the campaign ran television and newspaper ads, distributed literature to the public, and ran a campaign hot line to answer the public's questions.

### **Target your message**

It is important to be flexible in targeting the campaign message as this targeting will help to broaden the mechanism's appeal. For instance, in the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish's failed attempt to pass the Legacy Trust in 2000, agency official Chris Burkett wished they had kept the heart of the campaign consistent, while still allowing the message to vary from county to county. As Burkett said, “What is important to someone in Jackson is different than what's important to someone in the Big Horn Basin.”<sup>8</sup> Burkett felt that making an effort to tie the funding back to the difference it would make at an individual level would increase support among Wyoming residents.

### **Fundraise**

One very important aspect of promoting a mechanism is raising the funds necessary to support the promotional activities of the funding mechanism. In Colorado, significant funds were necessary to successfully generate public support for the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) amendment through media outlets such as TV, newspaper, and radio. Since Colorado law prohibited the use of state funds and personnel to support ballot initiatives, private money was sought. GOCO's supporters consequently placed a strong emphasis on fundraising and used the support of high-profile Coloradoans, including the Governor, to raise the necessary money. By the time the GOCO campaign went public, the list of financial supporters was well into the hundreds. It included private donors, corporate donors such as Coors, Anheuser-Busch, Gart Brothers, and Eagle Claw, nonprofits including the Sierra Club, Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, and The Conservation Fund, as well as other community clubs and organizations. Such broad-based financial support was crucial to the campaign.

### **Reach out to organizations that can contribute resources**

Having outside organizations help by supporting the campaign with their own time and money can reduce the amount of agency resources needed. For instance, in Missouri, state law prohibited the Department of Conservation from gathering signatures for the campaign, so the Department relied on help from conservation organizations to gather the necessary signatures. The Citizen's Committee for Conservation, an independent committee composed of concerned citizens, and the Conservation Federation, the largest conservation organization in the state, were the key organizations gathering grassroots support for the amendment. Volunteers helped gather signatures at state fairs, grocery stores, sporting events, and many other public events.

### **Building Support**

#### **Demonstrate need**

It is important to convince constituents of the need to fund wildlife in order to gain support. It is helpful that constituents understand the need for the mechanism and how it will benefit their interests to foster more support for the mechanism. For instance, in Missouri, the grassroots effort succeeded because the Department of Conservation had a well-planned campaign, and clearly outlined its need for additional funding and the intended uses of the funds in *Design for Conservation*. Daniel Zekor, Federal Aid Coordinator for the Missouri Department of Conservation, said, "The number one feature of the whole effort was having a good plan [*Design for Conservation*], which was realistic and made sense. People could see what the benefits were going to be to them."<sup>9</sup>

#### **Involve the state legislature from the beginning**

For states that choose a mechanism that will need involvement of the state legislature at some point in the process, providing the state legislature with a sense of ownership over the mechanism is important, and can be accomplished in many ways: by demonstrating the agency's need, by working with the legislature to choose the mechanism type, or by using personal relationships. For instance, previous attempts by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) to implement a conservation sales tax failed, in large part, due to political opposition from the General Assembly. Recognizing the opposition, AGFC



The Georgia Department of Natural Resources met with individuals from the county offices where plates were sold, and asked for advice about how to increase sales of the wildlife plates. Several of the employees' suggestions were used, notably creating t-shirts with the license plate design for staff to wear in the office. Staff also suggested diverting one dollar from the sale of each license plate to the county office.

worked to improve its relations with the Assembly. The creation of the Assembly's Game & Fish Commission Funding Study Committee was an important step in this process. It allowed the General Assembly to become involved in the funding mechanism choice. Eventually this involvement led the Assembly to recognize the necessity of a dedicated funding mechanism and resulted in strong support for the Conservation Sales Tax.



Vick Thomas, the co-chair of the Virginia House Resources Committee, was an important champion for House Bill 38, a diversion of the sales tax on outdoor equipment. Thomas' support helped to raise the Assembly's awareness of the agency's need and prompted increased support for the mechanism.

### **Find a champion**

A champion can be critical to ensuring the passage of a mechanism. The champion does not necessarily have to be one individual—the important point is that this champion has to be effective in promoting the mechanism. For instance, in Virginia, Vick Thomas, the co-chair of the House Resources Committee, was a champion not only for House Bill 38, a diversion of the sales tax on outdoor equipment, but also for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). As David Whitehurst, the Director of the Wildlife Diversity Division within DGIF, said, “He [Thomas] saw the agency's need and became a spokesperson for all wildlife.”<sup>10</sup> Thomas' support helped to raise the Assembly's awareness of DGIF's need and prompted increased support for the mechanism.

### **Collaborate with the organizations that will be impacted**

The best way to ensure that those impacted by the mechanism are supportive is to work collaboratively with them. For instance, Nevada's Department of Wildlife's (NDOW) rationalized that the best solution to the state's mining-related wildlife mortalities would be to work with the Nevada Mining Association to collaboratively solve the problem.

Consequently, rather than using enforcement as a means to solve the problem, joint legislation was drafted. Doug Hunt, Habitat Bureau Chief at NDOW, said, “We have had an excellent working relationship with the Nevada Mining Association and have basically worked hand-in-hand to reduce wildlife mortalities associated with mining.”<sup>11</sup> The trust that has been established between the two groups has ensured an effective and enduring program.

### **Target non-traditional constituents**

It is important to look outside of an agency's traditional supporters to find a broad base of support. In addition, a disproportionate amount of resources should not be dedicated to convincing either extreme: to organizations who will be

easily convinced, or conversely, to organizations that are likely to never be convinced. Focus campaign efforts on “swing” constituents or non-traditional, but likely, supporters. For instance, in Wyoming, despite the Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s effort to reach out to several prominent agriculture organizations, the Department was unable to obtain their support. According to Walt Gasson, an agency official, “The effort was a failure. I think we wasted our time. I think no matter what we did, [the agriculture organizations] were going to oppose it.”<sup>12</sup> In hindsight, Chris Burkett, Wyoming Game and Fish Strategic Coordinator, wished that the Department had courted the support of the Humane Society and the restaurant and hotel tourism industry, which would have encompassed an extensive number of individuals.<sup>13</sup>

### **Seek active support**

Support is only helpful if individuals are motivated to actively promote the mechanism. For instance, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee was a strong supporter of the Conservation Sales Tax. The Governor, a life-long bass fisherman and hunter, took a four-day river trip to promote the Conservation Sales Tax amendment. He launched his bass boat in Fort Smith, Arkansas and traveled the Arkansas River across the state to its convergence with the Mississippi, making promotional speeches along the way. The Governor was accompanied on his trip by a “flotilla” of other boats as well as his wife, who rode a Jet Ski. It is clear that without the Governor’s successful effort to generate support for the amendment, it would not have passed.

### **Work to improve the public perception of the agency**

Improving the agency’s public perception will help to generate support for the agency’s programs and the funding mechanisms that support them. For instance, Carrol Henderson, the Minnesota Nongame Program Supervisor, stated that “one of the things that has always been an important part of our program is getting our activities in front of the public.”<sup>14</sup> Staff members generate publicity through the savvy use of local media outlets. Henderson is a frequent visitor on local television and radio programs and writes news releases for local papers. His intention is to ensure that no matter where people get their news, they will see positive stories about how the Nongame Wildlife Tax Checkoff Fund



Arkansas’ Governor Mike Huckabee was an active proponent of the Conservation Sales Tax. The Governor took a four-day boat trip along the Arkansas River to promote the amendment. Photo courtesy of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

has helped Minnesota's wildlife. The high level of publicity associated with the Nongame Program and the Nongame Wildlife Checkoff Fund is critical to the development and maintenance of strong public support.



Publicity plays an important role in the Minnesota Nongame Program's efforts to maintain support for the Nongame Wildlife Checkoff. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Nongame Program.

## ***Dealing with Challenges and Opposition***

### **Actively counter any misrepresentations**

Actively countering misrepresentations will help to limit the influence of an organized opposition. For instance, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department struggled to communicate the idea that the Legacy Trust, by funding wildlife diversity programs, would also be beneficial to farmers and ranchers because it would help forestall potential listings under the Endangered Species Act. Walt Gasson, an agency official, explained, "It looked to [the agricultural community] like we were going to fund this army of biologists to go out there and find new sensitive species, list more species, and make life harder for them."<sup>15</sup> Had the intent of the Legacy Trust been more clearly communicated or corroborated by a source trusted by agriculture organizations, misrepresentations may have been more effectively countered.

### ***Factors Relating to Administering the Mechanism***

#### **Actively defend the funding mechanism once implemented**

Defending a mechanism against competing needs requires significant, committed support to ensure either continued existence of the mechanism and/or continued funding of the mechanism. For instance, since Virginia's House Bill 38, a diversion of the sales tax on outdoor equipment, depends on legislative appropriation, each year a groundswell of support has to be generated to defend the funding. Jeff Waldon, former Teaming With Wildlife volunteer, said, "By taking the route they took, meaning that the legislature had to approve the money to be transferred every year as part of the budget process, it was not a consistent source of funding."<sup>16</sup> Defending it every single year with a groundswell of support is the biggest challenge for sustaining the mechanism. According to Waldon, "You need to keep the coalition engaged every year and go after the legislature every time there is an attack on it."<sup>17</sup>



## Supplemental Information: Case Study Summaries

This section contains information supplementary to the analysis and recommendations. It includes summaries of the 15 in-depth case studies. The summaries are intended to provide an overview of the actors, strategies, and events that impacted the mechanism's approval and administration requirements.

### ***Alaska Wildlife Viewing Pass***

In 2003, the Alaska Wildlife Viewing Pass (Pass) legislation was introduced in the Alaska State Legislature. The legislation would require non-residents who view wildlife through a commercial tour to buy an annual viewing pass. By making the definition of "tour" broad, the Alaska Division of Wildlife Conservation (Division) sought to require those who enjoy wildlife, but who do not contribute through the purchase of hunting or fishing licenses, to support wildlife conservation. The legislation was introduced by the Governor's Office, but subsequently died in committee.

#### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Non-consumptive user fee  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Did not pass

#### **Funds Raised**

If the legislation had passed, the level of revenues was estimated to be \$11 million a year.

#### **Approval Strategy**

In 2003, the year the legislation was introduced, Governor Murkowski had just been elected and was supportive of the proposed pass. He helped by introducing the legislation during his first few months in office, however ongoing visible support from his staff during hearings was limited, and this lack of support may have hurt chances for passage. Because the Division did not have adequate time to organize a formal campaign before introduction, an implementation strategy or strategic plan was not used, and there was no active campaign to support this mechanism.

#### **Opposition**

The cruise-line industry, which felt their customers and their industry would be unfairly impacted by the Pass, opposed the legislation. Within the State Legislature, the legislation to create the Pass faced significant challenges. While many of the legislators thought the legislation was a good idea, they were not willing to spend the effort needed to ensure its passage. The media made the proposed mechanism seem outlandish and silly and undermined the importance of the legislation. Conservative hunting interests, who were opposed to the idea of giving non-consumptive constituents a "seat at the table," were also opposed to the Pass.

#### **Program Administration**

Not applicable

## **Arizona Heritage Fund**

In 1990, voters passed the Arizona Heritage Fund (Fund) which annually earmarks \$20 million of state lottery revenues for the acquisition, development, and protection of recreational, natural, wildlife, and cultural resources. Heritage Fund monies are equally split between the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Arizona Parks Department.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Lottery  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Approximately 1 year

The Arizona Game and Fish Department receives \$10 million annually. The majority of this money is allocated for the acquisition and identification of habitat. Funding is also dedicated for habitat protection, urban wildlife programs, and environmental education.

### **Funds Raised**

Twenty million dollars are allocated per year, split equally between the Parks Department and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

### **Approval Strategy**

Early meetings to discuss the need for funding were limited to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Arizona Parks Department, and Game and Fish executive staff. This approach was taken in order to limit the opportunity for opposition to organize. The funding idea was fully developed prior to any campaign activity. The signature gathering campaign and the campaign to pass the ballot initiative was coordinated by the Arizona Heritage Fund Alliance (composed of 85 recreation and conservation groups, as well as cities, towns, and individuals) and TNC. Polling was used to determine voter preferences. Presentations were made to various civic and business groups, and newspapers were contacted to solicit editorial support.

### **Support**

Gubernatorial candidates supported the initiative, convinced that it would portray them favorably during an election year. This gubernatorial support elevated support among the public. Polling results also demonstrated public support for diversions from the lottery over other mechanisms. TNC and the Arizona Heritage Fund Alliance recognized that wildlife decline was an important issue and saw the need to increase funding to protect this resource.

### **Opposition**

While there was opposition to the Fund, it was not organized or active, due in part to the “closed-door” planning process and the short public campaign. This opposition included the Arizona Cattle Growers Association, the Arizona Farm Bureau, and Kaibab Forest Products, all of which opposed the Fund due to the provisions for land acquisition. The Tax Research Association also opposed the Fund on the principle that all state programs should compete equally for funding.

### **Program Administration**

The Legislature has made frequent attempts to divert money from the Fund. Consequently, Arizona Heritage Fund Alliance, established for the specific purpose of protecting the Fund, is involved in the ongoing monitoring of legislative activity.

## **Arkansas Conservation Sales Tax**

In 1996, Arkansas passed the Conservation Sales Tax, a constitutional amendment that raised the general sales tax by 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a cent and dedicated that revenue to four state departments – the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC), the State Parks and Tourism Department, the Department of Arkansas Heritage, and the anti-litter Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: General sales tax  
 Implementation method: Constitutional amendment  
 Implementation timeframe: Approximately 12 years

Forty-five percent of the sales tax revenue is allocated to AGFC as general use funds. The funding source is permanent and cannot be redirected by the Assembly.

### **Funds Raised**

In FY 2004, the tax provided approximately \$21 million to AGFC. This money constituted 31 percent of AGFC's total operating budget for the year.

### **Approval Strategy**

Four attempts were made to implement the Conservation Sales Tax over approximately 12 years. Although the first three failed for a variety of reasons, the fourth attempt was made successful by a carefully planned campaign. Key elements included:

- A clear demonstration of the need for additional funding.
- Strong support from the General Assembly and Governor Huckabee.
- A broad constituent base.
- Creation of the Natural State Committee to lead grassroots publicity efforts.
- County-specific promotional materials.
- Active participation of all levels of agency staff.
- Extensive publicity including high-profile promotional work by Governor Huckabee.

### **Support**

The creation of the Game and Fish Commission Funding Study Committee was an important step in obtaining legislative support. It improved relationships between AGFC and the Assembly, allowing the Assembly to become involved in choosing the funding mechanism, and led the Assembly to accept a dedicated funding mechanism. The Governor's support, which created strong positive publicity, was motivated by his interest in hunting and fishing and by his concern for conservation efforts. Public support originated with the state's strong support of outdoor recreation. The amendment's broad constituent base was another important factor. Finally, public support was buoyed by the agencies' ability to make a strong case for increased funding.

### **Opposition**

The amendment attracted very little organized opposition. The opposition that did exist resulted mostly from anti-government sentiments. A more significant problem was the general public's aversion to new taxes.

### **Program Administration**

The Conservation Sales Tax does not require administration.

## **Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund**

In 1992, Colorado voters approved the Great Outdoors Colorado Amendment (GOCO). GOCO dedicates a portion of state lottery proceeds to “projects that preserve, protect, and enhance Colorado’s wildlife, parks, rivers, trails, and open spaces.”

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Lottery  
 Implementation method: Constitutional amendment  
 Implementation timeframe: Approximately 5 years

GOCO grants are awarded by a board of directors, which is required to allocate funding to wildlife resources, outdoor recreation resources, open space, and local governments in “substantially equal portions over time.” All allocations for wildlife programs are made through the Colorado Division of Wildlife (Division).

### **Funds Raised**

GOCO’s funds are capped at \$35 million each year (adjusted for inflation) and the Division receives one quarter of the money. Since GOCO’s inception, almost \$100 million has been provided to the Division. GOCO grants have remained a stable source of funding.

### **Approval Strategy**

The campaign for the amendment was characterized by strong political and public support. Key strategies included:

- A “closed-door” planning process that minimized the opportunity for opposition.
- Extensive fundraising efforts that generated many prominent supporters.
- A heavy reliance on outside expertise, including public relations and legal advice.
- A broad constituency that created public and political support for the amendment.
- The creation of Citizens for Great Outdoors Colorado, a large, active volunteer base.

### **Support**

Business community support was gained through the creation of a Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel, which validated the need for funding and lent credibility to the campaign. Governor Romer provided strategic advice and was an active promoter of the amendment due to his personal support of conservation and the political advantages to supporting a measure with such high public appeal. Agreements to share early proceeds with the Legislature’s Capital Development Committee and to cap GOCO revenue eliminated the Legislature’s active opposition. Public support was generated by the broad constituency, historical support of outdoor initiatives, and by concerns over the state’s rapid growth.

### **Opposition**

There was limited opposition from anti-gambling forces. The Governor’s endorsement, along with an emphasis on the lottery’s voluntary nature, minimized this threat.

### **Program Administration**

The grant process requires the Division to coordinate with other organizations to identify projects, and complete grant applications. The Division must also work with the GOCO Board to ensure that high priority programs are approved.

## **Georgia Nongame Wildlife Tags**

The Georgia Wildlife Resources Division (Division), within the Department of Natural Resources, has two wildlife license plates (also known as “tags” in Georgia) that benefit wildlife diversity programs. The program was created with the passage of legislation by the Georgia General Assembly in 1996. The first license plate, featuring a bobwhite quail in a longleaf pine habitat, generated \$13.6 million. The second plate, released in December 2003 features a bald eagle and an American flag, has raised approximately \$4.5 million.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Vehicle license plate  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: 1 to 2 years

Revenues go into an interest bearing account that is exclusively used by the Division for wildlife conservation, education, and recreation programs.

### **Funds Raised**

The eagle and flag plate raised approximately \$4.5 million in the 9-month period between December 2003 and August 2004. Annual revenue is expected to decline as the market becomes saturated. All of the funds are used to support wildlife diversity programs.

### **Approval Strategy**

In the legislative phase, the Division identified supporters necessary to pass legislation and worked to obtain their support.

### **Support**

Legislative support was secured through the development of personal relationships with the Assembly’s Game and Fish Committee, as well as with other influential citizens. Public support of the first plate was critical to the program’s success and was achieved after passage of the legislation through a number of creative strategies listed below.

### **Program Administration**

State Wildlife Director David Waller, spokesperson for the campaign, was integral in attaining support of the county license plate offices. Involving county offices in marketing, and educating county staff on the benefit of the funding energized those who were selling the plates. Dedicating one dollar for every plate sold to the counties created an incentive for county offices to sell the wildlife plates. Public input on the plate design was critical to creating a broad constituency. During the implementation phase of the program, coordination with outside partners was extensive. Key strategies were:

- Using personal relationships between agency staff, Governor, and the Assembly.
- Education of key supporters.
- Survey of buyer preferences for license plate designs.
- Promotion of the initiative through media coverage.
- Targeted public marketing campaigns.

One future challenge is competition from other specialty license plates.

## ***Georgia Heritage Fund Amendment***

In 1998, the Georgia Wildlife Federation ran a public campaign attempting to pass a ballot initiative that would have raised millions of dollars for wildlife conservation through a real estate transfer fee. Known as the Heritage Fund Amendment, the General Assembly approved the initiative but the public defeated the ballot initiative by a narrow margin.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Real estate transfer fee  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Did not pass

### **Funds Raised**

If the Heritage Fund Amendment had passed, the revenues from the real estate transfer fee would have raised between \$30 and \$35 million dollars annually.

### **Approval Strategy**

The Georgia Wildlife Federation led the campaign for the initiative, but was defeated by strong organized opposition from the Georgia Association of Realtors and the Georgia Association of Homebuilders.

### **Support**

The General Assembly supported the initiative and, at the time, there were great champions in both the State House and the Senate. Political leadership timed it so that the vote on the initiative took place when key opposition leaders were off the floor. The Georgia Wildlife Federation, working with other conservation and environmental groups, led a coalition in support of passing the initiative. The coalition was able to raise over \$1 million for the campaign's promotional events.

### **Opposition**

There was extensive organized opposition from the Georgia Association of Realtors. The realtors had the greatest influence in opposing the initiative because they were well organized and had an incentive to oppose the initiative. They used yard signs to advertise their opposition; since realtors put "For Sale" signs on lawns everyday, it was easy for them to put up additional signs that said to "Vote no on doubling your property tax." Even though this wording was not accurate, the message was simple and ubiquitous and ultimately helped to stop public support for the initiative.

While Florida was successful in passing a real estate tax in 1988, few other states have been able to pass such a funding mechanism since. This failure is primarily due to the real estate industry's organized opposition and ability to promote false claims about a proposed tax. States that want to try to pass a real estate tax face significant challenges in overcoming the real estate industry and combating any misrepresentations made by the industry.

### **Program Administration**

Not applicable



## **Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund**

The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund (MOHF) was created in 1995 to raise money for the conservation of Maine's natural resources through the sale of an instant lottery ticket. The funds do not support natural resource agency programs, but instead fund special projects sponsored by any state natural resource agency, which may partner with outside parties.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Lottery  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: 1 year

The funds go directly to the MOHF. The Board of Directors awards grants to special projects in four program areas: fisheries and wildlife enhancement, public land acquisition, endangered species protection, and natural resources law enforcement.

### **Funds Raised**

MOHF initially raised \$1.5 million per year, but it is now down to \$750,000 per year. Since its inception, MOHF has raised \$11.5 million for 400 projects.

### **Approval Strategy**

The Sportsman's Alliance of Maine (SAM) and the Maine Audubon Society (Audubon) led the campaign for the MOHF. Their main strategies to gather support were:

- SAM's candidate survey as a way to inform legislators about MOHF.
- Public polling on different methods to raise money for conservation.
- SAM's previous campaign endorsement of the Governor and SAM's Executive Director's personal friendship with the Governor.
- Audubon's extensive grassroots base to gather signatures and lobby state legislators.
- Explaining the lottery ticket was a new source of revenue, and not diverting money from the general fund (where other lottery monies went).

### **Support**

The Governor's support helped increase public support, since it was well known that he was opposed to gambling. Legislative support, which caused the Legislature to pass the initiative without requiring a public vote, resulted from political relationships and constituent contact. Public support was critical to passage and was achieved through grassroots education.

### **Opposition**

There was only minimal and unorganized opposition to the lottery from those worried about the lottery's effects on the general fund and those opposed to gambling. Opposition was not directly addressed since the mechanism was passed by Legislature.

### **Program Administration**

Due to the structure of program, it has experienced many different challenges. These include: decreasing funds, conflicts with the Lottery Commission over advertising and type of lottery ticket, conflict of interest with the MOHF Board of Directors, and strict spending guidelines.

## **Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Checkoff Fund**

In 1980, Minnesotans were given the opportunity to contribute money to a new non-game wildlife check-off on state tax forms. Since then, over 2.6 million Minnesotans have contributed approximately \$22 million to the Nongame Tax Checkoff Fund (Fund). For the 2002-2003 biennium, contributions totaled over \$2 million. The Fund has the highest participation rate in the United States, with 3.6 percent of taxpayers contributing in 2002.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Tax check-off  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: 1 legislative session

One hundred percent of the revenue is allocated to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Nongame Program (Program). This state is the only state with no other competing check-offs.

### **Funds Raised**

The Fund raises approximately \$1 million per year. This money is used to promote the conservation of wildlife diversity through habitat protection and management, species restoration and management, educational programs and publications, and research.

### **Approval Strategy**

The Fund was an unexpected gift from then Minnesota State Senator Collin Peterson, who wrote it into the state budget, with no input from the agency. Senator Peterson was inspired by an article in a local paper describing Colorado's new wildlife check-off program.

### **Support**

Legislative support has arisen from the close relationship between the Program staff and the Minnesota Commission on Natural Resources. Public support has arisen from a variety of techniques, described below.

### **Opposition**

The Minnesota Department of Revenue is opposed to all tax check-offs because they add to the Department's processing costs and increase the complexity of the tax forms.

### **Program Administration**

Program staff use a number of strategies to ensure the ongoing success of the Fund:

- Continued work with the Legislature and Department of Revenue to remain the only check-off in the state, which improves participation rates for the Fund.
- Work with the Department of Revenue to improve the visibility and wording of the non-game check-off line on tax forms.
- Ongoing work with tax preparers to promote awareness and participation in the Fund.
- Sustaining a positive public perception of Nongame Program and its work.
- Sustaining publicity efforts for both the Nongame Program and the Fund.

Despite its success, the Fund faces a number of challenges including continued attempts to add new check-offs, and the need to improve rates of participation, particularly among individuals that use a tax preparer.

## **Missouri Conservation Sales Tax**

The Missouri Conservation Sales Tax is a 1/8<sup>th</sup> of 1 percent sales tax that was created through a constitutional amendment in 1976. The funds from this tax are directed to the Missouri Department of Conservation, which manages the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of the state. Since its inception, the program has brought in over \$2 billion for conservation projects.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: General sales tax  
 Implementation method: Constitutional amendment  
 Implementation timeframe: 5 years

The funds from the sales tax are appropriated by the General Assembly to the Department of Conservation (Department), as mandated by the state constitution. The Conservation Commission, who oversees the Department, approves how the money is spent.

### **Funds Raised**

For FY 2004, the sales tax brought in over \$93 million for conservation projects, which was 62 percent of the Department's budget. In the recent past, the conservation sales tax has provided over half of the Department of Conservation's budget.

### **Approval Strategy**

In 1969, an outside evaluation of the Department's programs led to the creation of *Design for Conservation*, an outline of the Department's funding need and future plans to expand its programs. The Department extensively educated the public about its plans. In addition, an independent Citizen's Committee was formed to lead the campaign to find a funding source for this new plan. With the help of a well-respected nonprofit, the Conservation Federation, a large grassroots effort was undertaken to place the issue on the ballot and then pass the ballot measure. Some key aspects in this campaign were:

- *Design for Conservation*, which was easy to read and understand, appealed to the broad range of citizens in the state.
- The credibility of the Department and the credibility of *Design for Conservation*.
- Conservation Federation's strong, well-respected reputation in the state and its extensive grassroots network.

### **Support**

Public support was critical to passage and was achieved through the Conservation Federation's grassroots network and extensive education by the Department about its plans for the money.

### **Opposition**

There was minimal and unorganized opposition from those who did not want increased taxes and from a few legislators who did not want to earmark money for any one agency.

### **Program Administration**

There have been a few attempts by the Assembly to pass a law diverting the money to other causes, but it has not succeeded due to the Department's ability to maintain public support for the program by communicating the progress towards its goals.

## **Nevada Mining Program**

Established in 1989, the Mining Program's main objective is to curtail wildlife mortalities associated with mining operations. A permit is required to operate a mine, and these fees fund activities to reduce mortalities. The program is unique in that, from the start, it had the backing of the Nevada Mining Association (Association), a trade association of mining corporations.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Natural resource extraction funds  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Approximately 4 years

Proceeds go into an account that is exclusively used by the Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) for wildlife related programs.

### **Funds Raised**

Funds raised range between \$200,000 and \$500,000 annually. This figure depends on the number of active mines, and the fee varies according to the size of an individual mine; the larger the mine, the higher the fee. Recently, the fees have generated surplus funds, which have been used for other areas of wildlife conservation.

### **Approval Strategy**

NDOW worked extensively with the Association to come up with a plan to combat wildlife mortalities. This partnership was a critical component to the mechanism's success. Key strategies included:

- Use of existing personal relationships with key state legislators.
- Use of Nevada Wildlife Commission's public process.
- Credibility of the Association in the media and the State Legislature.

### **Support**

Because both the Association and NDOW cooperated to form a joint solution, the State Legislature fully supported the legislation and there were not any dissenting votes.

The public was supportive of the legislation and was involved through the Nevada Wildlife Commission's public process. The Commission's main objective was to see the mortality numbers decrease and the group played a significant role in the creation of the program. The industry's backing was critical to making the program successful in a timely manner. Since staff at the individual mines were responsible for collecting and voluntarily reporting mortalities, there were opportunities for the public and the media to access this information, thereby providing public scrutiny.

### **Opposition**

None

### **Program Administration**

One future challenge is how the Mining Program is viewed by non-agency personnel who do not think the fees should generate any more money than is needed to sustain the Mining Program itself.

## ***Pennsylvania Conservation License Plate***

The Pennsylvania Conservation License Plate Program was established in 1992 as a way to raise additional money for wildlife diversity. There have been two wildlife diversity license plates, an owl in 1993 and a river otter in 1999, which together have brought in \$4.5 million.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Vehicle license plate  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Under 6 months

The funds from the sale of the license plates are directed to the Wild Resources Conservation Program (WCRP). A seven member Board of Directors determines how the money from WCRP is spent. Funding is awarded only to wildlife diversity projects.

### **Funds Raised**

Since its inception, the program has brought in over \$4.5 million for projects focused on wildlife diversity. The revenues from the plate have been decreasing in recent years due to market saturation.

### **Approval Strategy**

The license plate bill passed quickly through the General Assembly as an amendment to a larger bill to avoid other organizations trying to amend the legislation to create additional specialty plates.

### **Support**

The license plate program was not publicly announced prior to approval. Public support was important to the success of the program after passage and was achieved through a large publicity campaign, see below.

### **Opposition**

There was no opposition in the early stages of the program. As more specialty license plates emerge on the market, law enforcement officials are increasingly concerned about designs of plates and quick identification of plates which may create challenges for future plate design.

### **Program Administration**

Public support for the program was gathered through an extensive publicity campaign that included the following:

- Designing a brochure to include with all license plate renewal notices.
- Strategic placement of the brochure in places such as AAA offices, liquor stores, and state parks.
- Multiple media events, television and radio interviews, and newspaper advertisements.

The program has been suffering from a decrease in revenue in recent years, possibly due to market saturation.

## **Texas Sporting Goods Sales Tax**

In 1993, the Texas State Legislature passed House Bill 706 that dedicated up to \$32 million in existing sales tax collections from the sale of sporting goods to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Division (TPWD) for local and state parks and the Fish and Wildlife Capital Fund.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Outdoor equipment sales tax  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Approximately 3 years

Revenue from the sporting goods sales tax is allocated by the Legislature. To obtain funding, TPWD must submit a budget request. Although the Legislature cannot allocate the funds to another agency, it can decline to allocate the money at all.

### **Funds Raised**

The sporting goods sales tax is capped at \$32 million per year. However, the requirement that funds be allocated by the Legislature has reduced funding levels due to a tight state budget. In the last session, only \$23.7 million of the \$32 million was appropriated.

### **Approval Strategy**

TPWD's Executive Director and the chairman of TPWD's oversight commission were both intimately involved in the campaign process. Key elements included:

- A convincing demonstration of the need for additional funding.
- Strategic selection of the funding mechanism. The sporting goods sales tax was not a new tax and its "user-pays, user-benefits" concept appealed to the State Legislature.
- Strong support from the sporting goods industry, which hinged on its belief that investments in conservation and outdoor recreation would lead to increased sales.
- Extensive lobbying efforts by powerful and well-connected businessmen who used personal connections to build support within the Legislature.
- TPWD's willingness to modify the bill to address legislators' concerns.

### **Support**

TPWD gained the retail industry's support by forming the Texas Outdoor Recreation Association, which provided TPWD with a forum to educate the industry about TPWD's funding issues. Senate support was created through relationships between TPWD leadership, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

### **Opposition**

TPWD had to overcome some resistance from House members who were concerned about the dedicated nature of the funding mechanism and who saw other uses for the funds. Their concerns were overcome using the "user-pays, user-benefits concept", which the Legislature found philosophically appealing, and through a willingness to alter the bill in several key ways. Most significantly, TPWD agreed to cap the revenue at \$32 million.

### **Program Administration**

Due to the funding cap and budgetary constraints, the mechanism has not provided an increasing revenue source. Supporters are currently engaging in efforts to raise the cap.

## **Virginia House Bill 38**

In 1998, the Virginia General Assembly unanimously approved House Bill 38; a measure that allocates up to \$13 million per year in existing sales tax collections on the sale of hunters', anglers', and wildlife watchers' equipment purchases to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). (The exact amount is based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency's National Survey on Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation conducted every five years.) Through the process of demonstrating its need, DGIF was able to establish significant agency credibility that made passage of H.B. 38 significantly easier.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Outdoor equipment sales tax  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Approximately 1 to 2 years

Revenues go into a Game Protection Fund that is exclusively used by DGIF for wildlife conservation, education, and recreation programs.

### **Funds Raised**

Up to \$13 million per year in existing sales tax collections is directed to the Game Protection Fund. This target was met in the first year of the program but, since that time, H.B. 38 has not been consistent in bringing in this level of revenue. For FY 2005, revenue estimates are \$10.9 million.

### **Approval Strategy**

The mechanism was not promoted as wildlife diversity funding, but instead promoted as a mechanism to meet DGIF's needs. David Whitehurst, Director of the Wildlife Diversity Program for DGIF, said that it was "sold for all wildlife." Other keys to success included:

- Involving the Assembly from the start and making sure DGIF had the right champions to carry it through the Assembly.
- A coalition of outside agency support used e-mail to alert groups to call the General Assembly's 1-800 number, which was used at critical times throughout the process to encourage public input on the pending legislation.
- Surveying the public's and the agency's opinion about non-game and game-related activities has helped DGIF be more efficient with its use of the revenues.

### **Support**

The support of legislative champions was critical in helping DGIF establish credibility, both in the eyes of the General Assembly and the public. Support for H.B. 38 came from rural areas where game programs were historically popular.

### **Opposition**

None

### **Program Administration**

Future challenges include competition from other programs in the General Assembly and the appropriation of general funds. Defending it every single year with a groundswell of support is the biggest challenge to sustaining the mechanism.

## **Washington Personalized License Plates**

The personalized license plate program in Washington State has generated funds for wildlife diversity for nearly 30 years. Money from the sale of personalized or “vanity” plates goes to the Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (Department) Wildlife Diversity Division expressly for “the management of wildlife which are not hunted, fished, or trapped.” Since 1974, this program has been the primary source of funding for the Department’s Wildlife Diversity Division (Division).

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Vehicle license plate  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Approximately 1 year

One hundred percent of the revenue from the sale of personalized license plates, which do not feature wildlife, is allocated to the Division.

### **Funds Raised**

The personalized license plate program raises \$2.6 million a year.

### **Approval Strategy**

Legislation was drafted by the Division and passed by the State Legislature. The Governor then vetoed the bill, which the Legislature failed to overturn. A referendum to allow revenue from the sale of license plates was taken to the public and approved. Carroll Rieck, Division Director, provided significant direction. Conservation organizations were influential in coordinating outreach campaigns. Key strategies included:

- The Sportsmen’s Council and the Audubon Society organized publicity events, public outreach, and media promotion.
- The Washington Environmental Council and the Department lobbied the Legislature. Key messages included: 536 species were not receiving sufficient funding; this was not a new tax; participation was voluntary; and funding was needed so the Department could acquire key habitats to protect sensitive and endangered species.

### **Support**

Twenty groups, with an additional mailing list of over 153 key conservationists, as well as 39 writers and editors, provided their support, contingent on all funds going to wildlife. General public support was high.

### **Opposition**

Hunting organizations were reluctant at first to give support, but eventually joined the coalition of supportive conservation and recreation organizations. The Governor, while supportive of wildlife issues, did not support the mechanism, which he alternatively hoped would be used to support the Highway Safety Fund. He vetoed the bill.

### **Program Administration**

There are few administrative concerns relating to the personalized license plates. However, the license plate market is becoming flooded with specialty design plates, which put pressure on the Division to produce license plates with a wildlife design. These specialized license plates will be released next year.



## **Wyoming Legacy Trust<sup>‡</sup>**

In 2000, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) attempted to secure legislation that would have diverted a portion of funds from minerals production to a permanent fund to support wildlife conservation programs. The funding would have been restricted to programs that manage sensitive species and habitat restoration projects. However, the Wildlife Legacy Trust legislation (H.B. 102) did not get out of the State Senate in March 2002. While a 2005 attempt at securing funding was successful, this case study focuses on the effort between 2000 and 2002.

### **Description of Funding Mechanism**

Mechanism type: Natural resource extraction funds  
 Implementation method: Legislative bill  
 Implementation timeframe: Did not pass

### **Funds Raised**

The Wildlife Legacy Trust was projected to raise \$20 million over two decades.

### **Approval Strategy**

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department conducted a survey to determine which method of funding was supported by the public. In addition, the Department conducted a series of meetings with Department personnel in an effort to establish commitment to the idea internally. Communication was attempted with the oppositional agricultural community, TV spots and radio ads played, and outreach materials were created. The Speaker of the House was influential in moving the legislation. However it died in the Senate where the influence of the oppositional agriculture community was prevalent.

### **Support**

There was little outside involvement. While conservation organizations liked the idea, they did not organize to support the legislation, in part due to their lack of influence with the Legislature.

### **Opposition**

The agricultural industry opposed the legislation on the principle that they were opposed to anything the Game and Fish Department did. They felt the money would go to fund an army of biologists that would lead to the overregulation of public lands. Agricultural organizations were influential in the failure of the legislation in the Senate. The Governor, closely tied to agriculture interests, keyed off of their opposition and, while not explicitly opposing the legislation, was never completely supportive. The Game and Fish Commission, which is appointed by the Governor,<sup>§</sup> also had ties with the agriculture community and never gave their forthright support to the Department. While the legislation passed in the House due to the leadership of the Speaker, the Legislature was still tied to agricultural interests and was reluctant to support the Legacy Trust.

### **Program Administration**

Not applicable

<sup>‡</sup> Wyoming's 2000 attempt to pass the Wyoming Legacy Trust, failed. A recent attempt passed in 2005. It is the failed 2000 attempt that is documented in this report.

<sup>§</sup> The Governor has since become very supportive of the Trust, thus setting the stage for the successful 2005 fundraising campaign.

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<sup>1</sup> Richie, D., and J. Holmes. "State Wildlife Diversity Program Funding: A 1998 Survey." Washington, D.C.: International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Sansom, Andy. Former Executive Director, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Personal interview. 30 Nov. 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Frank, Rebecca. Former Wildlife Commissioner. Personal interview. 9 Nov. 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Frank, Rebecca. Former Commissioner, Colorado Wildlife. Personal interview. 9 Nov. 2004.

<sup>5</sup> McCollum, Jerry. Employee, Georgia National Wildlife Federation. Personal interview. 17 Nov. 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Goad, David. Deputy Director, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Personal interview. 13 July 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Goad, David. Deputy Director, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Personal interview. 13 July 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Burkett, Chris. Strategic Management Coordinator, Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Personal interview. 29 Oct. 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Zekor, Daniel. Federal Aid Coordinator, Department of Conservation. Personal interview. 30 Sept. 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Whitehurst, David. Director of the Division of Wildlife, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Personal interview. 10 Sept. 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Hunt, Doug. Habitat Bureau Chief, Nevada Department of Wildlife. Personal interview. 4 Nov. 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Gasson, Walt. Policy Coordinator, Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Personal interview. 18 Oct. 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Burkett, Chris. Strategic Management Coordinator, Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Personal interview. 29 Oct. 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Henderson, Carrol. Supervisor, Minnesota Nongame Program. Personal interview. 29 Oct. 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Gasson, Walt. Policy Coordinator, Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Personal interview. 18 Oct. 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Waldon, Jeff. Former volunteer, Teaming With Wildlife. Personal interview. 18 Oct. 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Waldon, Jeff. Former volunteer, Teaming With Wildlife. Personal interview. 18 Oct. 2004.

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## About The Research Team

This research was conducted in partial fulfillment of a master's degree requirement. Four second year students in the Resource Policy and Behavior Program composed the project team:

- **Cindy McKinney** graduated from Southern Methodist University with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. Before returning to school, Cindy worked for Raytheon Systems Company in Dallas, TX and Avaya Communication in Denver, CO. As a Doris Duke Conservation Fellow, she recently completed an internship with The Nature Conservancy.
- **Lauren Ris** graduated from Willamette University with a B.A. in English and Environmental Science. After graduating, Lauren worked for the National Wildlife Federation in Boulder, CO. As a Doris Duke Conservation Fellow, Lauren recently worked for the Shared Strategy of Puget Sound.
- **Heather Rorer** graduated from Yale University with a B.A. in Psychology. Heather worked for the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy in Ann Arbor, MI before returning to school. As a Doris Duke Conservation Fellow, Heather recently interned with the Natural Resources Defense Council.
- **Sara Williams** graduated from Cornell University with a B.S. in Environmental Policy. After graduation, Sara worked for the Idaho Conservation League in Sun Valley, ID and the Environmental Policy Center in San Francisco, CA. As a Doris Duke Conservation Fellow, Sara recently worked as an Environmental Fellow for Senator Dianne Feinstein.

## For Additional Information

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The full report and this summary document are available on the Teaming with Wildlife website and the Ecosystem Management Initiative website:

- [www.teaming.com](http://www.teaming.com)
  - [www.snre.umich.edu/eml](http://www.snre.umich.edu/eml)
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