



Teaming with Wildlife A History of the Quest for Wildlife Diversity Funding

The work of America's state fish and wildlife agencies has facilitated a miraculous recovery of many game species from the brink of extinction at the beginning of the 20th century. Despite these successes, many wildlife species continue to decline, as evidenced by a staggering more than 1000 species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. Recognizing the need to take action to prevent wildlife decline, more than 3000 groups came together as the Teaming with Wildlife coalition. This coalition includes state fish & wildlife agencies, wildlife biologists, hunters & anglers, birdwatchers, hikers, nature-based businesses and other conservationists who support the goal of restoring and conserving our nation's wildlife.

- 1980 The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act ("Nongame Act") is passed by congress to fund planning and conservation efforts for nongame wildlife. While authorized at a \$5 million level, no funds were ever appropriated.
- 1990 The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies establishes an Ad Hoc Nongame Funding Committee charged to develop a strategy for obtaining funding for the "Nongame Act." The general goal was to establish a trust fund to provide states with nongame funding similar to the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson trust funds.
- 1991 A steering committee, composed of conservation organizations, was formed to develop strategy for the initiative. The Association hired a wildlife diversity coordinator to conduct a public education effort and associated grassroots campaign to build support for the initiative.
- 1994 The "Bridge to the Future" Conference in St. Louis officially launches the Teaming with Wildlife initiative. Over 400 conservation organizations are invited to join the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition and The Association calls for a coalition and Teaming with Wildlife coordinator in every state.
- 1998 By 1998 the Teaming with Wildlife coalition had grown to include 3,000 member organizations. While the initial funding proposal of a recreational equipment excise tax did not gain traction, our goal of a permanent and dedicated \$350 million annual fund for wildlife conservation was included in the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA). CARA included many other conservation programs and totaled \$3.1 billion in conservation funding. Teaming with Wildlife now became part of a coalition of parks, historic preservation and coastal interests ultimately growing to be an over 5,000-member organizations strong CARA coalition.
- 2000 CARA passes the House with over 300 votes! Unfortunately, its large-scale and dedicated funding source did not survive a final compromise with the White House and Senate, but the State Wildlife Grants Program was established. It provides annual appropriations (\$470M since inception) to the state wildlife agencies on a formula basis for all-wildlife conservation and mandates the development of Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies (State Wildlife Action Plans) by October 2005.
- 2005 As the state wildlife agencies submit these action plans for wildlife, the Teaming with Wildlife coalition is mobilizing again. Strategic communications, supported by polling data, have laid the groundwork for a reinvigorated coalition and will build public support for the funding and coordinated implementation these plans need for success.

Teaming with Wildlife

A coalition of more than 5,000 groups working together to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered.

c/o Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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