

WDFW State Wildlife Action Plan

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For today:

What is a State Wildlife Action Plan?

Washington's 2015 SWAP

SWAP implementation

Recovering America's Wildlife Act



What is a State Wildlife Action Plan?



- Comprehensive plan for conserving the state's fish and wildlife and natural habitats on which they depend
- Focuses conservation actions before species become imperiled and before opportunities for recovery diminish
- Aims to recover already imperiled species so they do not go extinct
- Required to be eligible to receive State Wildlife Grants

8 Required Elements

1. Wildlife status
2. Essential habitats
3. Threats
4. Actions
5. Monitoring
6. Review and update
7. Coordination
8. Public engagement



- 2005 – Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy
- 2015 – State Wildlife Action Plan
- 2025 – SWAP Revision due



WA SWAP through time

2015 SWAP



Washington's SWAP

- It is intended to be a comprehensive guide to *inform* WDFW strategic plans, work plans and priorities and *develop* State Wildlife Grant applications.
- It highlights *conservation needs*, and provides information and *tools* to address those needs.
- WDFW is the *primary* audience, but it is intended to be relevant to all conservation organizations.



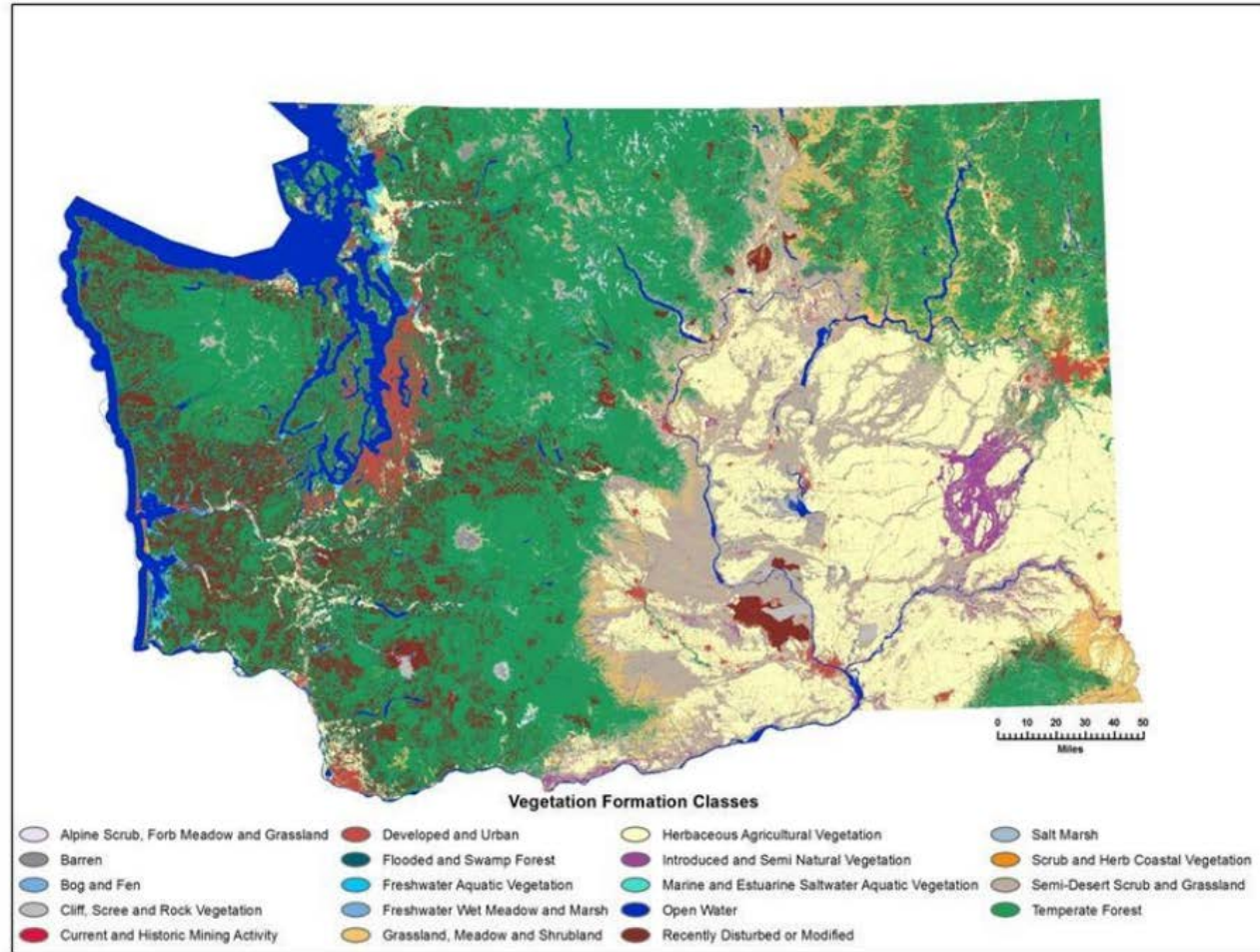
268 Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Photo by J. Treadwell

- All listed and candidates
- NatureServe ranks for state and global threat
- Not only imperiled, but also more common species in decline
- Includes some game species

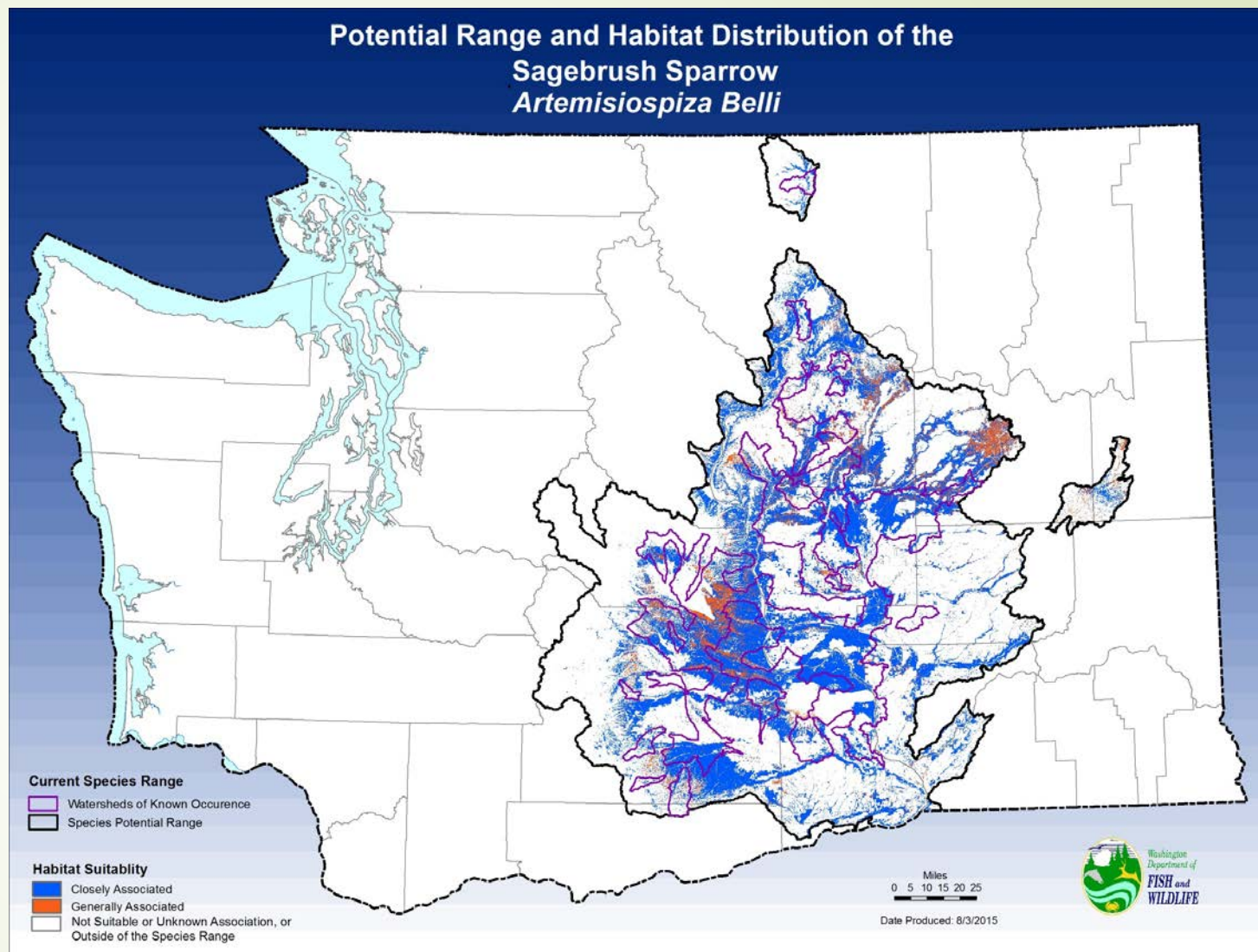
50 Habitats of Greatest Conservation Need



- Consistent national methodology
- All SGCN associated with ecological systems
- HGCN are imperiled ecological systems and/or those important to SGCN
- Threats and actions identified

Range and Habitat Distribution Maps

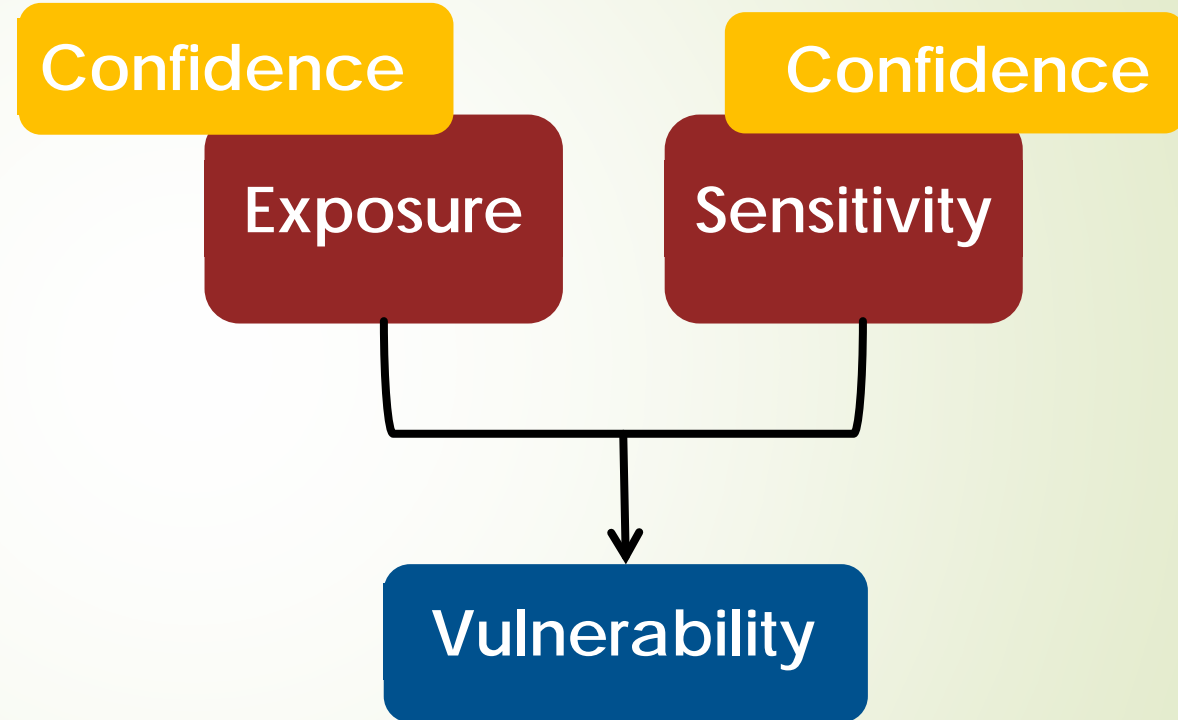
- ▶ For SGCN with adequate data.
- ▶ Watersheds of known occurrence
- ▶ Species potential range
- ▶ Habitat suitability
 - ▶ Closely associated
 - ▶ Generally associated
 - ▶ Not suitable or unknown association, or outside of the species range



Tools for Addressing Climate Change

- Integrated climate change into assessment threats and actions
- Identify when climate is a significant risk factor
- If is a significant factor, identify what should be done to address

Vulnerability Assessment for all 268 SGCN and 30 ESOC



Climate Watch List

SGCN Fact Sheets

- ▶ Status, biology and life history, distribution, abundance, and habitat requirements
- ▶ Key stressors and conservation actions necessary to reduce the influence of those stressors
- ▶ Climate change vulnerability





WASHINGTON GROUND SQUIRREL (*Urocitellus washingtoni*)

*See Appendix B for a potential range and habitat distribution map

Conservation Status and Concern

This species is associated with shrub-steppe and steppe in eastern Washington and is threatened by a number of factors, especially habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation.

Federal Status	State Status	PHS	Global Ranking	State Ranking	Population size/trend	Climate Vulnerability
Candidate	Candidate	Yes	G2	S2	Low/declining	Moderate

Biology and Life History

Washington Ground Squirrels are a burrowing species found primarily in small to fairly large colonies, but sometimes occurring solitarily. They are active for only four to five months, spending the rest of the year hibernating. Adults emerge from hibernation during mid-January to February. Mating occurs soon after emergence. Litters average five to eight pups and first appear above ground in March to April. During the two months before hibernation, adults and juveniles consume large amounts of food in an effort to gain adequate fat reserves to last through hibernation. Adults typically enter hibernation in late May and early June, but juveniles usually wait until mid to late June.

Burrows provide safety from predators, shelter from bad weather, protection for raising young, and a stable environment for hibernation. Diet is broad and comprised of mainly grasses, forbs, and seeds, with at least 100 plant species eaten. Life span is relatively short, probably averaging two to three years. Badgers, raptors, and snakes are the most important predators.



Photo: J. Higbee

Distribution and Abundance

This species is endemic to portions of the Columbia River basin in southeastern Washington and north-central Oregon. Population size is unknown, but the species has greatly declined or become extirpated in many areas.

Habitat

Shrub-steppe and native grassland habitats are preferred, especially those occurring on deep silty loam soils, which provide ample digging space for burrows. Plants frequently found in these habitats include sagebrush, native bunchgrasses, and various forbs. Where adequate food is present, highly disturbed sites may also be occupied, including degraded weedy locations, highway rights-of-way, lawns, and edges along crop fields.

Washington Ground Squirrel

Conservation Threats and Actions

Washington Ground Squirrel: Conservation Threats and Actions

	STRESSOR	DESCRIPTION	ACTION NEEDED	LEVEL OF INVESTMENT	LEAD
1	Fish and wildlife habitat loss or degradation	Habitat loss and fragmentation due to agriculture and other development. Habitat fragmentation may isolate remaining populations.	Use landowner agreements and conservation easements to protect significant colonies.	Current insufficient	Both
2	Fish and wildlife habitat loss or degradation	Habitat loss and fragmentation due to agriculture and other development. Habitat fragmentation may isolate remaining populations.	Conduct translocations to establish new populations in suitable habitat.	Current insufficient	Both
3	Invasive and other problematic species	Invasion of shrub-steppe by cheatgrass and other non-native plants has degraded habitats.	Restore and manage degraded habitat at colonies and sites chosen for translocations.	Current insufficient	Both
4	Overharvesting of biological resources	Some level of shooting and poisoning continues despite legal protection.	Enforce existing protective regulations. Conduct education and outreach to landowners and recreationists.	Current insufficient	Both
5	Resource information collection needs	Current distribution and causes of recent declines are not well understood.	Conduct surveys to monitor populations and trends. Conduct research to determine the causes of ongoing declines.	Current insufficient	Both

NOTE: Numbers are for reference only and do not reflect priority.



SWAP Implementation



Chronic Underfunding



- Inclusion in SWAP does not mean WDFW *will* take action, but rather that action *is needed*
- State Wildlife Grants inadequate and insecure
- Only a fraction of SWAP implemented
- Conservation investment largely focused on listed species
- Significant knowledge gaps remain



With adequate resources we can make real progress



Fisher Recovery

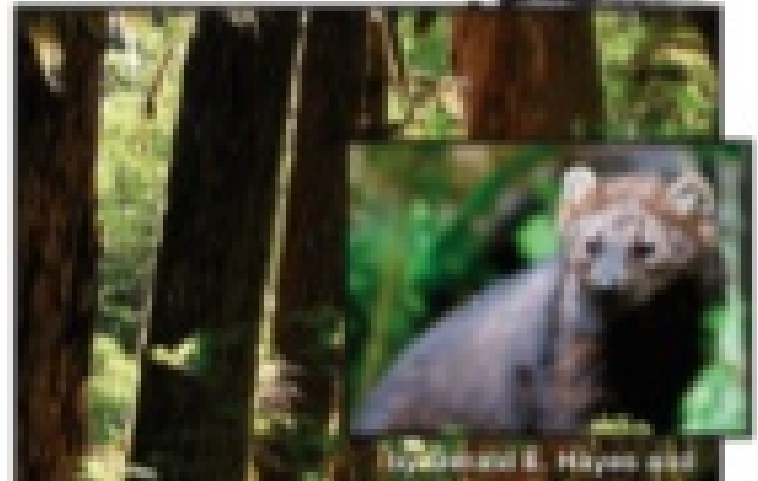
Spotlight



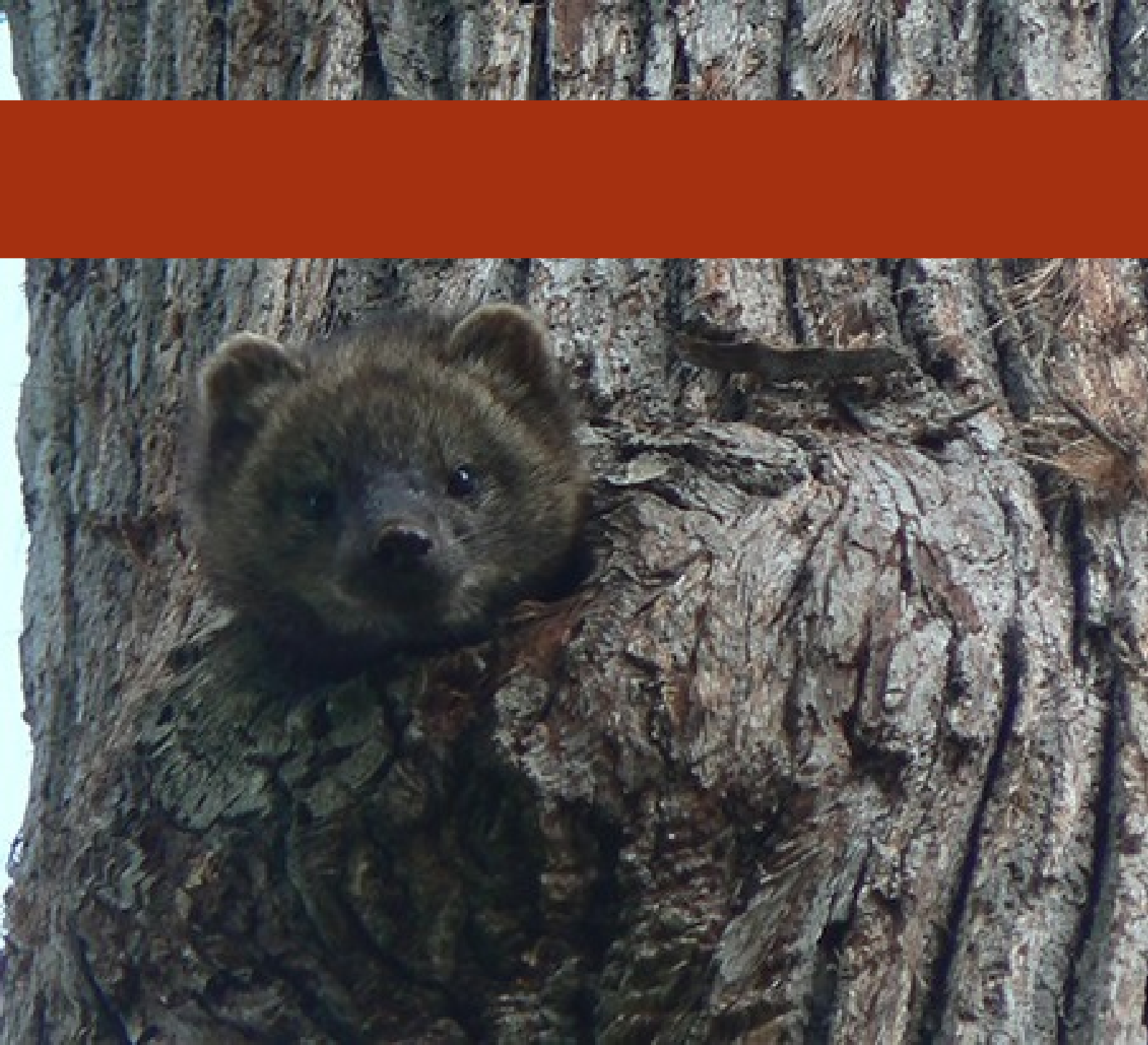


State of Washington November 2008

Fisher Recovery Plan







- ▶ Fishers have been reintroduced into all three Recovery Areas
- ▶ Reproduction has been confirmed in all three
- ▶ Evidence of broad distribution
- ▶ Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for over 1 million acres of non-federal forest lands
- ▶ Precluded from federal listing
- ▶ Recovery area monitoring underway

South Puget Sound Prairie Habitats and Species



Spotlight

Western Pond Turtle Recovery

Spotlight



Western Snowy Plover Recovery

Spotlight



Recovering America's Wildlife Act

- ▶ Funding to States, Territories, Tribes to conserve SGCN
- ▶ Avoid the need to list
- ▶ Recover listed species



A photograph of a loon swimming in green water with white lily pads. The loon has a black head and neck, a white breast, and a grey back with white spots. It is swimming towards the left of the frame.

RAWA Purpose: SWAP Implementation

Recover and manage SGCN (can be plants) and the key habitats and plant communities essential to their conservation

- At least 15% shall be used to recover listed species (fed and state)
- Not more than 15% may be used for wildlife conservation education and wildlife-associated recreation, especially in historically underserved communities
- May be used for invasive species and disease
- May be used for pollinators
- May be used for law enforcement directly related to protection of SGCN and their habitats



RAWA: Dedicated Annual Funding \$1.4B/yr

Would establish three new accounts/subaccounts

- ▶ Tribal Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Account: \$97.5mil/yr; no match required
- ▶ Endangered Species Recovery and Habitat Conservation Fund: \$187.5 mil/yr for 4 years to DOI/USFWS
- ▶ Wildlife Conservation and Restoration subaccount in PR to States/Territories
 - ▶ Ramp up to \$1.3B by FY26
 - ▶ 25% match required

By FY26 at full implementation after ramp-up and assuming plants are incorporated into our SWAP, Washington can expect to receive \$24,609,234/yr

30yr effort on the cusp of success



Photo by S. Pearson

- Bipartisan support for common sense solutions
- 70% of Americans support
- Passed the House in June
- Positive discussions in Senate
- Could be as early as next week

Questions?

