



NACD believes proper natural resource management is critical to the overall health of both private and public lands.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Modernization

NACD supports local management of habitat and species, rather than a top-down approach. Legislation is needed to improve and modernize the ESA to reflect current scientific wildlife management principles. ESA recovery plans need to have local public involvement from the outset in order to provide clearly defined goals, objectives, and alternative recovery options. Stakeholders have shown that through proactive, collaborative, voluntary, locally-led conservation, meaningful achievements can be made on both the land and in species recovery. The New England Cottontail, Greater Sage Grouse, and Lesser Prairie-Chicken are all recent successes.

Invasive Species Management

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service helps mitigate damage caused by invasive species like feral swine. NACD encourages full funding both for APHIS Wildlife Services and the national feral swine control program. NRCS's current feral swine pilot project should be expanded. NACD supports the use of native plant and seed species in recovery and restoration projects and urges USDA and Interior agencies to develop and disseminate geographically specific lists of "recommendations on what to plant and what not to plant" to help guide recovery and restoration efforts and avoid using invasive species.

Wildfire Management

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) currently spends just under 60% of its entire agency budget on fighting wildfires. The growing cost and need to maintain a balanced budget has resulted in USFS having to implement the practice of fire borrowing or fire transfers. These practices result in decreased funding for fire prevention programs. NACD continues to advocate for legislation that includes a provision for the use of off-budget funding sources, similar to how other natural disasters are handled. Without a funding change, USFS will not be able to adequately manage our federal forests and address the environmental stressors that have led to an increase in tree mortality and pest problems.

Wild Horse and Burro Management

The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 as amended directs U.S. federal agencies to manage wild herds to "maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship" on herd management areas (HMAs). Agency scientists have established appropriate management levels (AMLs) to achieve that balance. Unfortunately, current management efforts have proven unsuccessful on federal lands, and current on-range populations on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land alone is 67,000 animals: nearly 250% higher than the AML. NACD urges Congress to support necessary actions that would help federal agencies like the BLM more appropriately manage the wild horse and burro populations and better protect the land.