

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE: THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE DIVERSITY FUNDING INITIATIVE

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Federal fees on shooting and angling equipment presently fuel state wildlife and fisheries management programs, yet the vast majority of our nation's fish and wildlife receive scant attention unless they are threatened or endangered. The fish and wildlife diversity funding initiative, *Teaming With Wildlife*, would establish a conservation system based on a small user fee on outdoor products such as tents, binoculars, backpacks, cameras, sleeping bags, bird seed, and recreational vehicles, similar to current fish and wildlife restoration programs. Funds would be distributed to states through existing federal aid in wildlife and sport fish channels using a formula based on state population and area, with a 1:3 state:federal matching requirement. Funds would be used for conservation, education and recreation. Songbirds, small mammals, raptors, marine mammals and many other neglected groups would benefit from research, habitat conservation and management. This fund will provide the first significant support for conservation education programs. Facilities and information will be developed for birders, wildlife watchers, photographers and other outdoor enthusiasts. At this point, broad support is being cultivated for the initiative among conservation groups and equipment manufacturers prior to introduction of legislation. **Key words:** *Teaming With Wildlife*, conservation funding, wildlife diversity, conservation, education, recreation

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Anchorage, Alaska

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