

NONGAME WILDLIFE WINS UNDER NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR WILDLIFE GRANT PROGRAM

State efforts to conserve wildlife will get a boost from a new cooperative grant program aimed at funding nongame wildlife conservation projects. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies announced the selection of 58 wildlife projects nationwide to receive \$2.9 million this year under the newly established Partnerships for Wildlife Grant Program.

This is the Service's first grant program to focus primarily on nongame wildlife (species not generally hunted or fished) that are not protected under the Endangered Species Act. It also has a unique funding source comprised of an equal combination of Federal, state, and private monies. Private sector contributors include the Nature Conservancy, the L.L. Bean Company, and the Virginia Power Company.

"The new partnerships formed by this program represent a real breakthrough in supporting grass-roots projects to benefit nongame wildlife conservation," said Service Director, Mollie Beattie.

"We've reached a milestone in wildlife management with this program," said Max Peterson, executive vice president of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "Partnerships for Wildlife is an investment in the future of wildlife and the future of wildlife-associated recreation."

Those interested in contributing to the Partnerships for Wildlife Grant Program may contact their state wildlife agency or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation:

1120 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Ste.
900 Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone - 202.857-0166

— DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

CONFUSED ABOUT BLACK BEAR BAITING?

If you feel confused as a spring bear hunter, don't feel bad. Recent legal maneuvers by animal rights groups and administrative decisions by the

U.S. Forest Service have also created confusion for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

In what should be the last change to affect the spring hunting season, the Forest Service recently again banned baiting on lands it manages until final policy on bear baiting has been established.

Is bear baiting allowed in Wyoming this spring? Yes, but only on Bureau of Land Management and private lands off national forests, except in hunt area 25 and 26 where no baiting is allowed.

Larry Kruckenberg, Game & Fish chief spokesman, said there are "really" two issues involved in the current controversy, and "neither has a heck of a lot to do with bear baiting."

One involves "states' rights," Kruckenberg said. "We contend the federal government should never be involved because baiting is a hunting technique and should be subject to state, not federal regulation."

The other, and "more important" issue, is that hunters should not be led to believe current litigation is only about bear baiting.

"The ultimate purpose of these court actions is to bring an end to all forms of hunting, one step at a time," Kruckenberg said.

"We believe the practice of bear baiting will receive more scrutiny in the future," Kruckenberg said. "Folks need to understand neither the future of bears nor the future of bear hunting depends upon baiting. The sooner that is recognized, the more likely we will be successful in maintaining all other forms of hunting for future generations to enjoy."

— WYOMING GAME & FISH NEWS

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT COMPLETED ON WOLF REINTRODUCTION

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has officially recommended that an "experimental population" of wolves be reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho as part of recovery actions for the endangered gray wolf.

"We are nearing the end of a long and exhaustive process to determine the future of wolves in the

Yellowstone ecosystem," said Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt. "Although this is not the final step in the EIS process, this document does represent an extraordinary effort in public involvement and participation."

More than 160,000 comments were logged on the draft EIS process, released last July, the largest response to any action ever proposed by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The recommendation is included as one of five possible actions identified in a final environmental impact statement. The document, prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Service as directed by Congress, will be reviewed by Interior Department officials during a mandatory 30-day waiting period before a Record of Decision is signed, identifying the action selected by the Department.

Other options outlined in the final EIS include natural recovery, establishment of a non-experimental population, a "no-wolf" alternative, and establishment of a special, state-managed wolf population.

Copies of the final environmental impact statement are available for public information in local libraries in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, and in some larger cities across the nation.

— DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

WANTED TROPHY ROOM PHOTOS

The idea of featuring trophy rooms in our publication came from a suggestion from one of our Associates more than a year ago. One's trophy room is, in a sense, a reflection of that individual's code of hunting ethics. The admiration and respect that we have for the animals we hunt can be extended to the way in which these animals are displayed in one's trophy room. We encourage Associates to send photos of their trophy room along with a short article about themselves and their ideas about what makes a trophy room personal, tasteful, and an extension of the fair chase ethic from the field to the home to: Boone and Crockett Club Headquarters, Attn: Fair Chase, 250 Station Drive, Missoula, MT 59801. See Bowhunter's Mastery on page 53.