

# USDA Forest Service Update

August 2011

## Subject: Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council

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**Issue:** The Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC) is an official advisory group established under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The Council will advise the federal government – through the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture – about agency activities that benefit recreational hunting and wildlife resources, and that encourage partnership among the public, sporting conservation community, shooting and hunting sports industry, wildlife conservation organizations, and federal and state governments.

### **Key Points:**

*The Council has written to Secretary Vilsack and Salazar voicing the following discussions/recommendations relevant to the USFS:*

- Unanimous support of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (DOI and USDA) and the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (DOI).
- **Full funding of LWCF (\$900 million/year) and using a minimum of 1.5% of LWCF to fund access to landlocked public lands for wildlife related recreation** in support of the Respected Access is Open Access campaign and the Making Public Land Public initiative.
- **America's Great Outdoors:** WHHCC recommends that the agency include sufficient funds to support implementation of conservation, outdoor recreation, and educational programs, and should promote the conservation of landscapes.
- **Recreational access, shooting sports, and providing for hunting opportunities should be prominent features in the new planning rule.** The proposed rule recognizes the importance of sustainable recreation as a multiple use and requires plan components to provide for sustainable recreation opportunities.
- The WHHCC is interested in **exploring ways to compensate the taxpayers for public lands converted from multi-use to single-use** by renewable energy developments such as the 4000-acre solar energy project on BLM land.

### ***Recent Events:***

- Council held their spring meeting in Washington D.C. June 15-16, 2011
- Agenda items included:
  - Conservation Programs in the FY12 Federal Budget
  - Energy Development and Wildlife: Challenges and Opportunities
  - Farm Bill Updates
  - BLM Shooting Sports Policy
  - Pebble Mine (Alaska)
  - Issue discussions included: Americas Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO), wolf management, National Wildlife Refuge Vision, Dakota Grasslands, BLM Wild lands

**Background:**

The WHHCC consists of 18 discretionary members – appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to serve 2-year terms – and 6 non-voting, ex officio members representing five federal agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Farm Service Agency) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The Council's primary goal – as outlined in its charter - is to promote and preserve America's hunting heritage for future generations. The Council will also provide a forum for sports men and women to advise the federal government on policies related to wildlife and habitat conservation endeavors that (a) benefit recreational hunting; (b) benefit wildlife resources; and (c) encourage partnership among the public, the sporting conservation community, the shooting and hunting sports industry, wildlife conservation organizations, the states, Native American tribes, and the federal government.

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