

# Require Collaboration for Wildlife Conservation, Hunting, and Recreational Shooting on Federal Lands

The hunting conservation community has been actively engaged on natural resource management issues for well more than a century. Sportsmen and women led the way on recognizing fish and wildlife, and the habitats they depend on, as sustainable resources that can be successfully managed for future generations. The tenets that were developed over time and the commitment of private funding, now known as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, are unique in the world. The future of our nation's conservation and hunting heritage depends on dedicated attention to the sportsmen's community in federal wildlife and resource management institutions. The essential objectives in maintaining this heritage are providing continued access to federal lands, maintaining habitat quality there, and engaging more Americans in these traditional outdoor pastimes.

## Use Secretarial Orders to Drive Pro-Hunting Conservation Policy

- Support active and meaningful participation by the federal agencies that are signatories to the Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports Roundtable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in meeting the goals and objectives of the agreement. Interior/all bureaus; Agriculture/all bureaus; Defense/all bureaus
- Incorporate Executive and Secretarial Orders related to public access and opportunities for hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting into federal land management policies. Interior/all bureaus; Agriculture/FS; Defense/all bureaus
- Enhance opportunities and access for hunting and recreational shooting on federal lands through budget requests and appropriations that support this objective. Congress; Interior/all bureaus; Agriculture/FS; Defense/all bureaus

The Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports Roundtable MOU, updated in 2020, formalizes an agreement between 46 national organizations and federal land management agencies. The Roundtable provides a forum for regular discussions on issues associated with access, including closure of federal lands to hunting,

fishing, or recreational shooting. We encourage the USDA to issue Secretarial Orders (SOs) for the USFS similar to DOI SOs 3346, 3347, 3356, 3362, 3370, 3373, and 3374, and for both agencies to translate those orders into complementary, pro-hunting conservation policy.





## Support R3 Efforts

- Foster a greater understanding and appreciation among federal land managers for the role hunters and recreational shooters play in the American System of Conservation Funding by creating a conservation funding training curriculum for federal land management agency employees at the National Conservation Training Center. Interior/all bureaus; Agriculture/FS; Defense/all bureaus
- Support the national hunting and shooting sports recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) movement. Specifically, through Secretarial Orders, direct federal land management agencies to take concrete steps to facilitate outdoor experiences for groups of prospective hunters and recreational shooters by decreasing barriers for organizers of such groups to obtain permits for access to federal lands and waters to facilitate R3 programs. Interior/all bureaus; Agriculture/FS; Defense/all bureaus

Unfortunately, participation in hunting and, until recently, shooting sports has been steadily declining since the 1980s. The decline in these activities, which sustain a multi-billion-dollar industry, poses an ever-increasing threat to wildlife conservation in America. These long-term declines in hunting and recreational shooting participation have sparked a national movement to recruit, retain, and reactivate (R3) hunters and recreational shooters among America's public. Part of this movement is focused on educating the public about the role hunters and recreational shooters play in providing funding for state-led wildlife conservation. In support of these efforts, this movement should be recognized and supported by all federal partners including development and delivery of a conservation funding curriculum for federal land management agency employees at the National Conservation Training Center. Additionally,



federal lands that are open to hunting and recreational shooting can and should serve as a resource for R3 programs. Reducing barriers to programs of this nature should be prioritized through SOs and federal land management agency directives that define the role these agencies can play in facilitating R3 activities in an efficient and collaborative manner.

## Engage Sportsmen's Community

- Convene the next White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy and update the 10-year Action Plan per E.O. 13343. Council on Environmental Quality; Interior/all bureaus; Agriculture/all bureaus; Defense/all bureaus
- Pursue permanent reauthorization of the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council so it can continue to advise the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture on federal land management issues and policies from the perspective of sportsmen and women. Congress; Interior/all bureaus; Agriculture/all bureaus
- Work in partnership with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus to build a strong future for wildlife conservation, hunting, and recreational shooting in the 21st century. Congress; Interior/all bureaus; Agriculture/all bureaus; Defense/all bureaus

In 2008, Executive Order (EO) 13443 reaffirmed the key role that hunters play in restoring and conserving our wildlife resources, in order to address modern challenges to wildlife conservation and to shape wildlife conservation and wildlife-dependent recreation in the 21st century. With this EO, the administration formed the first hunting and shooting sports advisory council, convened a White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy, and developed the Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan. This 10-year Action Plan identified 58 actions to implement the EO. The time is right for the Administration to convene a third conference, one that is smaller and more strategically focused, to update the Plan.

In addition, permanently authorizing the current advisory council, the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council, would affirm the indispensable link between wildlife conservationists, hunters, recreational shooters, and federal land management agencies. These partners, working closely with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (the largest bicameral, bipartisan caucus of any kind in Congress), provide sportsmen and women with a significant link to development of sound wildlife conservation policies, including increasing access to federal lands while supporting efforts to enhance multiple use of wildlife habitat.