FOREWORD

Montana, like other states, is rich in fish and wildlife but unfortunately not in the funds needed to address all species successfully.

Responding to the need for funding, Congress established the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program in 2001. The funds support conservation projects for species historically overlooked because money's been short. To ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively, Congress charged each state to develop a comprehensive assessment of its fish and wildlife and the places they inhabit.

This is Montana's contribution to the nationwide effort to take a broad look at America's fish and wildlife. It is our hope that this Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CFWCS) will bring Montana a step closer to securing long-term federal funding needed to conserve and manage hundreds of species that fall in the conservation gap between the state's major game animals and those that are threatened or endangered.

This document not only identifies Montana's critical wildlife habitats and the animals that need special attention, it aims to keep fish and wildlife management decisions in the hands of Montana citizens by keeping species from becoming threatened or endangered.

FWP hopes this comprehensive assessment will enable Montana to build on past successes and broaden the agency's ability to fulfill its mission to conserve all species.

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