



WGFD

Conserving Wildlife, Serving People

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News Release DRAFT

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WYOMING GAME & FISH PARTNERS WITH THE NATURE CONSERVANCY ON WETLANDS STUDY

JACKSON – An important wetlands study in Wyoming recently received a financial boost from an Environmental Protection Agency grant. The grant awarded to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will provide \$98,000 for a wetlands study to be completed in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. The two-year study, and inventory, will provide foundational data on wetland conditions in the Upper Green River Basin for future wetland protection and restoration efforts. This new information will expand upon a basic statewide wetland assessment completed by both organizations in 2010.

“The Nature Conservancy is proud to partner with the Game and Fish on this project because we both know healthy wetlands mean a better environment and a stronger economy in Wyoming,” says Holly Copeland, ecologist for The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming. “Wetlands provide natural flood control, store carbon and help fight pollution. They also provide great economic value through clean water recreation and fisheries.”

The rapid energy and residential development in the Green River Basin is raising concerns about potential impacts to its land and water resources. The planned project will provide a better understanding of overall wetland health in the basin. The resulting information will lead to improved wetland habitat through on-the-ground enhancement projects and protection of existing wetlands through conservation easements.

“We’re extremely pleased to obtain this grant and again team up with The Nature Conservancy on this wetlands study,” says Susan Patla, Nongame Biologist for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. “This project will build upon the Department’s recent work with landowners in the Green River Basin to restore wetland habitat for Trumpeter Swans and other species of conservation concern. We hope the successful completion of this project will lead to similar assessments in all of Wyoming’s priority wetland areas across the state.”

Patla said the project will help fulfill goals developed in the new 2010 Wyoming Wetlands Conservation Strategy which calls for identifying important wetland types, and developing strategies to improve the quality and quantity of wetland habitat in the future. Patla noted that ninety percent of Wyoming’s wildlife use wetland or riparian habitats at least seasonally, if not daily.

Protecting Wyoming wetlands is a priority for the Conservancy and Game and Fish. Both agencies are part of the Wyoming Bird Habitat Conservation Partnership, a group of state, federal and private organizations that have been working collaboratively for several years on wetlands conservation in the state.

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The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming

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