

Testimony of John F. Calvelli
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Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Moran, Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on FY13 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. My name is John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice President of Public Affairs with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which was founded with the help of Theodore Roosevelt in 1895 with the mission of saving wildlife and wild places worldwide. Today WCS manages the largest network of urban wildlife parks in the United States led by our flagship the Bronx Zoo. WCS helps address threats to over 25 percent of Earth's biodiversity in 60 countries around the world, employing more than 4,000 full-time staff including 170 Ph.D. scientists and 100 veterinarians, while generating \$414 million in economic activity annually.

The American conservation tradition is based on promoting sustainable use of our natural resources in order to preserve the world's species and environment for future generations. In recognition of the current fiscal constraints, it is important to note that effective natural resources management and conservation can have indirect benefits as well, including contributing to local economies and building capacity in developing countries. The Department of the Interior (DOI) reports that, in 2010, 476 million people visited national parks, refuges and public lands, contributing an estimated \$47 billion in economic activity and supporting 388,000 jobs. Additionally, revenues generated by the DOI continue to exceed its annual appropriation. In 2011, DOI revenues reached \$13.2 billion in contrast to the FY11 enacted funding for DOI of \$11.8 billion.

On a global level, by supporting conservation, the U.S. is increasing capacity and governance in developing nations and supporting sustainable industries at home and abroad. For example, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) are working to combat illegal trade in wildlife and plants, which not only devastates the impacted species around the world, but also undercuts the success of legitimate U.S. industries. It is estimated that the flow of illegal timber into the global marketplace alone results in the loss of approximately \$1 billion annually to U.S. forest industries as American businesses are undersold by the cheaper illegal supply. Additionally, with support from FWS, WCS trains eco-guards and park rangers to combat poaching and the illegal wildlife trade in high conflict nations, like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad. The illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products spreads diseases and is often affiliated with criminal networks trading drugs and weapons. WCS has also established Wildlife Crime Units comprising of informants that assist in alerting law enforcement authorities of potential criminal activity. Eco-guards and Wildlife Crime Units are often first steps to expanding governance in these countries and play a critical role in protecting imperiled species. This testimony will highlight both domestic and international programs at DOI and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) that are shaping the future of conservation.

America's Great Outdoors (AGO): WCS is pleased with the Administration's agenda to protect and effectively manage our natural areas by encouraging American citizens, community groups, and all levels of government to share a leadership role in preserving our natural heritage. Facilitating coordination of natural resource management across a variety of federal agencies, along with states and the private sector, allows for more efficient use of limited financial resources and greater integration of strategies across actors ensuring better leverage of

implementation activities and actions. WCS appreciates the inclusion of the Crown of the Continent eco-region as an AGO priority landscape. WCS has been actively working in this ten-million-acre region, which is still home to nearly all of North America's large mammals, to identify the highest-quality habitat for sensitive species, like lynx, elk and mountain goats. WCS also supports the AGO Initiative's emphasis on landscape-scale conservation promoting landscape connectivity and the protection of wildlife corridors. This connectivity is particularly important for some of the wide-ranging species that are conservation priorities for WCS, such as the wolverine, Pronghorn antelope, and grizzly bear. WCS supports the President's FY13 budget request of \$33.1 million for Cooperative Landscape Conservation and Adaptive Science, which will apply landscape-scale conservation science partnerships and facilitate the production and dissemination of data and tools. This facilitation is integral to developing regional strategies for preserving wildlife corridors and promoting habitat connectivity.

National Park Service Director's Call to Action Initiative: WCS applauds the NPS Director's "Call to Action," which, among other things, sets the goal of restoring and sustaining three wild bison herds to native landscapes by 2016 (Action 26). In 1905, Theodore Roosevelt and WCS's William Hornaday established the American Bison Society (ABS), which succeeded in bringing bison back from the brink of extinction. ABS efforts included the relocation of bison from the Bronx Zoo to federally established herds, like Wind Cave National Park and Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. WCS is working toward the ecological restoration of bison, which will allow bison to fully interact with the many native species and ecological systems across their range.. Bison continue to sustain and provide cultural value to Native Americans and Indian Tribes. Over 60 tribes are working to restore bison to over 1,000,000 acres of Indian lands in places like South Dakota, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Montana. Bison production on private ranches is in its strongest economic condition in more than a decade with herds located in all fifty states. The inclusion of bison in the NPS Director's Call to Action highlights the icon significance of bison in the U.S. and the need to further recognize the role of this animal in our national heritage.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (SWG): The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program gives states and tribes funding to develop and implement comprehensive conservation plans to protect declining wildlife and habitats before protection under the Endangered Species Act is necessary. This important program is supported by more than 6,200 organizations that have formed a national bipartisan coalition called Teaming with Wildlife of which WCS is a steering committee member. WCS recommends Congress appropriate at least \$61.3 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants to implement State Wildlife Action Plans. This funding level is consistent with the President's FY13 budget request. In helping to leverage these funds, WCS continues its highly successful conservation grant program with financial support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. As of 2011, the grants, which require a 1:1 match, support non-profit conservation organizations managing applied, on-the-ground projects focused on implementing priority conservation actions for landscape scale resiliency. Priority is given to projects protecting areas of high biological value and designated as a high priority in a strategic habitat conservation plan. Since the grant program was established in 2006, WCS awarded more than \$8.1 million for 87 wildlife conservation projects across 46 states, including funding the State of Idaho's work to protect wildlife corridors. In addition to the domestic investments by DOI, WCS supports the department's international programs that have a broad global impact. The remainder of my testimony will focus on international investments at DOI and USDA.

Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF): Global priority species--such as tigers, rhinos, African and Asian elephants, great apes, and marine turtles--face constant danger. The U.S. has a legacy of leading international wildlife conservation efforts for these species and the MSCF program exemplifies this by being the only dedicated source for global species conservation by any government donor. MSCF programs have helped to sustain wildlife populations by controlling poaching, reducing human-wildlife conflict, and protecting essential habitat, while promoting U.S. economic and security interests in far reaching parts of the world. Despite their modest funding levels, these programs have an outsize impact because they consistently leverage three or four times as much in matching funds from corporations, conservation groups, and national governments making them highly efficient. For example, as a result of the Great Ape Conservation Fund, the first ever sentencing of an illegal Sumatran orangutan owner and trader took place in Sumatra, Indonesia in 2012. The seven-month prison sentence is only the third for Indonesia, despite orangutans being strictly protected under Indonesian law since 1924. Working in conjunction with WCS's Wildlife Crime Unit, the Indonesian government confiscated Julius, a three-year-old male orangutan, when his owner was trying to sell him. Julius is currently being cared for by the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme, where he is socialized with other orangutans in an effort to prepare him for an eventual return to the forest. In July 2011, the government of Thailand arrested tiger poachers operating in the Western forest Complex, one of Thailand's most important protected areas and a critical landscape for tigers and other wildlife. The poachers, who had originally fled when confronted by rangers, left behind an abundance of evidence including animal body parts, insecticides used to poison tigers, and a cell phone containing incriminating images, like the individuals posing over a dead tiger. This capture was an achievement of the SMART patrol, a systematic, evidence-based adaptive management program designed to increase monitoring and enforcement in areas important to conservation. WCS receives funding from the Rhino-Tiger Conservation Fund to help train rangers in countries like Thailand on SMART patrol methods. WCS supports the President's FY13 budget request of \$9.98 million for MSCF. Additionally, WCS requests that Congress ensure that proceeds raised from the sale of MSCF semipostal stamps are supplementary funds to annually appropriated funds pursuant to section 2(c)(1)(B) of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-241).

Wildlife Without Borders Global and Regional Programs: These programs are a great investment in addressing cross-cutting threats to ecosystems and wildlife such as disease outbreaks, human-wildlife conflict, and the bushmeat trade. Wildlife Without Borders (WWB) is making lasting impacts through capacity building, technical support and training, local community education and citizen science. Created in 2010, the WWB Critically Endangered Species Conservation Fund has provided over \$570,000 in grants to protect the most imperiled species on the planet. A portion of this funding is helping to expand a successful WCS project in the Patagonian steppe of Argentina designed to prevent human-wildlife conflict between goat herders and the extremely rare Andean cat. When a goat has recently given birth, a puppy is purchased and given to the herder. The puppy is taught to nurse from the mother goat alongside the kid, imprinting the puppy and resulting in social bonds. By adulthood, this "guard dog" becomes the goat herd's greatest protector, fending off carnivore predators, such as the Andean cat. Since acquiring the guard dogs, participating families have had no goats killed, resulting in herding livelihoods being protected and fewer retribution killings against these critically endangered cats. In FY13, WCS recommends funding the Wildlife Without Borders Global and Regional Programs commensurate with the FY12 appropriated level of \$6.2 million.

U.S. Forest Service, International Program

The Forest Service International Program (FSIP) levels the playing field in international trade for U.S. timber producers and reduces illegal logging by providing specialized experience. This improves the sustainability and legality of timber management overseas, which translates to less underpriced timber on the world market. FSIP, through partnerships with USAID and the U.S. Department of State, helps to improve the resource management in countries of strategic importance to U.S. security. Resource scarcity and unregulated extraction of natural resources—whether it be water, food, timber, or minerals—has tremendous potential to stimulate unrest and corruption, both of which undermine democracy, rule of law and stability. FSIP is supporting a Pamir Trans-boundary initiative between Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China to help facilitate management of the region’s biodiversity and the impact of wildlife diseases, encourage sustainable economic development and ecotourism, and promote diplomacy and cooperation. Conservation in the Pamir Mountains directly impacts its two endangered flagship species—the Marco Polo sheep and snow leopard—and the human communities that reside in this strategically important region of central Asia. FSIP has increasingly leveraged modest funding from Congress to make a big impact for the U.S. taxpayer. For every federal dollar invested in FSIP, four additional dollars is leveraged in matching funds and other contributions from partners. The FY13 President’s Budget request reduces funding for this vital program to \$4 million. Restoring support for this program to FY12 enacted levels of \$8 million is needed to sustain and enhance these important activities.

U.S. National Park Service, International Program

In 1961, the U.S. government initiated its first international conservation program with the creation of the Office of International Affairs (OIA). Since then, this office has facilitated technical assistance and exchange projects with counterpart agencies globally building on the legacy of American leadership in national parks management. OIA is also the managing agency for World Heritage Sites located in the United States. Thanks to this program, NPS is working on collaborative areas of trans-frontier concern, including at the Beringia Shared Heritage Initiative, and providing technical support to the US – Russia bilateral environment working group led by the U.S. State Department, which WCS has been involved with as part of our ongoing conservation efforts in Arctic Alaska. The international work conducted by NPS is not only about helping other countries protect their parks and heritage. It is about bringing home best practices and learning from international engagement that could benefit the American national park system. WCS recommends \$1 million for this office in FY13 and encourages a strategic conversation with stakeholders that would draw on common objectives of parks and protected area management particularly in trans-frontier collaborative initiatives.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to share WCS’s perspectives and make a case for increased investment in conservation in the FY13 Interior, EPA and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Conservation of public lands is an American tradition and, as far back as 1909, Theodore Roosevelt recognized that the management of our natural resources requires coordination between all nations. Continued investment in conservation will reaffirm our global position as a conservation leader, while improving our economy and building capacity and good governance in developing countries. Thank you.