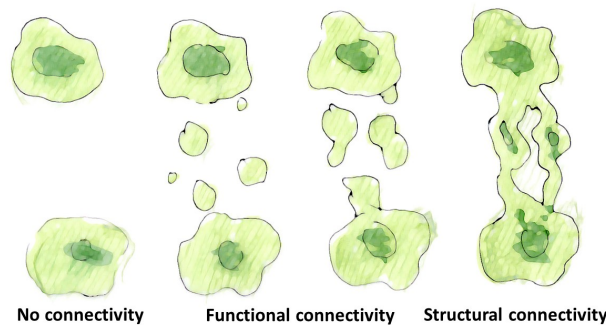




Credit: T. Butcher

What is the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act?

The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act establishes a **National Wildlife Corridors System** to designate national wildlife corridors on federal public lands, as well as funding for states, tribes, and other entities to protect wildlife corridors on non-federal lands. This will ensure that fish, wildlife, and plants can migrate between habitats for genetic exchange and climate adaptation. The bill directs federal land and water management agencies to collaborate with each other, as well as with states, tribes, local governments, and private landowners, to manage national wildlife corridors according to the habitat connectivity needs of native species. The bill also creates a publicly available National Wildlife Corridors Database to inform corridor protection. Establishing this program is a critical step forward in protecting and restoring fish, wildlife, and plant species populations across our nation's lands and waters.



When habitats are isolated from one another, species suffer because they cannot access the resources, mates, or genetic diversity they need to survive.

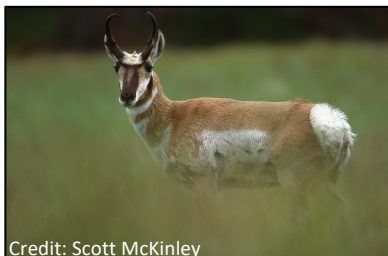
What species benefit from corridors?

All of them! The beauty of this bill is that all of our native wildlife – from wide-ranging carnivores to specialized amphibians – will benefit from protected corridors. **Florida panthers** need corridors for dispersal (when the young head out on their own to find new territory) and to find mates. Because these panthers have such a large home range, corridors help to provide enough space by linking protected areas together and can help reduce human conflict by offering an alternate route around cities and towns. **Pronghorns** are an important game species in the southwest, but their survival depends upon the ability to migrate seasonally. With a designated corridor, pronghorn would be able to migrate south during the winter to access resources, like food, that are unavailable during the cold season. Even small insects like the **monarch butterfly** need protected corridors to migrate up to 3,000 miles in search of warmer climates in Mexico because they can't withstand freezing temperatures. It can take 3-4 generations to complete a full migration and without places along the flyway for them to rest and reproduce, we would lose this iconic species. Species have different reasons why corridors are important to their survival, but we could have a proven solution that works for all of them: a National Wildlife Corridors System!

By focusing on landscape-scale habitat connectivity, we can ensure the health of whole ecosystems – from Florida panther to pronghorn to butterflies.



Credit: Mark Conlin



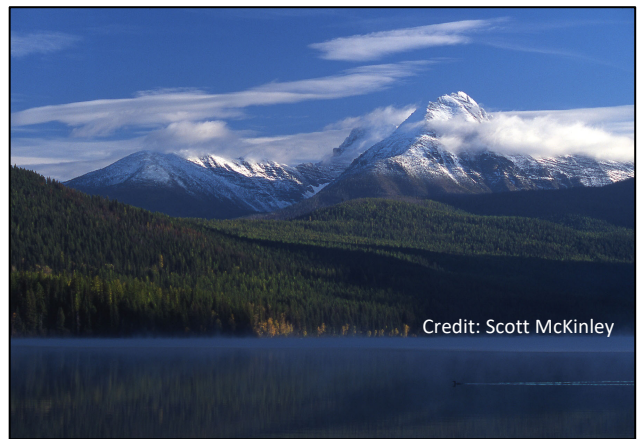
Credit: Scott McKinley



Credit: Robin Winkelman

How does the Act work?

- Grants authority to key federal agencies to designate National Wildlife Corridors, which will be managed in a way that contributes to the connectivity, persistence, resilience, and adaptability of native species.
- Creates a Wildlife Connectivity Database to support decisionmakers that will be freely available to states, tribes, federal agencies, and the public.
- Creates a Wildlife Movement Grant Program that will fund priority projects on state, private, and tribal lands.
- Creates Regional Wildlife Movement Councils to develop regional plans, identifying priority areas on non-federal lands.
- Establishes the National Coordination Committee to administer the Wildlife Movement Grant Program and facilitate collaboration between National Wildlife Corridors on public lands and regional wildlife connectivity efforts.
- Promotes public safety and mitigates species damage where corridors cross roadways.
- Provides incentives for private landowners to protect wildlife corridors using funds from Department of Agriculture conservation programs.
- A Wildlife Corridors Stewardship and Protection Fund will be established to provide the financial resources necessary to carry out and sustain this system.



Why is this important?

- America's native fish, wildlife, and plant species are part of our rich natural heritage and an important legacy to pass on to future generations.
- Many species in the US are declining. Scientists estimate that one in five species are at risk of extinction.
- One of the greatest threats to species survival and diversity is the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of natural habitats. America's landscapes are losing species, becoming biologically unproductive and unhealthy because native habitats have become islands, cutoff from other landscapes and waterways, unable to sustain vital natural processes, such as: dispersal, migration, genetic exchange, acquisition of resources, population stability, and climate adaptation, among others.
- Climate change is a significant threat to native species. Plant communities are shifting in elevation and location, coastal waters are warming, and coastal habitats are eroding due to sea level rise and land subsidence. Conserving, restoring, and establishing new ecological connections to facilitate the shift of species into more suitable habitat is a key climate change adaptation strategy.
- Protecting landscape corridors and hydrologic connectivity is a broadly accepted strategy to conserving native fish, wildlife, and plant species and ensuring ecosystem resilience, and it is typically one of the first steps in restoration and recovery planning. It has already been integrated by proactive state and federal agencies, such as California, the Western Governors Association, and NOAA, and by international agreements between northeastern US states and southeastern Canadian provinces.

Now is the time to support a Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act to protect and reconnect our national heritage.
For more information, contact Susan Holmes, Policy Director, at susan@wildlandsnetwork.org
or Anna Wearn, Policy Analyst, at anna@largelandscapes.org.

A Closer Look: Why Florida Panthers Need a National Wildlife Corridors System



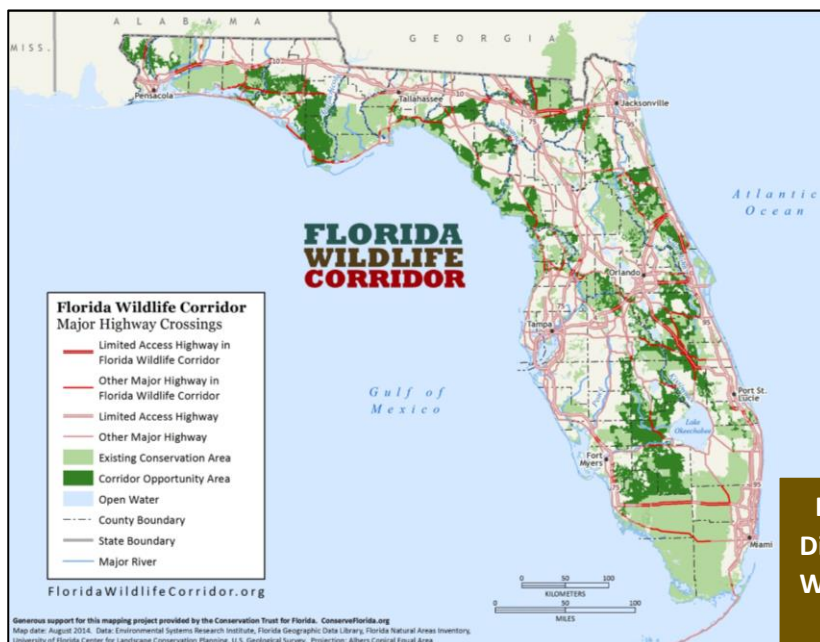
Beginning to return from the brink of extinction, **Florida Panthers** represent an important American comeback story. There are roughly 100 panthers estimated in the wild today, but their population is mostly limited to southern Florida – a mere 5% of their historic range. In order for this species to fully recover and flourish, they will need protected pathways to disperse northward. This past November, exciting news that a female panther crossed the Caloosahatchee River made headlines for two reasons: (1) female panthers have not made it north of this river in 40 years and (2) while males have made

it across, without females there too, the panther population cannot grow – now there is a chance for this species to reclaim their former range.

This news is encouraging, but without designated corridor protections, possible through a **Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act**, the fate of this species will remain tenuous. Florida Panthers need corridors for dispersal – that time in each panther's life where they leave their mother to make it out on their own. Because they have such large home ranges – males needing up to 200 square miles – their survival hinges on their ability to move from protected area to protected area through wildlife corridors. These corridors would provide them the ability to access suitable habitat and give them an alternative route around cities and towns – making it far easier for humans and panthers to coexist peacefully.

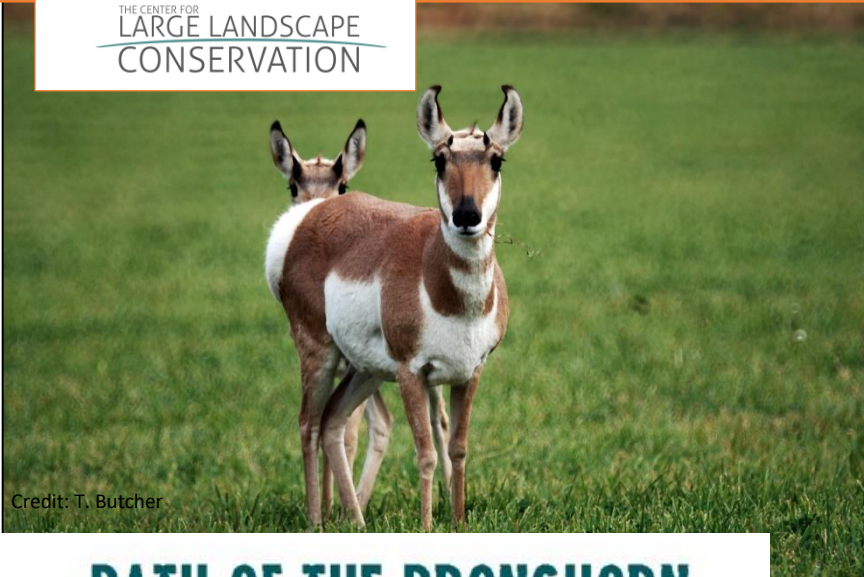
A Wildlife Corridor for Panthers

The Florida Wildlife Corridor Project is one such opportunity that would benefit panthers. Through the implementation of wildlife corridors and road crossings on major highways, Florida Panthers would have a safe passage from southern protected areas such as Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park, and Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge northward to protected areas like Apalachicola National Forest, securing this species for future generations. Florida Panthers are a classic tale of an American comeback – and by supporting the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act, this species will continue to represent this important national story.



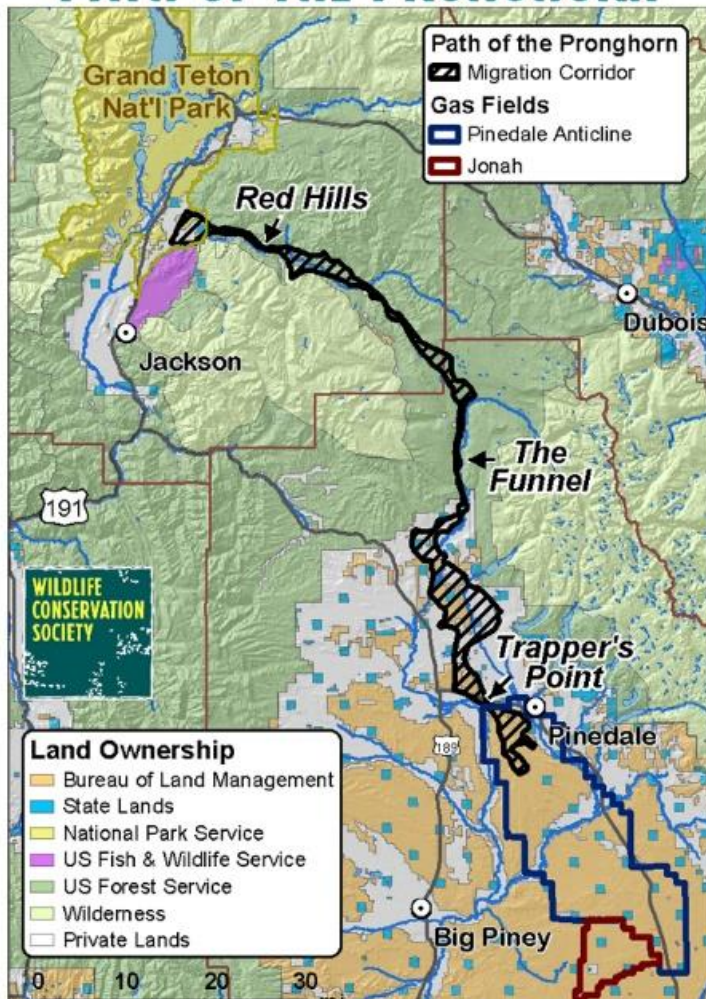
For more information, contact Susan Holmes, Policy Director, at susan@wildlandsnetwork.org or Anna Wearn, Policy Analyst, at anna@largelandscapes.org.

A Closer Look: Why Pronghorn Need a National Wildlife Corridors System



During the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806, pronghorn were formally observed and recorded. At this time, they ranged an enormous swath of North America – from southern Saskatchewan and Alberta in Canada, south through the United States to northern Mexico, extending as far east as central Texas. But hunting, habitat loss, roads, and fences have significantly reduced their numbers and available habitat. While conservation measures have helped to rebuild their populations, the greatest threat facing this species is the loss of their historical migration route.

PATH OF THE PRONGHORN



Each winter, pronghorn make a grueling 150 mile migration from Wyoming's Upper Green River Basin to Grand Teton National Park. This migration is important to their survival, without it they would not be able to find feeding grounds to get them through such harsh winters. Unfortunately, many of our roads, fences, and cities block pronghorn from making this critical migration and consequently, this species future remains uncertain. But, it doesn't have to be.

The Path of the Pronghorn

The **Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act** would make it possible for pronghorn to reclaim their migration route and secure it for future generations. Through the designation of a wildlife corridor, we can safeguard this species' migration route, make our roads safer through highway crossings, and ensure that our western landscapes remain wild for the species that have lived here for hundreds of years.



For more information, contact Susan Holmes, Policy Director, at susan@wildlandsnetwork.org or Anna Wearn, Policy Analyst, at anna@largelandscapes.org.

A Closer Look: Why Monarch Butterflies Need a National Wildlife Corridors System

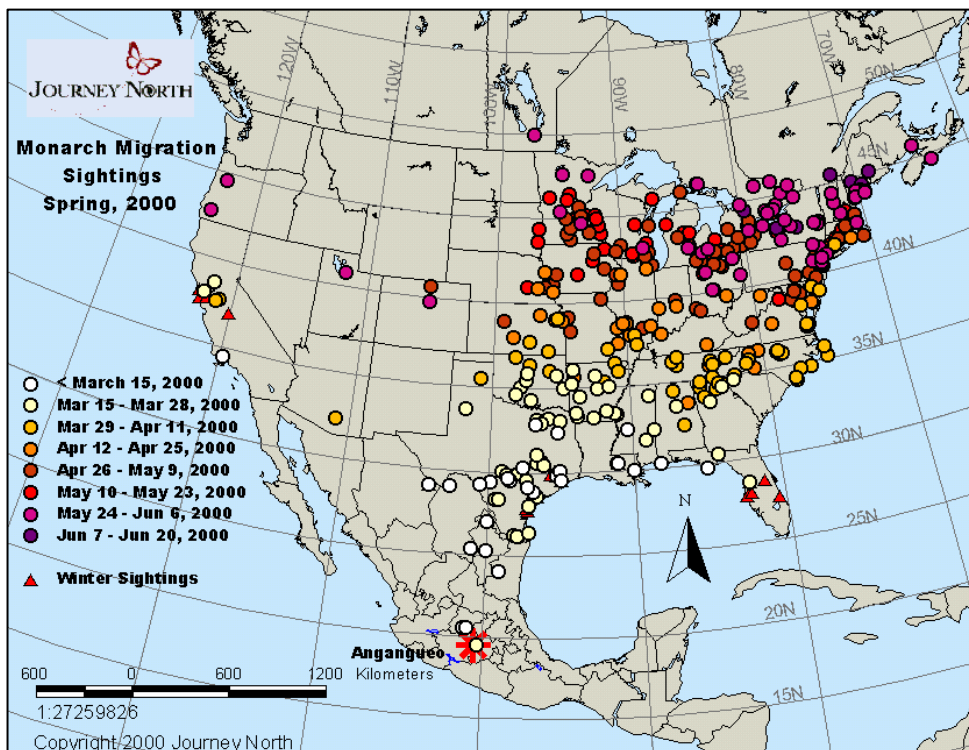
Many consider the Monarch Butterfly to be one of the most beautiful butterflies in the world. Most Americans grew up watching this iconic species in their backyards, learning about their metamorphosis in elementary school, and continue to enjoy their appearance, heralding each new summer. What some may not know is that each year Monarchs travel 2,500 miles to Mexico and southern California to escape freezing temperatures and lack of food during the winter. This enormous migration can take up to four generations to complete – yet, these insects use the same trees even though they are not the same insect from the year before.

A Highway for Butterflies

As Monarchs complete this difficult migration, they depend upon protected habitat to stop, rest, eat, and reproduce. Without it, Monarchs would not be able to complete their migration and their survival would be at risk. Americans are taking notice of this critical need – many are planting native vegetation that supports Monarchs and other important pollinators. This is helping, but we need to do more – and with the **Wildlife Corridors Conservation**



Credit: Christopher Carter,
Saint Louis Zoo



Act we can. Through the designation of a wildlife corridor, Monarchs can be supported by protecting strategic habitat along their flyways, providing them with the rest, food, and ability to reproduce that they need.



For more information, contact Susan Holmes, Policy Director, at susan@wildlandsnetwork.org or Anna Wearn, Policy Analyst, at anna@largelandscapes.org.

A Closer Look: Why Grizzly Bears Need a National Wildlife Corridors System

The grizzly bear is an **icon of North American wildness**. Historically, an estimated 50,000 roamed from Alaska to Mexico, California to Ohio, utilizing a variety of habitats like dense forests, subalpine meadows, open plains, and arctic tundra. But due to hunting and habitat loss, this bastion of North American landscapes has been largely restricted to Canada and Alaska. In the lower 48, only an estimated 1,500 grizzly bears remain in 5-6 distinct populations.



Credit: Scott McKinley

Grizzly bears need room to roam – they don't follow human boundaries, and often, our parks are simply too small for this wide-ranging species. When they venture outside of protected areas, they are hunted, hit by cars, or come into conflict with people. But just like how people need highways to get from one place to another safely, grizzly bears, and other species, need wildlife corridors to move from protected area to protected area in search of food and mates. The **Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act** would provide these essential paths, protect grizzlies and drivers from dangerous highway collisions, and help to reduce conflicts with people by giving grizzlies a safer route around cities and towns.



Credit: Miller & Waits 2003



Credit: Center for Large Landscape Conservation
<http://largelandscapes.org/library/>

A Glacier-Great Bear Corridor

Through this bill, critical wildlife corridors could be designated for grizzly bears. For example, the Glacier-Great Bear Corridor, if protected, would reconnect the Glacier-Watertown Lakes National Park Complex to the north with the Great Bear- Bob Marshall-Scapegoat Wilderness Complex to the south. This corridor is 33,100 acres – just 2% of the otherwise contiguous protected areas surrounding it – and is comprised mostly of National Forest. Most importantly, a corridor would provide safe passage across Highway 2 and the Northern Burlington-Sante Fe railroad, which currently blocks grizzly bear movement, as well as other important Rocky Mountain species like wolverine and lynx.

For more information, contact Susan Holmes, Policy Director, at susan@wildlandsnetwork.org or Anna Wearn, Policy Analyst, at anna@largelandscapes.org.

