



USDA-Wyoming Big Game Conservation Partnership



For generations, wildlife biologists, ranchers, sportsmen, and Tribes have known that many large ungulate populations in Wyoming and throughout the West migrate from summer to winter range to optimize forage quality and decrease seasonal risks associated with certain habitats. Migratory herds possess a special ecological, cultural, and economic importance to surrounding communities, and depend on a variety of land ownerships throughout each year.

Over the course of their annual migrations, many animals depend on private and tribally owned working lands for forage and for shelter from deep snow.

USDA has a flexible suite of tools available to support voluntary conservation and is uniquely positioned to conserve seasonal ranges of migratory big game where they intersect these working lands. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) has been working closely with the State of Wyoming and its many partners to develop an approach where existing Farm Bill programs are strategically implemented in a way that maximizes benefits to both migratory ungulates and the working lands that support them.

Conservation Programs

USDA is supporting this partnership with a focused application of the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#), [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), and [Grassland Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#). USDA provides support for habitat leasing through a combination of EQIP and CRP, with opportunities for partners to contribute resources. Through this partnership, USDA programs work in a complementary way to support big game conservation. The implementation of these programs is prioritized based on areas identified by Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Tribal leaders on the Wind River Indian Reservation to be of particular benefit to big game.

Conservation Actions

ACEP assists producers who want to protect sensitive landscapes and prime farmlands from conversion to non-compatible land uses such as residential subdivision through establishment of long-term conservation easements. EQIP focuses on integrating practices on working lands, such as prescribed grazing systems, wildlife-friendly fencing, and cheatgrass control. Grassland CRP is used to provide participating landowners with 10 or 15-year contracts in exchange for continued management of sustainable grassland habitats. USDA has expanded compatibility among these programs to streamline delivery to farmers and ranchers and will continue to do so.

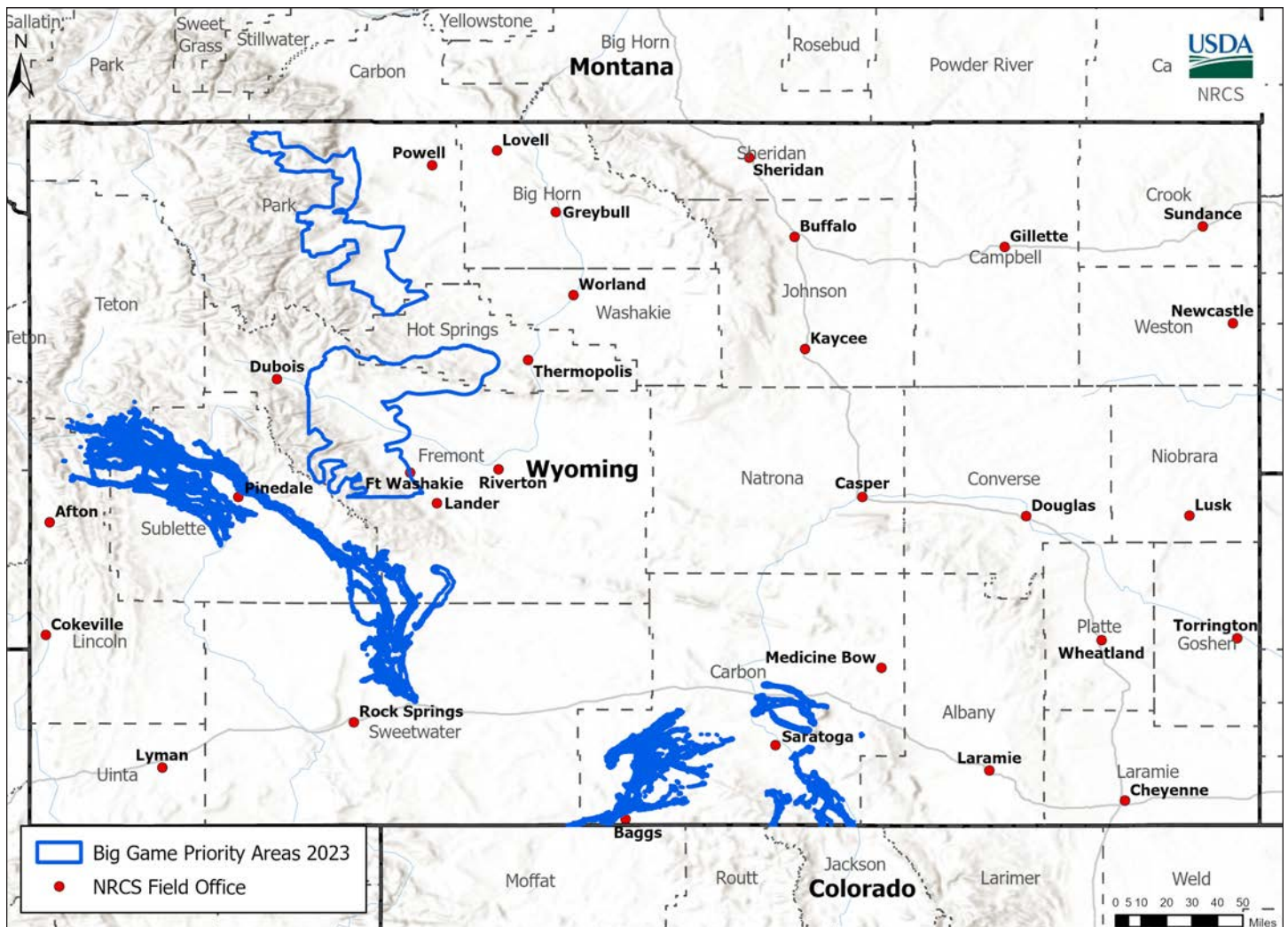
For more information, visit the [USDA-Wyoming Big Game Partnership](#) website to learn more about the effort and to inquire about specific program deadlines, application requirements, and priority areas.



Elk moving through grassland with tracking collar.

Project Location

The pilot is open to producers in Wyoming statewide, but there are several priority areas where big game migrations are known to be prevalent, especially in Carbon, Hot Springs, Lincoln, Park, Sublette, Sweetwater, Fremont and Teton counties. Contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) to discuss how your property aligns with these priority areas.



Additional Information

Additional program fact sheets for the primary programs used can also be found here:

[Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#)

[Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#)

[Conservation Reserve Program – Grasslands Working Lands](#)

[Conservation Reserve Program – Grasslands Ranking Factors](#)

How do I apply?

Contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).



Photo of bighorn sheep.