

American Woodcock Society * Boone and Crockett Club * California Waterfowl Association * Camp Fire Club of America * Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation * Delta Waterfowl * Ducks Unlimited * Houston Safari Club * National Deer Association * National Shooting Sports Foundation * North American Grouse Partnership * Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation * Ruffed Grouse Society * Safari Club International * Whitetails Unlimited * Wild Sheep Foundation * Wildlife Mississippi

September 21, 2023

The Hon. Mike McCaul, Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul:

We write in strong support and appreciation of your interest in establishing the U.S. Foundation for International Conservation (the Foundation).

Our organizations represent millions of hunters, anglers, conservationists, and outdoor professionals with experience in fundraising and implementing conservation projects internationally and in the United States. Based on our experience, we strongly support the proposed Foundation and look forward to its successful support of conserved areas internationally.

We are proud that many countries promote conservation through the rule-of-law to provide for the needs of local communities dependent on conserved areas, and to combat external corrupt and malign influences behind poaching, deforestation, and exploitation of communities, among other challenges.

Where we work extensively both overseas and in the United States, we have experienced firsthand the necessity of the principles on which the Foundation is envisioned to be based: combining public funding with private philanthropy, establishing professional management for conserved areas, building on local commitments, and delivering ecological benefits and community needs for food, water, and other resources.

By providing long-term, core support for conserved areas and leveraging additional contributions from other funding sources, the Foundation is designed to deliver success with only the necessary amounts of funding.

Evidence from successful countries shows that establishing effective management of individual protected areas costs between \$5-10 million per area per year, depending on their size, ecological complexity, and scale of the challenges they face.

The experience of many organizations suggests that \$1-3 million per year per area over at least 15 years is sufficient to secure basic care for a wide variety of conserved areas. When an area has the base funding for its core functions, it can establish durable success and attract other support. Foundation funding will help cover the costs of activating this virtuous cycle by establishing core functions.

Effectively established conserved areas attract additional funds from other sources, including from the host country, other countries, revenue, and philanthropy. A review by the World Bank (2021) found that for every dollar governments invest in protected areas, the economic rate of return is 6 to 28 times the original investment.

The challenges facing international conservation are similar to those the United States faced 100 years ago. As it was at the establishment of U.S. National Parks and the National Forest System, many international conservation lands exist on paper, and in some places have basic staffing and work underway, but in many cases they are not yet fully functional and under severe pressure.

Our organizations and our forebears were instrumental in realizing the benefits of early conservation commitments in the U.S. and eagerly support the wider distribution of those benefits. We thank you for your leadership of this effort, our community is ready to support your vision and turn it into reality.