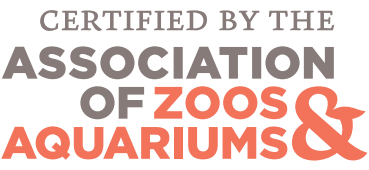




COLORADO WOLF & WILDLIFE CENTER

MAY 2025 • CONSERVATION • EDUCATION • PRESERVATION





The Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center

is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization certified by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). Look for this logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things.

The contents of the material we include in our newsletter does not necessarily reflect the views of CWWC. We collect information from other organizations, the web, news feeds, and/or other sources. We choose articles that are in the related field of education and conservation.



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| SOCIAL MEDIA HAPPENINGS |

Stay up to date with the animals at CWWC, wolves and wildlife in the news, and advocacy opportunities.



Subscribe to our YouTube Channel: ColoradoWolf&WildlifeCenter We post videos of the training and enrichment we are providing for our animals, and educational vlogs about wolves.



Follow us on Facebook: Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center to get updates on new YouTube video postings, read feel good stories from other wolf/wildlife organizations, and learn about new wildlife findings in the research field.



Follow us on Instagram: @cowolfcenter to see pictures of our beautiful animals, stories of what we are doing around the center, and ways you can help wild wolf populations. Keep your eye on our story for fun videos of the day to day lives of our wolves and keepers.



CWWC is now on Bluesky! Follow us: @cowolfcenter.bsky.social



Follow us on Twitter: @Wolves_at_CWWC to see photos of our animals, read fun facts, and hear about events happening at CWWC.



Follow us on TikTok: @cowolfcenter for the videos you won't see on our other social media pages.

We hope to give you something to look forward to every day!

FIRE MITIGATION at CWWC





How redefining just one word could strip the Endangered Species Act’s ability to protect vital habitat

Mariah Meek & Karrigan Börk | The Conversation | May 13, 2025

It wouldn’t make much sense to prohibit people from shooting a threatened woodpecker while allowing its forest to be cut down, or to bar killing endangered salmon while allowing a dam to dry out their habitat.

But that’s exactly what the Trump administration is proposing to do by changing how one word in the Endangered Species Act is interpreted: harm.

For 50 years, the U.S. government has interpreted the Endangered Species Act as protecting threatened and endangered species from actions that either directly kill them or eliminate their habitat. Most species on the brink of extinction are on the list because there is almost no place left for them to live. Their habitats have been paved over, burned or transformed. Habitat protection is essential for their survival.

As an ecologist and a law professor, we have spent our entire careers working to understand the law and science of helping imperiled species thrive. We recognize that the rule change the Trump administration quietly proposed could green-light the destruction of protected species’

habitats, making it nearly impossible to protect those endangered species.

The legal gambit

The Endangered Species Act, passed in 1973, bans the “take” of “any endangered species of fish or wildlife,” which includes harming protected species.

Since 1975, regulations have defined “harm” to include habitat destruction that kills or injures wildlife. Developers and logging interests



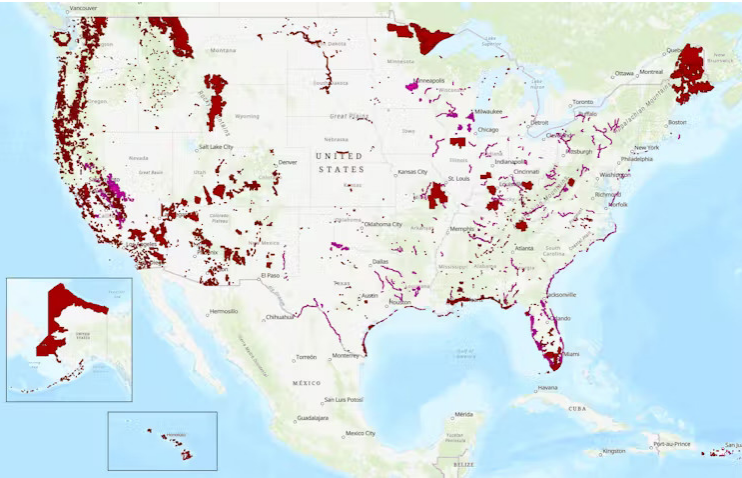
The golden-cheeked warbler breeds only in Texas, primarily in Texas Hill Country. It has been losing habitat as development expands in the region. Photo: Steve Maslowski/USFWS, CC BY

challenged that definition in 1995 in a Supreme Court case, Babbitt v. Sweet Home Chapter of Communities for a Great Oregon. However, the court ruled that the definition was reasonable and allowed federal agencies to continue using it.

In short, the law says “take” includes harm, and under the existing regulatory definition, harm includes indirect harm through habitat destruction.

The Trump administration is seeking to change that definition of “harm” in a way that leaves out habitat modification.

This narrowed definition would undo the most significant protections granted by the Endangered Species Act.



Critical habitat throughout the U.S., including many coastlines and mountain areas. Note: Alaska is not to scale. Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Why habitat protection matters

Habitat protection is the single most important factor in the recovery of endangered species in the United States – far more consequential than curbing direct killing alone.

A 2019 study examining the reasons species were listed as endangered between 1975 and 2017 found that only 17% were primarily threatened by direct killing, such as hunting or poaching. That 17% includes iconic species such as the red wolf, American crocodile, Florida panther and grizzly bear.

In contrast, a staggering 81% were listed because of habitat loss and degradation. The Chinook salmon,

island fox, southwestern willow flycatcher, desert tortoise and likely extinct ivory-billed woodpecker are just a few examples. Globally, a 2022 study found that habitat loss threatened more species than all other causes combined.

Threats that led to Endangered Species Act listings

The No. 1 reason species were listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act has been the loss or degradation of habitat, far more than the overuse, or direct killing, of animals. The numbers are from an analysis of threats indicated in listings from 1975 to 2017. Most species experience more than one threat type.

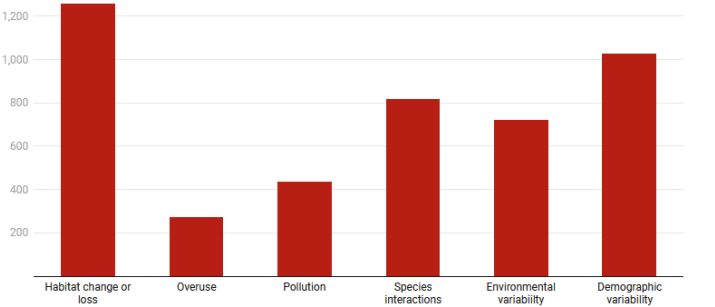


Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: Matthias Leu, et al, 2019 • Get the data • Embed • Download image • Created with Datawrapper

As natural landscapes are converted to agriculture or taken over by urban sprawl, logging operations and oil and gas exploration, ecosystems become fragmented and the space that species need to survive and reproduce disappears. Currently, more than 107 million acres of land in the U.S. are designated as critical habitat for Endangered Species Act-listed species. Industries and developers have called for changes to the rules for years, arguing it has been weaponized to stop development. However, research shows species worldwide are facing an unprecedented threat from human activities that destroy natural habitat.

Under the proposed change, development could be accelerated in endangered species’ habitats.

Gutting the Endangered Species Act

The definition change is a quiet way to gut the Endangered Species Act.

It is also fundamentally incompatible with the purpose Congress wrote into the act: “to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved [and] to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species.” It contradicts the Supreme Court precedent, and it would destroy the act’s habitat protections.

Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum has argued

continued on next page...



Northern spotted owls, like these fledglings, living in old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest are listed as threatened species because of habitat loss. Photo: Tom Kogut/USFS, CC BY

and endangered species until it's too late, though if approved it will certainly end up in court.

The ESA is saving species

Surveys have found the Endangered Species Act is popular with the public, including Republicans. The Center for Biological Diversity estimates that the Endangered Species Act has saved 99% of protected species from extinction since it was created, not just from bullets but also from bulldozers. This regulatory rollback seeks to undermine the law's greatest strength: protecting the habitats species need to survive.

that the recent “de-extinction” of dire wolves by changing 14 genes in the gray wolf genome means that America need not worry about species protection because technology “can help forge a future where populations are never at risk.”

But altering an existing species to look like an extinct one is both wildly expensive and a paltry substitute for protecting existing species.

The administration has also refused to conduct the required analysis of the environmental impact that changing the definition could have. That means the American people won't even know the significance of this change to threatened

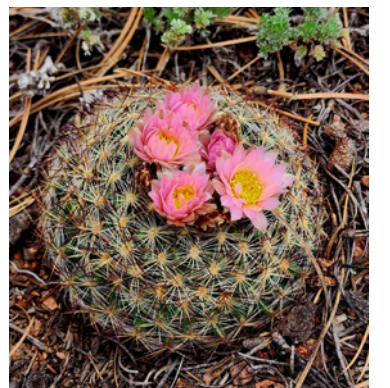
Congress knew the importance of habitat when it passed the law, and it wrote a definition of “take” that allows the agencies to protect it.



The Catalina Island fox is endemic to Catalina Island. Habitat loss, diseases introduced by domestic dogs, and predators have diminished the population of these small foxes to threatened status. Photo: Catalina Island Conservancy/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA



Mother's Day WITH Coco!



LIFE AT THE CENTER

Top Left: Rick giving Nanook some sweet attention

Top Right: Waterfall in our new fox enclosure

Bottom Right: The beauty of Spring

Bottom Left: Shamba finding a nice sleeping place in staff cubby

BIRTHDAY WEEK FOR THE WOLVES



Meat Bone Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 lb ground meat of choice
- 2 eggs
- Cheese, treats, or any other toppers to decorate
- Baking sheet tray
- Parchment paper
- Mixing bowl
- Large bone cookie cutter or silicone mold

Steps:

1. Add the ground meat and eggs into the mixing bowl and mix together until well incorporated.
2. Evenly distribute the meat mix into the large cookie cutter or mold of your choice.
3. Decorate the top with your pet's favorite treats and things to eat. Some great choices our wolves love include cheese, jerky treats, freeze dried minnows, and chicken feet!
4. Line your baking tray with parchment paper and then line your treats up to freeze. Parchment paper can be used in between layers to help prevent sticking as well.
5. Freeze the treats for at least a few hours, up to overnight. Allow the tray of treats to thaw for about 30 minutes before pulling them off the tray so that they pull apart easier. Once the treats are easily separated, they are ready to enjoy! The treats can be stored in an airtight container and in the freezer.

'De-extinction' is a fool's errand

Pepper Trail | Post Independent | May 19, 2025

To breathless media coverage, a company called Colossal Biosciences now claims to have produced three genetically engineered pups of the long-extinct dire wolf. Scientific criticism followed fast.

The company's press release claimed the pups to be "the world's first de-extinct animals ... brought back from extinction using genetic edits derived from a complete dire wolf genome, meticulously reconstructed by Colossal from ancient DNA."

Experts in paleogenetics pointed out that only 14 genes, with 20 differences between living gray wolves and extinct dire wolves, were involved in the "edits." Pontus Skoglund, head of the Ancient Genomics Laboratory at Britain's Francis Crick Institute, posted on BlueSky: "Would a chimpanzee with 20 gene edits be human? ... These individuals seem optimistically 1/100,000th dire wolf."

Conservationists noted other concerns. What is the plan for dire wolves and other "de-extinct" species? Where is the habitat for an animal that was adapted for preying on now-extinct megafauna like ground sloths and giant bison? How might dire wolves and gray wolves co-exist, and could they hybridize?

And the real question: Wouldn't Colossal's enormous financial resources be better used to conserve existing species?

According to the Washington Post, the company has been valued at \$10.2 billion and has raised \$435 million in funding; billionaire and conservative mega-donor Peter Thiel is an investor.

Despite all this, there is one place where the scientifically dubious and ethically problematic goal of "de-extinction" has been embraced without reservation: the Trump Administration.

In a post on X, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum claimed that most species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) have not recovered "because the status quo is focused on regulation more than innovation," and went on to hail Colossal's announcement: "The revival of the Dire Wolf heralds the advent of a thrilling new era of scientific wonder, showcasing how the concept of de-extinction can serve as a bedrock for modern species conservation."

Burgum's endorsement of Colossal went even farther during a meeting with Interior Department employees: "If we're going to be in anguish about losing a species, now we have an opportunity to bring them back. Pick your favorite species and call Colossal."

In fact, the Endangered Species Act has produced some

spectacular recovery successes, including the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and American alligator. And the law has succeeded in preventing the extinction of over 99% of listed species.

Burgum is correct that most ESA-listed species have not recovered sufficiently to be "delisted," declared no longer at risk of extinction. But the reason is not excessive regulation.

A peer-reviewed analysis of species listed by the law from 1992 through 2020 concluded that the reasons for the low rate of delisting were "small population sizes at time of listing, coupled with delayed protection and insufficient funding." To this can be added the fact that by the time many species are listed, their suitable habitat has dwindled too much to support robust recovered populations.

The "innovation" needed to protect America's biodiversity is not the high-tech resurrection of extinct species. It is simply to list declining species earlier, when their populations are still large enough to benefit from the protections that the law provides. And funding must be sufficient to support scientifically sound recovery plans. The paper cited above found that spending per listed species declined by nearly 50% from 1985 to 2020.

Burgum's statements ignore the most basic goal of conservation. It is not to preserve individual animals, it is to help populations sustain themselves in their native habitats, fulfilling their ecological roles and exhibiting the full range of their natural behaviors.

The idea that species can be conserved by picking up the phone to "call Colossal" and order up a few genetically engineered survivors is a delusional and disingenuous fantasy.

Burgum has made clear that his management of the more than 500 million acres of public land under his authority will be all about energy extraction. On his first day in office, he released six Secretarial Orders, all of which were focused on increasing fossil fuel production. None mentioned the words "wildlife" or "conservation," much less endangered species.

Endangered species such as sage grouse, gray wolves, and grizzly bears are inconvenient obstacles to "unleashing" fossil fuel extraction everywhere across the public lands of the West. We can expect many attacks on the Endangered Species Act from this administration.

But none is more wrong-headed—or cynical—than using those cute genetically engineered "dire wolf" pups to distract from the urgent needs of actual endangered species.

Rangers hit out at Trump’s plans for National Parks: ‘They’re going to be sold off’

Richard Hall | The Independent | May 9, 2025

Rangers have hit out at the Trump administration’s plans to hand over control of National Parks to states, warning that it could lead to the closure of many lesser-known sites and monuments.

The unprecedented plans, announced in a budget proposal for 2026, call for sites that receive “small numbers of mostly local visitors” to be handed over to state control and for a cut of some \$1 billion from its \$4.8 billion budget.

“The National Park Service is protecting not only these really remarkable natural resources, but some of the most important cultural and historical resources as well,” said one ranger who asked to remain anonymous.

“Oftentimes, those more difficult stories and those smaller stories don’t get as much attention as those big-name national parks,” the ranger said, adding that they could now be under threat.

There are more than 430 national parks that span across 85 million acres, including every U.S. state and territory. Among that number are 76 national historical sites and 87 national monuments that include archeological sites and shorelines like the Canaveral National Seashore in Florida.

The ranger said sites like the Nicodemus National Historic Site in Kansas, the only remaining Black settlement west of the Mississippi River, receive very few visitors, but have significant historical and cultural importance.

“It’s telling such an important historical story that it would make sense to me and others that it would be a national park and part of the national story that we protect, but when you’re only looking for diamonds,



Horseshoe Bend is an ancient sandstone formation in Grand Canyon National Park — and unlikely to be one of the parks on the chopping block (Getty)

those smaller gems are on the chopping block, it seems,” they said.

Some rangers see a more sinister reason for the handover of national parks to state control.

The budget proposal comes amid a push from the Trump administration to open national parks for mineral extraction, mining, logging and drilling.

“Any indication of ‘states rights’ is a smoke screen for ease of access to drilling and logging,” said another ranger, who also asked to remain anonymous over fears of reprisals from the Trump administration.

They were also concerned that the handover to state control would inevitably lead to closures.

“The states don’t want these lands. They’re a huge financial burden. They’re going to be sold off and massively downsized,” they said.

Precisely which parks would be handed over to the states is unclear from the budget request. The proposal claims that the budget “would continue supporting many national treasures, but there is an urgent need to streamline staffing and transfer

certain properties to state-level management to ensure the long-term health and sustainment of the national park system.”

The budget proposal comes just three months after the Trump administration abruptly fired some 1,000 National Park Service employees as part of a huge reduction of the federal workforce spearheaded by Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency, an advisory board that has been given sweeping powers by the White House to reduce government spending.

Two courts later ordered the workers to be re-hired, but many of them remain in limbo.

Brian Bengs, 54, was a ranger in Wind Cave National Park, in South Dakota, when he learned his job was at risk of being cut by Musk’s DOGE. The Air Force veteran later resigned and launched a second run for Senate in the state as an independent.

He sees the budget plan as an attempt by the Trump

administration to exploit the national parks for profit.

“This is an attempt to recreate the Gilded Age, where public lands were looted for resource extraction, and it helps out the rich folks,” Bengs said.

“An effort to privatize would be easier at the state level. In many of these states, they want money because they can’t afford to do things themselves. So the politicians will be more than happy to turn over whatever resources to the federal government, to private developments, mining companies, and whoever.”

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HELP US EXPAND OUR HOME!

This year, CWWC will be expanding our Critically Endangered Mexican Wolf enclosure. We need your help!

RSVP to our Mexican Fiesta
Saturday, July 19th

Our goal is to raise \$20,000

Mexican wolves are the most endangered subspecies of wolf in the world with about 280 roaming the wild today. Dakota and Diego will likely remain with us the rest of their years, and we always strive to offer them the most enriching life we can offer. What better way than to give them more space to be wolves?

If you can't attend the Mexican Fiesta but want to support this project, you can still help by visiting wolfeducation.org and clicking the yellow **DONATE** button at the bottom of our homepage. Please make sure you write "Mexican wolf enclosure" in any donation notes. Any donor contributing \$200 + will receive a 1x3 nameplate that will be placed on their enclosure.

Thank you to our supporters for always offering what you can. In this changing economy and unpredictable climate, we are deeply thankful for any contributions you can make to support our animals and our mission.

Time of Mexican Fiesta will be announced in June's newsletter.

Never Let the Howl Go Silent!
Darlene Kobobel



FATHER'S DAY WITH THE WOLVES



Sunday, June 15th - 9-11am
Wolf Tour - Breakfast Burritos - Raffle

\$40 (12 & older) · \$20 (6-11)
RSVP today! Space is limited
719.687.9742

Colorado Wolf & Wildlife Center
wolfeducation.org

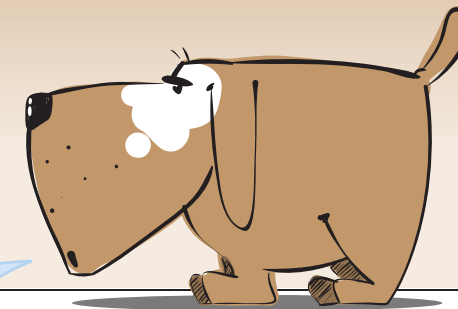
Adoption corner

TCRAS

Teller County Regional Animal Shelter
tcrascolorado.org · 719.686.7707

SLVAWS

San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society
slvaws.org · 719.587.woof (9663)



[NOTE - Our shelter is still open for adoptions, but we are asking that you call ahead and make an appointment before coming in to the shelter - 719-686-7707.]

REBA »

Hello! My name is Reba, and I'm currently enjoying life in a foster home. I love to be with my people, follow you around, and talk to you! I love to be loved on. A home where I have a lap to nap on and a sunny spot to lay in would be the best thing ever. I have lived with other cats and small dogs before. Will you be my new family?



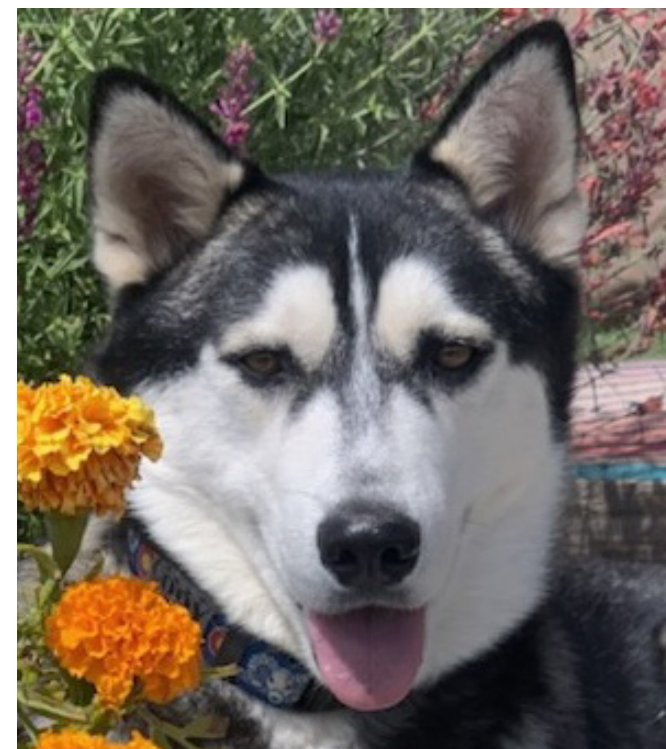
« ROCKY

Hi there! I'm a cute little guy who's on the lookout for my very own special forever home! I am very shy at first - it will take me a few visits to become comfortable with you. When I know and trust you, I like to cuddle close, sit on your lap, and give you kisses! It will take me a little time to fully settle in and feel safe and comfortable when I go to my new home. Will you give me a chance?



GUCCI »

9 month old Australian Cattle Dog mix. Very mellow, sweet and quiet. Gets along with other dogs. Spayed, medium length fur, 9 months old, chipped, all vaccinations. Her owner had given Gucci and her sister away when they were 6 months old. It appears the new owner kept the sister and discarded Gucci.



« CODY/BALTO

Cody/Balto is an affectionate 3 year-old husky. Owners had to move and gave him to us. He had been found as a stray on Wild Horse Mesa near San Luis, CO. Gets along with other dogs. Neutered, all vacc's, chipped, about 60 lbs.

SLVAWS
Please check our website,
www.slvaws.org for our next
adoption fair in Colorado Springs,
every Saturday 10am-3pm.