

RD2H MIGRATION CORRIDOR LANDOWNER BENEFITS

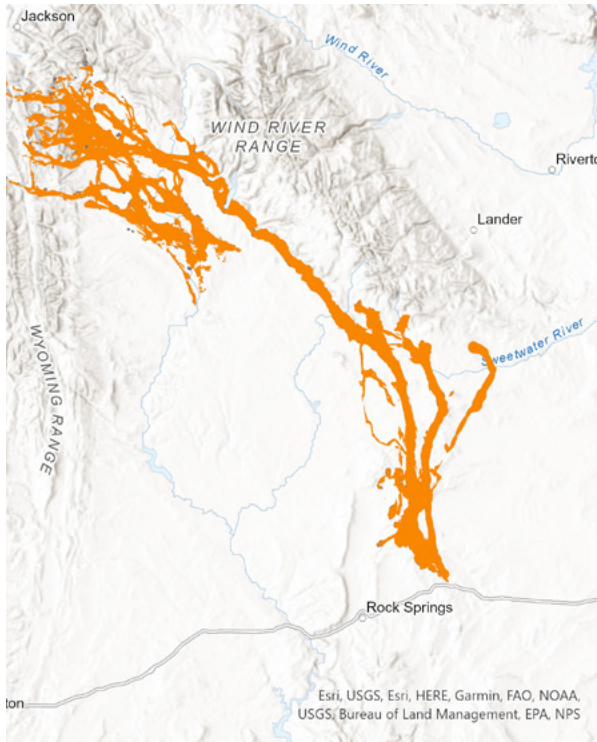
A Legacy of Conservation Benefiting Wildlife, Landowners, and Wyoming alike

Wyoming is home to some of the most iconic, intact ungulate migrations in the world and also leads in recognizing these pathways through migration corridor designation. Landowners and Wyoming communities benefit from programs that conserve migration routes crossing both private and public land.

No one landowner or agency can work alone to safeguard migration routes; it takes a coordinated effort. By understanding the RD2H Migration Corridor you can support and contribute to a program that greatly benefits the state you call home.



What is the RD2H Migration Corridor?



Known as RD2H for “Red Desert to Hoback Basin,” the Sublette Mule Deer Migration Corridor stretches 160 miles, from the Red Desert’s Leucite Hills, along the west flank of the Wind River Range, southeast into Hoback Basin. The corridor consists of migratory paths that are defined by observed deer movements. Pronghorn, moose, and elk also use winter and summer ranges linked by these ancient pathways.

Designation

The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission designated this migration corridor in 2016. RD2H was among the first to receive this status. Designation prioritizes conservation funding and opens an array of programs with direct benefits for landowners.

Recognition

Big game migration corridors exist today thanks to a legacy of landowner’s care for wildlife. Conservation funding on private land recognizes this legacy. Landowners also benefit from the pride they feel as they watch wildlife cross their lands.

How Does the RD2H Corridor Benefit You as a Landowner?

Direct benefits to landowners related to the RD2H corridor since state designation in 2016 include improvements to ranch infrastructure and assets such as fencing and forage, as well as property value adjustments that reflect both conservation and landowner values.

Wildlife-Friendly Fencing:

Good fence placement and design benefits both wildlife and livestock grazing management. Assistance for fencing associated with migration corridors include installing new fencing, rehabilitating old fencing to be more compatible with wildlife, adding seasonal lay-down sections, as well as removing unused or derelict fences.

Habitat and Forage:

Migration corridor designation has prioritized funding to ensure big game animals have quality forage as they move between summer and winter range. Habitat and forage improvements and restoration benefits livestock grazing as well. These projects also provide landowners with tools to manage the landscape, enabling agricultural operations to be more adaptive.

Conservation Easements:

Wyoming’s ranches and working lands are testament to a culture that values wildlife and undeveloped spaces working alongside agriculture. Conservation easements protect land from future development while preserving agricultural legacies for future generations.

482 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing

\$7.6 million in fence project funding

86+ landowners participating

\$718,000 in project funding for:

- invasive species control
- fire adaptation
- rangeland and forage improvements

74,447+ acres conserved

50+ landowners participating

12 funding and land trust partners

How Does the RD2H Corridor Benefit Wyoming?

Conservation related to migration corridor designation has numerous benefits for wildlife, agriculture, tourism, hunting, public safety, and ecological services that extend to the state of Wyoming more broadly. Direct benefits to landowners spill over property lines, supporting strong agricultural communities boosting the state's important tourism industry, as well as providing untrammelled views, clean water, and abundant wildlife Wyomingites value.



Recreation and Tourism:

Many Wyoming ranches and farms appreciate secondary income associated with outfitting, hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-related tourism.

In 2019, Sublette County benefited from **\$1.9 million in tax revenue** and **\$43.8 million in spending** from travel and tourism.



Healthy Ecosystems:

The benefits humans receive from healthy ecosystems are both important and valuable. These "ecosystem services" have sizeable, measureable economic benefits.

Conservation easements prioritized in migration corridors protect watersheds that link headwaters to **Wyoming's Blue Ribbon fisheries**. They also provide **natural filtration and purification of water** used for drinking, agriculture, and wildlife. Open lands provide **ground water recharge** and **erosion and flood control**. Water quality also affects land values.

Landowner Experiences:

"Not every time, of course, but often these fences needed to be replaced, so [wildlife-friendly] fencing comes right off annual ranch budgets."

- **Albert Sommers, Sommers Ranch**

"There is nothing special about wildlife-friendly fencing. These are good cow fences too. Sometimes the bottom wire is too low and animals can't get through. But good spacing doesn't hurt the cows."

- **Brad Bousman, Bousman Livestock Inc.**



Strong Agricultural Communities:

Dollars spent on fencing, forage, and conservation easements directly benefit individual landowners and support local companies and contractors.

Each dollar spent on projects related to the RD2H corridor designation generates an additional \$0.30 in local spending, resulting in **\$8.5 million in local economic activity**, supporting **84 jobs**.



Safe Roadways:

Each of the 6,000 vehicle collisions with big game that occur each year in Wyoming result in \$11,600 in injury and property damage costs, adding up to nearly \$70 million.

Migration corridor designations help focus transportation funding. Two wildlife underpasses at a RD2H bottleneck **reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions by 80 percent**.

"[Our lay-down fence sections] reduce damage to our fences by the elk moving from their summering grounds to the feeding grounds next to the ranch."

- **Walter Wehtje, Jackson Fork Ranch**

"If you take care of the land it will take care of you."

- **Albert Sommers, Sommers Ranch**

What Can You Expect as a Landowner?

Landowner experiences with conservation projects related to the RD2H migration corridor are diverse in the scale and scope of projects, as well as their influence on individual ranch operations. Projects vary from modifying a single fenceline to landscape-scale preservation. Ranch operation benefits may focus on the annual budget bottom line or long-term ranch succession and climate adaptation.

Typical project sizes for wildlife friendly fencing related to RD2H migration range from a short section of lay-down fence to over thirty miles of fencing modified, removed, or replaced. For 70 landowners participating in the Upper Green River Basin Migration Corridor Fencing Initiative the average landowner received 6.6 miles of new or modified fence and 2.3 miles of unused or derelict fence removed.

Land parcels enrolled in conservation easements by landowners since designation in the RD2H corridor area range in size from 1.3 to 15,122 acres.

Landowners benefit from habitat and forage projects on leased public grazing lands. Many of these projects are landscape scale and involve long-term, multi-year planning and multiple landowners, making typical benefits for individual landowners difficult to quantify. Further, rather than showing up as benefits on annual ranch budgets, these projects have long-term landscape management and adaptation benefits for landowners and leaseholders.

Landowner perspectives have a common thread in seeing co-benefits to both ranching and habitat—livestock and wildlife—from conservation projects that relate to migration on their lands.

HAVE QUESTIONS? READY TO GET INVOLVED?

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WyomingWildlife.org



Extension

Email Us At:
info@wyomingwildlife.org

Write to Us At:
**PO Box 1312
Lander, Wyoming 82520**

Authors:

Amy Nagler, Research Scientist, Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Wyoming
Joy Bannon, Policy Director, Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Benjamin S. Rashford, Associate Professor, Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Wyoming

Issued in furtherance of extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Kelly Crane, director, University of Wyoming Extension, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

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