

STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS AT WORK

Rep. Mike Gallagher, 8th District

Federal **State Wildlife Grants** are the only nationwide program to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. These grants have been critical for Wisconsin, yet despite many conservation successes, the state has more than 400 Species of Greatest Conservation Need - and more than 100 are endangered or threatened. Once species become endangered, especially at the federal level, they often require costly “emergency room” conservation and regulatory measures which are not sustainable in the long-term.

The **Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (HR 2773)** is designed to keep species off endangered and threatened lists. It would provide the most important boost for conservation in decades and would fund the highest priorities in our state using an existing blueprint: Wisconsin’s Wildlife Action Plan. Agencies, organizations, and individuals across the state already do critically important work to conserve fish, wildlife, and our natural areas, and RAWA would help them do more.



Examples of on-the-ground conservation work in 2019-20.

- Controlled invasive plant species across 2,638 acres of public lands within the district
- Coordinated prescribed burning for 1,190 acres within the district
- Restored 112 acres of natural forest communities, 27 acres of prairie through prescribed fire, and converted 55 acres of former agricultural lands to native forest
- Completed 25 field visits to follow up on rare species avoidance and habitat management guidance requests
- Reviewed and provided consultation or data that facilitated the completion of 140 different projects within the district, including waterways, wetlands, timber management, road construction, and utility projects
- Completed property management and maintenance activities for 24 State Natural Areas
- Completed habitat restoration project to benefit pollinators including bees, critical for ecosystems and agriculture across 200 acres of department lands.

Project Highlight: Work to protect native mussels – and clean water -- on the Wolf River



Native freshwater mussels help keep lakes and rivers clean and provide food for wildlife. Nearly half of Wisconsin’s 52 species of freshwater mussels are endangered, threatened or of special concern, including snuffbox mussels. State conservation biologists are using State Wildlife Grant monies to conduct surveys for the endangered species. Wisconsin DNR is trying to reverse population declines throughout the Wolf River watershed by defining snuffbox habitat requirements. The information collected will help inform protection efforts, and ultimately can play a role in keeping lakes and rivers clean and healthy as well as supporting the \$12.7 billion tourism industry dependent on Wisconsin waters.

