

## Initial Email: RAWA Update and All-Staff Survey

Good afternoon MDC team,

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) continues to make progress in both the U.S. House and Senate. This past Thursday, the Senate RAWA Bill was passed out of the Committee on Environment and Public Works – an important milestone as this historic legislation moves toward the finish line.

Once passed, RAWA would provide roughly \$1.4 billion dollars in dedicated annual funding to state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies. Under the current legislative language, Missouri's total RAWA allocation would be roughly \$21,000,000 each year, after a 3-year "ramp-up" period. In the first year of RAWA funding, fish and wildlife agencies will receive 65.3% of their full RAWA allocation, meaning \$13,713,000 for MDC.

The primary intent of RAWA is to prevent the need to list species as threatened or endangered, and to recover species currently listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act or state law. As laid out in the current legislation, RAWA dollars should be used for:

- Implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans, which for Missouri, is our recently approved Comprehensive Conservation Strategy (CCS)
- Assisting in the recovery of species listed, or proposed to be listed, as threatened or endangered under federal or state law
- Conservation education and wildlife-associated recreation projects, especially in historically underserved communities
- Management of invasive species, diseases, and other risks to Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)
- Enforcement activities directly related to SGCN and their habitat

Though business support functions are not listed as a RAWA focus area, MDC will be including these foundational needs in our RAWA planning efforts.

MDC has established a RAWA Ready Team to make sure that we are prepared to responsibly spend RAWA dollars in alignment with the legislation and our MDC Strategic Plan. Our planning process is just beginning, and we'll be providing many opportunities for staff to share their ideas and voice their opinions on how RAWA dollars can best be used in Missouri. Later this month, we'll be hosting a series of internal focus groups to discuss and develop preliminary RAWA priority objectives and strategic initiatives. To foster dialogue, these focus groups are being kept small, with relevant staff from across our Branches, Regions, and position levels.

To prepare for the kick-off of the focus groups, we want to provide **all staff with the opportunity to provide input on MDC's RAWA priorities, and how those priorities should be balanced. Please share your perspective by taking this short RAWA survey by 5pm on Friday April 22:**

[Insert survey link](#)

In the coming weeks, we'll be sharing more RAWA information with you, including legislative updates, and providing additional opportunities for you to engage in the planning process. If you have any RAWA-

related questions, feel free to contact one of our RAWA Ready Team Co-Leaders: Megan Buchanan, Nate Muenks, or Lorisa Smith.

We sincerely look forward to working with all of you to make sure that MDC is ready for RAWA!

Thank you,

## Survey Introduction

Thank you for taking time to complete this short, six-question survey to help MDC **prioritize and balance** the best use of increased funding we will receive if Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) is passed by Congress. The goal of this survey is to understand what our MDC staff see as the priority focus areas for the first three full years of potential RAWA funding: **FY24 – FY26**. Your input is valuable and will be used to guide the conversations during four internal RAWA focus groups that we will host in late April. This is by no means your only opportunity to provide input on MDC's RAWA priorities! After the focus groups, we will further engage all staff and our external partners to determine the RAWA strategic priorities and operational plans.

## Survey Instructions

For each question, you will have 100 percentage points to allocate between multiple options. Allocate your 100 points based on what you think is most important in FY24 – FY26, giving more points to items you think are more important, and fewer points to items you think are less important. You can allocate all 100 points to one item, split your 100 points evenly between items, or anything in between – just make it reflective of your thoughts on the importance of the options and how you think they should be balanced in FY24 – FY26.

Two examples of what your response could look like are below:

[Example response 1](#)

[Example response 2](#)

We want to hear from your unique perspective. If you don't feel that you know enough to provide input on balancing certain RAWA priorities, that's understandable, just allocate all 100 points to the "No opinion/Don't know enough" option.

*If you have any questions or issues while completing the survey, contact Megan Buchanan (x4760), Nate Muenks (x3353), or Lorisa Smith (x3233).*

## RAWA Focus Area 1: Conservation for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

1. Allocate your 100 percentage points to the types of work you think MDC should focus RAWA funding on in FY24 – FY26.
  - Recovering endangered species
  - Preventing at-risk species from becoming endangered
  - Conserving species that are rare or declining but not yet considered at risk of becoming threatened or endangered
  - Learning more about the distribution, status, and population trends for species we don't know much about, but suspect may be declining
  - No opinion/Don't know [if true, allocate all 100 points here]

## RAWA Focus Area 2: Natural community and habitat conservation supporting SGCN

2. Allocate your 100 percentage points to the types of work you think MDC should focus RAWA funding on in FY24 – FY26.

- Maintaining high-quality natural communities
  - Buffering high-quality natural communities
  - Improving medium-quality natural communities
  - Maintaining medium-quality natural communities
  - Improving low-quality natural communities
  - Reconstructing previously converted natural communities
  - No opinion/Don't know [if true, allocate all 100 points here]
3. Allocate your 100 percentage points to the types of work you think MDC should focus RAWA funding on in FY24 – FY26.
- Setting landscape-scale habitat objectives and making long-term management plans
  - Doing on-the-ground natural community management
  - Conducting monitoring to assess progress toward natural community goals
  - Filling knowledge gaps to inform natural community planning and management
  - Protecting natural communities from conversion/development
  - No opinion/Don't know [if true, allocate all 100 points here]

**RAWA Focus Area 3: Conservation engagement, education, and recreation**

4. Allocate your 100 percentage points to the types of work you think MDC should focus RAWA funding on in FY24 – FY26.
- Reaching new audiences, especially those historically excluded from conservation activities
  - Maintaining existing conservation audiences
  - Expanding existing audiences
  - No opinion/Don't know [if true, allocate all 100 points here]
5. Allocate your 100 percentage points to the types of work you think MDC should focus RAWA funding on in FY24 – FY26.
- Marketing outreach
  - Public educational programs
  - School-based education
  - Wildlife associated recreation
  - Technical assistance to communities and local governments
  - No opinion/Don't know [if true, allocate all 100 points here]

**RAWA in general: Internal capacity and partnerships**

6. Allocate your 100 percentage points to the types of work you think MDC should focus RAWA funding on in FY24 – FY26.
- Enhancing and increasing internal MDC programs, projects, and staff
  - Enhancing and increasing existing partnerships
  - Establishing and fostering new partnerships
  - No opinion/Don't know [if true, allocate all 100 points here]