

PROTECTING THE WATER, WILDLIFE AND OUTDOOR HERITAGE OF THE CROWN OF THE CONTINENT.



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### **Documenting Wildlife Corridor**

#### **Dr. John Weaver's Research Advises Crown Conservation**

May 23, 2013

Dear Friend:

How much and which landscapes do wildlife in the Crown of the Continent need to persist as Earth's climate warms up? Answering this question has kept Dr. John Weaver busy across the Rockies and beyond for over a decade as Senior Research Scientist for the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

In March of this year, Dr. Weaver published his fourth WCS report. This report, titled, "Safe Havens, Safe Passage for Vulnerable Fish and Wildlife", focused on the landscape of the southern Canadian Rockies of British Columbia and Montana.

This report and his 2011 effort assess the conservation value of approximately 6,632 square miles of public (US) and crown (BC) lands adjacent to the international border for six vulnerable species. These include bull trout, west slope cutthroat trout, wolverine, grizzly bear, mountain goat and bighorn sheep.

Dr. Weaver writes,

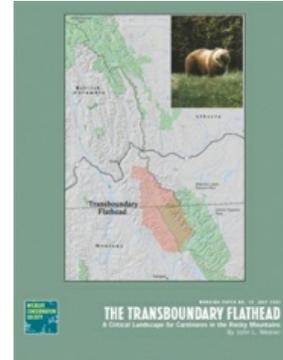
*"Roads and settlements have fragmented habitats for all these vulnerable species across the Southern Canadian Rockies. Such fracturing can reduce population and genetic exchange, and impede movements of animals to track shifting climatic conditions. Consequently, many wildlife scientist recommend landscape linkages to facilitate current and future movement."*

The reports document a map-based, model-driven methodology that ranks habitat elements for each species. For example, for bull trout, Dr. Weaver incorporated historic and current records and distributions maps, consulted with local scientists and managers, and conducted his own field recognisance.

Data and modeling is undertaken for each species that results in habitat values across the landscape. Habitat values for each species are then combined for a "composite" land value score.

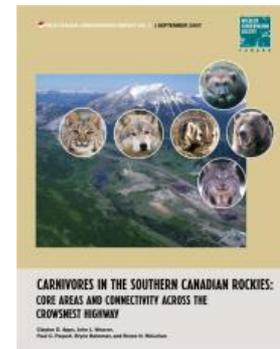
The computer model then maps the landscape for its importance for all six species that results in a landscape-scale view of areas most important to the long-term persistence for the six species.

Dr. Weaver makes several recommendations in his *Safe*



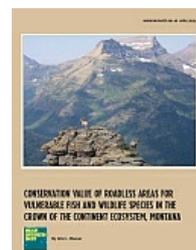
**2001**

*"The Transboundary Flathead: A Critical Landscape for Carnivores in the Rocky Mountains." This report details the dual-citizenship of wildlife that occupy the North Fork Flathead River watershed.*



**2007**

*"Carnivores in the Southern Canadian Rockies". Co-authored with Drs. Apps, Paquet, Bateman, and McLellan, this report documents the remaining movement corridors and core areas for carnivores in the developed Elk River Valley of SE B.C., a critical landscape for Montana's biological connection to Canada.*



**2011**

*"Conservation of Roadless Lands", the first of two*

Havens report. For the Montana side of the transboundary Flathead River basin and the Whitefish Range, Dr. Weaver recommends, "64,986 ha (260,515 ac) of remnant roadless areas be legislated as a national Wilderness Area."

For crown lands in the Southern Rockies of BC, he recommends, "designation of 719,297 ha of Crown land as the 'Southern Canadian Rockies Wildlife Management Area.'"

For the area west of Elkford BC he recommends, "approximately 64,048 ha be designated as the Homaday Wilderness (or Homaday Conservancy)."

Headwaters Montana has looked to Dr. Weaver's reports for insight on the biological significance of public lands viewed at the "landscape scale". We strive to achieve our conservation mission based upon this broader view. This helps keep future options open because it emphasizes ecological variability and resiliency across space and time.

### **Other Reports**

"*The Transboundary Flathead: A Critical Landscape for Carnivores in the Rocky Mountains*" (2001) examines the dual-citizenship of 8 species (5 carnivores and 3 ungulates).

Of the North Fork Flathead River valley, Dr. Weaver writes, "A unique community of carnivore species resides in the transboundary Flathead region that appears unmatched in North America for its variety, completeness, use of valley bottomlands, and density of species which are rare elsewhere."

"*Carnivore in the Southern Canadian Rockies: Core Areas and Connectivity across the Crownsnest Highway*" (2007) is co-authored by Drs. Clayton Apps, John Weaver, Paul Paquet, Bryce Bateman, and Bruce McLellan.

The authors write, "Due to their particular geographic position, the southern Canadian Rockies also represent one of the most strategically important sections in maintaining broad ecological connectivity in the western mountains of North America."

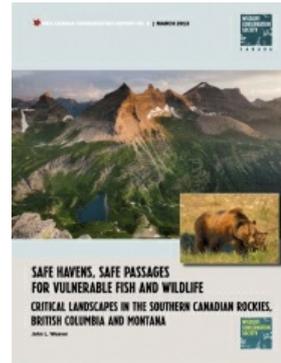
### **Read Them**

Each of these reports is available free, on line. Click on the titles above or the images in the right panel. You can also find links to them on our website [here](#).

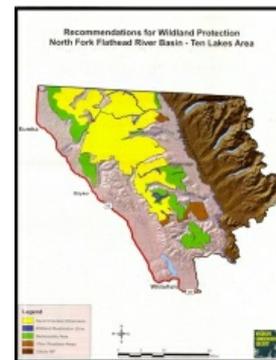
~ ***We thought you'd like to know***

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*assessments of habitat values of public lands in BC and Montana for six vulnerable species.*



**2013**  
"Safe Havens, Safe Passages", the second of two assessments of habitat values of public lands in BC and Montana for six vulnerable species.



**Sample Recommendation**  
In this example, Dr. Weaver recommends protection of lands that are important to vulnerable species as congressionally designated "Wilderness"...



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