



Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

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To: Dr. Wyatt Hoback,

From: Bob Bettger, Chairman Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

Subject: Support Letter for Research Funding for the Platte River and Rainwater Basin Wetland Complexes

The purpose of this letter is to provide support for the proposed research in the Platte River and Rainwater Basin Wetland complexes. Recently the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture adopted the Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) business model. The SHC model stresses the principles of Adaptive Resource Management (ARM). In the ARM framework conservation actions are completed based on the best available science, but continued research and monitoring is done to evaluate key uncertainties. In the Rainwater Basin and Platte River Bio-energetic models are being used to assess current habitat conditions and prioritize future conservation actions. With all models there are key uncertainties associated with the model predictions. The two critical components of a bio-energetic are the number of individuals that use a region and the forage values associated with habitats present in these regions. In the Platte River and Rainwater Basin forage values for similar habitats from different geographic regions were used to estimate habitat potential. It is critical that these model inputs be validated. Research to determine baseline forage potential by habitat, the impacts of different management actions, and the influence of agriculture runoff on forage potential is critical. Dr. Hoback and the faculty at the University of Nebraska at Kearney have the expertise and student resources to complete these types of research projects.

Thanks again for your time,

Bob Bettger

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