

## INTERAGENCY NEWS RELEASE



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### **Nevada Becomes 39th State to Create Multi-Agency Cooperative Research Unit**

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Nevada – The newly formed Nevada Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit brings state and federal wildlife-management resources together, providing for a cooperative partnership that ensures resources are best serving Nevada’s wildlife and wild places. The partnership consists of the Nevada Department of Wildlife; the University of Nevada, Reno; the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI); the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to focus on scientific research and conservation of fish and wildlife in the state and region.

The Nevada Cooperative Research Unit will include three scientists employed through the USGS who will have adjunct faculty appointments to the University of Nevada, Reno. Based on the University campus, the program will focus on wildlife research, ecology, and management, and will promote collaboration among the participating partner organizations. In addition, the program will support a focus on human dimensions and the importance of wildlife conservation to the public’s overall quality of life.

“Nevada’s creation of a Cooperative Research Unit is a monumental success for the scientific research and conservation efforts for the state’s wildlife and habitat,” said Nevada Department of Wildlife Director Tony Wasley. “This partnership brings the

state's top wildlife and research agencies together at the table and allows us to enhance the effectiveness of our conservation science and delivery through collaboration.”

“We are excited to welcome Nevada to the Cooperative Research Unit family,” said USGS Cooperative Research Unit Chief Jonathan Mawdsley. “We look forward to working with all of our collaborators to train the next generation of conservation professionals and provide high-quality science and technical assistance to meet the needs of our partners in Nevada.”

Since 1935, the Cooperative Research Unit program has grown from the original nine wildlife-only units and today—with the addition of the Nevada Unit—now includes 41 units located on university campuses in 39 states. The mission of the Cooperative Research Unit program focuses on developing the conservation workforce of the future through applied graduate education, helping fulfill the training and technical assistance needs of the cooperators, and delivering actionable science to cooperating agencies and organizations. The unique model of the Cooperative Research Unit program increases productivity and capacity by allowing partners to benefit from each other's strengths, developing better management at every level of fish and wildlife conservation.

“The addition of Nevada to the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit system is a proud moment for WMI, the only national, private cooperator,” said WMI President Steve Williams. “WMI was involved in the creation of the Unit system in 1935, and we applaud the 2021 agreement.”

“We are very excited about the establishment of the new Nevada Cooperative Research Unit,” said Paul Souza, Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's California-Great Basin Region. “The Unit will serve as a model for researchers to work collaboratively with the conservation community to benefit wildlife and their habitats. At the same time the Unit will provide a wonderful way for students to connect to their natural world, students who will be our next generation of conservation leaders.”

All partners will link their respective research and training missions, sharing scientific expertise while training students interested in conservation to enter the workforce. Advised by unit scientists incorporating cutting edge academic training from university cooperators, graduate students will conduct applied research projects that directly address current natural resource concerns identified by state and federal partners.

“It is especially exciting to have this multi-agency program connected to the development of our graduate students,” said University President Brian Sandoval. “The

University of Nevada, Reno has an impressive track-record of outstanding research and teaching in the natural resources, biology, ecology, and many other areas of study related to wildlife conservation and environmental settings. Bringing together the passion and expertise of these agencies, people, and resources will open new doors of opportunity, and apply the science and discovery of our faculty and students to real-world, real-time challenges.”

The experience prepares graduates to be effective members of the natural resource workforce; in fact, one of the greatest legacies of the program is the placement of students in natural resource agencies and organizations. Nationwide, the Cooperative Research Unit program educates more than 500 graduate students annually in conservation and natural resource management. Alumni of the program currently hold important leadership positions in nearly every state and federal fish and wildlife management agency.

“Nevada is facing unprecedented environmental change. Native plant communities and their associated fish and wildlife species are challenged by invasive weeds, increased fire frequency and intensity, water quantity and quality, and development associated with a growing human population,” said University Vice President for Research and Innovation Mridul Gautam. “Establishing a Cooperative Research Unit at the University of Nevada, Reno will significantly enhance the efforts of the University, the Nevada Department of Wildlife and other partners to address these natural resource management priorities.”

The state of Nevada—along with its fish, wildlife, and habitat—stands to benefit greatly from the partnership. By working closely together and toward the same goals, the state’s management agencies can ensure that Nevada’s resources are used effectively and responsibly, keeping wildlife wild for generations to come.

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*Photo Caption: In Nevada’s Humboldt County, College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources undergraduate and graduate students conduct field tests of native plants for restoration in cheatgrass-invaded rangelands.*