



Bat Conservation International



Bat Conservation International and USDA Forest Service: Partnership Opportunities

CONNECTING SCIENCE WITH CONSERVATION

Bat Conservation International (BCI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting bat conservation, education and research, worldwide. BCI has supported and collaborated with others to enhance and solidify the public and scientific understanding of the unique and beneficial role of bats worldwide.

BCI was founded in 1982 and remains the primary champion for bats at a global scale through public education including classroom curriculum, collaborative research, development of grants, and through partnerships with state and federal agencies to instill bat conservation as a fundamental aspect of managing public lands. BCI facilitates positive solutions to natural resource management situations concerning bats that benefit people and bats alike.

The **USDA Forest Service** is a natural resource agency dedicated to sustainable management of the nation's natural resources, service to people and, through Federal law and regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture, has major responsibilities for conserving biodiversity through the management of fish, wildlife, and plant habitats on National Forest and Grasslands, including special protection for threatened, endangered, and sensitive/rare plant and animal species. The agency works to acquire, evaluate, and disseminate up-to-date information on the status, distribution, population trends, ecology, conservation needs, and stewardship of species and habitats to accomplish needed management and conserve these natural resources. The Forest Service accomplishes much of this work by initiating and developing cooperative relationships and effective partnerships through its National Forest System, Research and Development, International Programs, and State and Private Forestry branches.

MUTUAL GOALS, MUTUAL BENEFITS

The Forest Service and BCI have a long history of partnership and collaboration on a wide range of projects devoted to bat conservation. BCI has worked with the Forest Service nationally and at local levels to provide guidance and support for forest planning, to protect or manage important bat habitat, to assess habitat use, to conserve threatened, endangered, and sensitive bat species, and to research bat issues relevant to National Forest System management and other Forest Service missions.

Recognizing the opportunity to expand on these collaborations, in August 2008, the Forest Service and BCI signed a service-wide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU provides a framework for cooperation between the two organizations, to help achieve our mutual goals of ensuring the sound management of the

nation's National Forests and Grasslands, and protecting the biological resources key to bat conservation that these lands and waters sustain.

A TRACK RECORD OF COLLABORATION

- **Management for the Indiana Bat**

BCI and the Forest Service have collaborated to conduct research and surveys to better understand the habitat relationships and conservation needs for this endangered eastern forest bat species. Collaborative efforts include the protection of critical cave and mine hibernacula, support to conduct studies to assess the use of forest habitat, educational efforts to inform the public and others on the species ecology, and contributing to a scientific symposium on the Indiana bat and publication of the proceedings.

- **Development of guidance for managing eastern bats**

BCI and the Forest Service worked with other partners to produce *Bats in Eastern Woodlands* an on-line report that has become an invaluable resource to forest managers on the ecological background and management approaches for bats in eastern forests. Additionally, they have worked collaboratively to protect key roost sites and foraging areas for several species of state and federally listed bats throughout the Eastern U.S.

- **Development of guidance for managing bats in forests**

BCI and the Forest Service collaborated with public and private partners to publish the "*Bats in Forests, Conservation and Management*" book and the "*Forest Management & Bats*" handbook, two resources that are invaluable resources to forest managers on the ecological background and management approaches for bats in forests throughout the United States.

- **Conservation, protection and management of cave and mine roosts and water resources for bats**

BCI and the Forest Service worked to identify and protect important cave and mine roosts and water resources throughout the western United States to help maintain healthy bat populations. Thousands of roost and water sites have been conserved, enhanced, and protected by these efforts.

- **Grants**

BCI has contributed towards National Forest System based projects through the North American Bat Conservation Fund competitive grants program, helping to fund an array of projects including: development of cave, mine, and forest-roosting bat survey protocols; cave and mine protection; forest landscape-level studies; and cave and mine closures that support bat conservation.

- **Education**

BCI facilitated and collaborated with the Forest Service and others to conduct a 2004 North American Symposium on Bats and Forest Conservation that was attended by over 250 practitioners and researchers from the USA and Canada. The symposium provided the latest information on bats and their habitat needs, workshops for practitioners, and publication of the proceedings.

- **Training**

BCI has collaborated with the Forest Service and other agency partners to conduct many regional and national training sessions on forest management and bat conservation and bat-compatible mine closure methods that have trained hundreds of Forest Service biologists and natural resource managers.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The new MOU between the Forest Service and BCI provides a framework for expanding collaboration on the conservation of bats and their habitats.

- BCI is the flagship organization for bat conservation and provides expertise and supports Forest Service management of: bat species and their habitats, abandoned mine closure and reclamation, wind generation, and forest management.
- BCI is proficient at initiating and facilitating cooperative efforts with the Forest Service, other agencies, and non-government organizations to complete conservation efforts in collaborative and cost-effective manners.
- The Forest Service and BCI can work together internationally, nationally, regionally, and locally to identify and support priorities for research, education, and management that will meet mutual objectives for species conservation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

BCI works on an array of bat conservation projects and issues. Forest Service staff are encouraged to contact BCI at their headquarters in Austin, TX at the contact below to find the most appropriate staff person to work with them. Also, BCI manages an informative website that provides information and links that address bat ecology, current issues, upcoming training opportunities, resource materials and more.

BCI Home Office

Bat Conservation International <http://www.batcon.org/>
P.O. Box 162603 (512) 327-9721
Austin, TX 78716

Forest Service national forest, research laboratories, and state and private forestry offices are located in most states; contact information is available at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/national.shtml>.

Contacts for Service-Wide MOU (USFS# 08-SU-11132424-172):

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