

---

## **TRANSFERRING FEDERAL LANDS TO STATES: UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR WILDLIFE**

Martin Nie, Director, Bolle Center for People and Forests; Professor, Natural Resources Policy;  
W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation; University of Montana, Missoula

The Wildlife Society should oppose the transfer of federal lands to the states or their sale to private interests. Federal public land and the wildlife it supports is in the national interest and is essential to the conservation of biological diversity. Those interests advocating the transfer of federal lands to the states have still yet to explain how transferred lands would be managed. These unanswered questions have significant implications for wildlife conservation and the management of habitat. Managing federal public land in a democracy comes with its challenges. The solution is not to transfer federal lands to the states or sell them to private interests or to backslide on foundational federal land and environmental laws. The more constructive approach is to seriously investigate ways in which these laws can be more effectively and efficiently implemented.