

BAT CONSERVATION ON THE FLATHEAD INDIAN RESERVATION

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The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Wildlife Management Program is working on conservation projects to benefit bats on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The Reservation has at least eight species of bats including Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) a state listed 'Species of Concern.' One of only five known or suspected big-eared bat maternity colonies in the state is located in an abandoned mine on the Reservation. Surveys have confirmed that *C. townsendii* and other bat species are using other abandoned mines for hibernacula and roost sites. In August 2007, two bat-friendly gates were installed with cost-share funding from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Wildlife Habitat

Incentive Program. Within less than one week, big-eared bats were observed roosting in one of the gated mines. In 2008, a third bat-friendly gate will be constructed and mine surveys will be conducted to identify if there is a need for additional gating projects. Long-term monitoring of bat activity at gated sites will provide information on gate success. Additional plans include 1) Reservation-wide baseline field inventories to gain information on species distributions and key resource needs, 2) the construction of roosting structures to provide additional bat habitat, and 3) the distribution of educational materials and presentations to increase public awareness of the benefits of bats.