

PRIVATE EFFORTS TO CONSERVE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY^{TWS}

Michael K. Phillips

Turner Endangered Species Fund, P.O. Box 190, Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730

Every year tens of thousands of species and attendant ecological interactions, fine-tuned by time and place, disappear at the hand of man. Losses are so severe that the redundancy and certainty of nature is being stripped away, exhausting the lives of millions of people. If trends continue, the world will soon be a more dismal place with silent springs and hot summers and little left to excite the senses less the weeds. Without doubt, the extinction crisis is one of humanity's most pressing problems. In response to the crisis, during June 1997 Ted Turner launched the Turner Endangered Species Fund and the Turner Biodiversity Divisions as private organizations dedicated to conserving biodiversity by ensuring the persistence of imperiled species and the habitats upon which they depend. We concentrate on carnivores, grasslands, plant-pollinator complexes, species with historic ranges that include Turner properties (14 parcels encompassing 1.5 million acres in six U.S. states and Argentina), and distribution of reliable scientific and policy information on biodiversity conservation. Our activities are based on the principles of conservation biology and we work closely with state and federal agencies, Universities, and private organizations. We operate on the belief that many minds wrapped around a problem is a certain route to success. In our endeavors, whether it is management of an extant population or restoration of an extirpated population, our goal is population persistence with little or no human intervention. We believe that self-sustaining populations of native species indicate a healthy or, at least, a recovering landscape.