



## **MONTANA WILDLIFE AND WATERS AT RISK**

### **New report shows state's streams and wetlands endangered**

WASHINGTON – February 17, 2010 – A new report shows serious threats to Montana's wetlands and streams – and to its waterfowl, fish, and wildlife. Compiled by the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, and Trout Unlimited, the report identifies four case studies where the loss of Clean Water Act protections has put Montana waters at risk of pollution, unrestricted drainage and destruction.

As a result of regulatory guidance resulting from two Supreme Court cases in 2001 and 2006, tens of millions of acres of wetlands and thousands of miles of streams have been put at risk of losing Clean Water Act protections.

"These protections help guarantee the outdoor heritage that of a state like Montana," said Tom France of the National Wildlife Federation. "Sportsmen spend a billion dollars in Montana every year, and the lack of protection for these waters and wetlands threatens that economic engine."

Montana contains a portion of the Prairie Pothole Region, an area that contains many small, shallow ponds and wetlands that are critical to waterfowl and wildlife and important on a continental scale.

"The Prairie Pothole Region - called America's duck factory because of the number of ducks that breed there – includes much of eastern Montana," said Scott Yaich of Ducks Unlimited. "Ensuring that these wetlands have Clean Water Act protection is vital to the future of waterfowling."

Fish habitat is also threatened. "Many of the world's finest coldwater fisheries are here in Montana, and threats to these streams threaten those fisheries," said Bruce Farling, executive director of Montana Trout Unlimited. "The epic waters from movies like A River Runs Through It depend on stream-feeding wetlands like the ones detailed in this report."

#### **[Read the Report](#)**

This report provides an overview of the waters at risk in Montana and documents cases in Montana where important waterways have lost basic federal pollution protections or been placed at risk because of the confused state of the law. Included among these are a valuable wetland next to a famed trout river; a geographically isolated wetland with potentially important habitat values; and a wetland that may be geographically isolated, but likely has other important hydrological and ecological connections to water quality and wildlife habitat. It is almost certain that these waters would have been protected prior to the 2001 and 2006 Supreme Court decisions that weakened the Clean Water Act.