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## Helping States Safeguard Nature in an Era of Climate Change

### Grant to NatureServe will help states update their wildlife action plans and expand cross-border collaboration

**New York** – The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) today announced a grant of \$600,000 over four years to NatureServe. With this award, NatureServe, working with the state natural heritage programs it represents, will launch a science-based initiative to assist state wildlife agencies as they update their wildlife action plans to account for a changing climate.

“NatureServe is eager to bring our best science to bear to help the states safeguard the natural areas that their residents know and love, and that their plants and animals will need to survive,” said Mary Klein, NatureServe’s President and CEO. “We look forward to working with everyone who has a role in meeting the climate change challenge, from state and federal agencies to other conservation organizations and concerned citizens.” NatureServe, which represents the state-by-state network of biological inventories known as the state natural heritage programs, is a leading provider of conservation data and tools.

The initiative will use science and partnerships to assist the states in the following ways:

- **Developing consistent approaches for classifying and mapping priority wildlife habitats** by working with partners in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan to develop statewide maps, and then with these states and the 17 others in the Eastern Region of the US Forest Service to develop a regional map
- **Identifying and incorporating into the action plans the connected corridors of wildlife habitat** that will be needed for animals and plants to adapt to changing climates. A pilot project in several western states will build upon the efforts of the Western Governors’ Association Wildlife Corridors Initiative (<http://www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/corridors/index.htm>)
- **Assessing the expected impacts of climate change on plant species** by applying the new NatureServe Climate Change Vulnerability Index in pilot projects in Colorado, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, and North Dakota (<http://www.natureserve.org/prodServices/climatechange/ClimateChange.jsp>)
- **Sharing results with all states via maps, publications, trainings and toolkits using LandScope America**, the innovative online conservation guide developed by NatureServe and the National Geographic Society ([www.landscape.org](http://www.landscape.org))

“With the expertise of its staff and the depth of its network of natural heritage programs, NatureServe is ideally suited to helping the states develop effective ways to conserve nature in an era of climate change,” said Jeff Lerner, program officer with DDCF’s Environment Program. “The even better news is that with this new initiative NatureServe will not be starting from scratch, as the states

already have developed the first versions of wildlife action plans that can now be expanded to handle what will be required for a changing climate.”

The state wildlife action plans were created at the request of Congress, which mandated that each state develop a comprehensive strategy for conserving its wildlife. The plans were developed by the state wildlife agencies, working together with local scientists, sportsmen, conservationists and other members of the public, and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. More information about the plans, as well as copies of each of the plans, can be found at [www.wildlifeactionplans.org](http://www.wildlifeactionplans.org).

“The state fish and wildlife agencies look forward to working with NatureServe on this project,” said Matt Hogan, Executive Director of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. “Climate change is exacerbating many threats to fish and wildlife and is creating new challenges for state fish and wildlife agencies to conserve our wildlife resources for future generations to enjoy.” The association represents state fish and wildlife agencies, and leads the Teaming With Wildlife Coalition, a national coalition of 6,100 organizations that supports dedicated funding for implementation of the state wildlife action plans to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered.

This new award to NatureServe complements a set of four grants DDCF made earlier this year to assist the states in updating their action plans to account for a changing climate (<http://www.ddcf.org/page.asp?pageId=434>).

For more information about the work of NatureServe, please contact Rob Riordan, Director of Marketing and Communications, at [rob\\_riordan@natureserve.org](mailto:rob_riordan@natureserve.org) or 703-908-1831.

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*The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation ([www.ddcf.org](http://www.ddcf.org)) is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties.*