

For Immediate Release

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Wildlife Conservation Advocate and Lawyer provides Ranchers, Private Landowners a Resource with *Saving Species on Private Lands* Book

By Kelsey Pope, BluePrint Media Writer

Whether engaged in farming, ranching, forestry, mining, energy development or other businesses, private working lands all have value as wildlife habitat with the proper management and financial support. In his latest book, *Saving Species on Private Lands: Unlocking Incentives to Conserve Wildlife and Their Habitats*, Lowell E. Baier, provides landowners and their partners with a roadmap to achieve conservation compatible with their financial and personal goals. This guide is a great resource for private landowners who want to conserve fish and wildlife on their lands.

Baier's intellectual curiosity during his 56-year career has taken him from a practicing attorney, to an entrepreneur, a tireless advocate for natural resources and wildlife conservation, and a legal and environmental historian and author. Baier continues to practice law specializing in wildlife conservation and natural resource policy, legislation and regulation, and writes extensively on these subjects.

From Farm to Law School to Author

Being raised on a farm in northern Indiana and spending time on his grandfather's homestead ranch in Montana gave Baier a lifelong passion for protecting the country's natural resources and wildlife conservation.

"I was raised close to the land and have always had a respect for it and wildlife," Baier says. "It was always a part of our lives to make the land more productive while preserving wildlife so this topic is naturally close to my heart."

Along with those childhood experiences, Baier got a taste of law and policy when he was selected to be a Page Boy in the United States House of Representatives for Congressman Charles Halleck in 1956 during the 84th Congress.

"Being in Washington got me hooked on law," Baier recalls. "Congressman Halleck really inspired me to pursue a degree in law, and he helped me find a job that paid for my college education, and I remained focused on going to law school, which immediately followed."

Baier received his B.A. in economics and political science from Valparaiso University in 1961 and completed his law degree in 1964 at the Indiana University School of Law where he earned a Doctor of Jurisprudence.

Baier also holds an honorary Doctorate of Law and Letters degree awarded in 2010 by Rocky Mountain College, a Doctorate of Humane Letters awarded in 2015 by Indiana University, and a Doctorate of Public Service awarded in 2019 by Valparaiso University. The law school building at Indiana University was named 'Baier Hall' in his honor in 2015.

A recognized advisor to elected officials and educators on environmental and conservation issues, Baier took the lead in drafting President George H.W. Bush's wildlife conservation agenda in 1989, and has been an advisor and counselor to all successive presidential administrations. Between 1988-2010, Baier was heavily involved in the creation of Ph.D. programs at four separate universities dedicated to postgraduate studies in natural resources and wildlife conservation management.

From 2004-2007, he led a national campaign to raise \$6.5 million to purchase for the federal government the last and largest remaining piece of privately held land (23,550 acres) that was initially Theodore Roosevelt's historic Elkhorn Ranch established in 1884 adjacent the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, also once part of the ranch, thus virtually expanding the national park by one-third its size.

Along with his education and experiences, Baier began observing and documenting wildlife on extensive treks and expeditions in the mountains across North America, the Pamirs and Caucasus of Russia, and Mongolia's Gobi Desert and Altai Mountains. Baier has been recognized as Conservationist of the Year by various organizations, including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in 2008, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in 2010, Outdoor Life magazine in 2010 and the National Wildlife Federation in 2016.

Reasons for Saving Species on Private Lands

Today, fish and wildlife are in a crisis of rapidly accelerating decline and extinction, brought about by the expansion of the human population, the fragmentation and loss of wildlife habitat, and the impacts of climate change and disease. The historical response to this has been one of government regulation and restrictions on private enterprise, embodied by laws such as the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA).

But there is a better way forward. Over the past decades, a quiet, sustained effort has been made to conserve species, with private landowners voluntarily investing in conservation leading the way. More than 75 percent of threatened and endangered species are found on private land, as well as countless more species at risk of decline and eventual extinction. The prescient efforts of private landowners to conserve these species need to be recognized, celebrated, and supported.

“I was in the process of writing a book on the Endangered Species Act, its history, application and enforcement, and its contemporary challenges. One chapter focused on the toolbox of available aids for private landowners to incorporate wildlife conservation into their land management, such as funding opportunities, technical guidance and advice, NGO partners, Farm Bill incentives, etc.,” Baier says.

“With the 50th anniversary of the ESA coming up in 2023, the chapter was growing more into a book by itself than just a chapter,” Baier adds. “So I talked with my publisher and we decided to make it a separate book focusing on incentives for private landowners to include wildlife conservations on farms and ranches with a focus on endangered species.”

Baier’s aim in writing his book was to:

- 1) Explain wildlife conservation on private lands;
- 2) Show readers how to develop land management plans for wildlife;
- 3) Decipher the Endangered Species Act and how private landowners can address it; and,
- 4) Access financial and technical assistance to conserve wildlife, and identify NGO partners.

In each of these topics, the legal, regulatory, financial, and tax consequences that should be considered are also clarified. Regulatory compliance, principally with the ESA, is widely feared by private landowners, and not without reason. But over the years innovations and regulatory assurances have greatly reduced the burden of the ESA.

“In doing interviews with farmers and ranchers, they kept telling me they needed someone to explain land management practices for wildlife conservation, including endangered species, and to demystify the ESA,” Baier adds. “The ESA created a myth in the early ‘70s that landowners in the West are still wary about. I want these landowners to know that the myths of the past are not what they should be worried about today with managing endangered species and other wildlife on their farms and ranches.”

Most landowner assistance programs provided by the government and subject to review under the ESA are approved in advance of landowner enrollment. Tools to identify and take advantage of these opportunities are provided in the book, and ESA tools such as Habitat Conservation Plans, Safe Harbor Agreements, Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances, experimental populations, and critical habitat exclusions are discussed.

While this book is targeted toward landowners, government agency and NGO staff, policymakers and students, it introduces the art and language of land management planning by categorizing and explaining the tools used by wildlife professionals to implement conservation on private lands.

Moreover, it documents the multitude of federal, state, local, and private opportunities for landowners to find financial and technical assistance in managing wildlife, ranging from working

with a local NGO, to accessing the \$6 billion per year available for conservation through the federal Farm Bill.

“In the book, I also spotlight who farmers and ranchers can go to for confidential discussions besides the government to find out what they need to know about managing wildlife and endangered species on their land,” Baier says.

Praise from the industry

Several individuals from government, industry, conservation organizations, media and the academic community have given praise to Baier’s book.

“This book takes on the complex issues of how landowners can conserve wildlife, access public and private support for doing so, and avoid regulation under the Endangered Species Act. This practical, well organized book is a valuable resource for landowners, partner organizations, government officials, students, and policymakers alike,” Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture (2009-2017), Governor of Iowa (1999-2007).

“Ranchers are perhaps our most important resource for the conservation of wildlife. *Saving Species on Private Lands* arms these conservationists with critical information to aid them in securing the technical assistance, regulatory assurances, and financial incentives necessary to navigate the Endangered Species Act. These tools can help ranchers continue to provide the large unbroken landscapes needed for healthy wildlife populations,” Ethan L. Lane, Vice President, Government Affairs, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, Executive Director, Public Lands Council (2015-2019).

Get Your Copy!

Baier welcomes media interviews to aid him in reaching private landowners, including farmers and ranchers, with this powerful resource. To schedule an interview, contact him at lebaier@lawbaier.com or visit www.lowellebaier.com to learn more.

Saving Species on Private Lands: Unlocking Incentives to Conserve Wildlife and Their Habitats is now available at www.rowman.com/ISBN/9781538139387.

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