

\$30,000 FOR A BEETLE? (NOT THE VOLKSWAGEN KIND)

QUICK STATS

- ✘ **CONFERENCE:** Spending
- ✘ **TEAM:** Fish and Wildlife Service
- **FUMBLE:** \$30,000 for American Burying Beetle credits
- **HOW TO RECOVER THE BALL:** Remove the American Burying Beetle from the endangered species list to avoid unnecessary spending on efforts to protect their habitat

For most Americans \$30,000 is a substantial amount of money that could pay off debt, purchase a vehicle, or maybe even buy a home. What about \$30,000 to secure a house for a bug? That is the price some must pay in “beetle credits” to have access to land without disturbing the habitat of the American Burying Beetle, an insect that teeters on being listed as endangered by the federal government. The American Burying Beetle was listed as an endangered species in 1989 as part of the Endangered Species Act.¹⁰⁵ Across the country its numbers have soared, yet the beetle still remains listed as threatened by FWS. Companies within the oil and gas industry have been known to pay upward of \$30,000 per drilling well in “beetle credits” to gain access to and develop land on which the beetle may reside.¹⁰⁶ Remember, the companies who pay for these beetle credits pass that cost on to you, the American consumer.

The federal government has an obligation to serve as a steward of U.S. land and maintain the habitat for God’s creatures, but is spending that much really necessary for an insect that no longer needs such protection? Surely not. Currently FWS has approved the Industry Conservation Plan to permit projects in the beetle’s habitat for the next year. This is a good first step to remove the beetle as a hindrance to further economic development. However, removing the beetle from the list of endangered species would bring long-term stability and predictability to those looking to expand oil and gas activities or develop

land. The population of the beetle continues to soar, but now FWS is focused on the “habitat” protection of the insect. Bugs should never get priority protection over people. Americans should hope termites and ants are never labeled “threatened” by FWS.



Photo: Cincinnati Zoo

RECOVERY

To prevent such a deterrent for construction and to save American consumers from having the costs transferred to them, the American Burying Beetle should be removed from the list of endangered species. While beetle populations continue to increase across the Midwest, it is apparent the beetle lacks the primary criteria for remaining on the list, and Congress should remove it. In the short term, FWS should continue with its plan to permit projects in the beetle’s habitat until the list of endangered species receives an update.

For more information, please visit:

[U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: American Burying Beetle Impact Assessment for Project Reviews](#)
[Osages You Need To Know: Our Beloved American Burying Beetle](#)