

# How Defenders of Wildlife raised **\$7M** in new bequests in their first year with FreeWill



## THE OPPORTUNITY

Conservation organization Defenders of Wildlife has a robust planned giving team. However, after years of successfully marketing planned gifts to their donor base, they felt that they had hit a wall. They were speaking to the same donors year after year and found that the returns on their surveys and marketing were diminishing over time. In order to broaden their reach and surpass their goal of 165 new commitments per year, the team wanted to find new and innovative ways to market planned gifts.

## THE SOLUTION

When FreeWill reached out to Defenders of Wildlife, the team was excited to learn how it could help them grow. With FreeWill's help, they created messaging that reframed the donor conversation, and offered estate planning services as a gift to a broader segment of their supporters.

In just one year, these efforts led to more than 300 new gifts, totaling \$7 million, from a wider, more diverse audience than they had previously targeted. Plus, they now screen every new donor for immediate gift potential, growing the organization's major and annual giving programs as well.

As of April 2023, Defenders of Wildlife has raised **\$38.8M** in primary bequest commitments across **1300+** gifts.



FreeWill has enabled us to reach out to people outside of our normal donor base. It's helped us take our program to a new audience and created a new level of longterm commitments to Defenders

**Jim Luerssen**  
Director of Planned Giving

## RESULTS

**\$7M**

new bequests in 1 year

**300+**

new bequest commitments