

## Conservation Officers: A Force Multiplier for Homeland Security

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## Conservation Officers: A Force Multiplier for Homeland Security

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### Abstract:

Today's law enforcement officers—both conservation and police—find themselves adapting to an emerging and dynamic threat environment. Policies and practices aimed at the prevention of threats have focused primarily on federal, state, and local police agencies. At a time when terrorists, extremists, and activists have begun to widen their array of attack methods, collaboration across all sectors of law enforcement becomes essential. More specifically, an increased vulnerability to biological threats has not been met by steps to prevent or mitigate these threats. Conservation officers have a unique and integral role to enhance homeland security efforts given their day-to-day operations and interactions with the community, especially rural America. This article will discuss the role of conservation officers as it relates to homeland security—a significant conceptual component to research and practice that has largely been ignored by both academics and professionals. The integration of conservation officers into the proactive information sharing environment will be discussed to strengthen a culture of information sharing as it pertains to an “all-threats, all-hazards” philosophy and to enhance national security awareness. Moreover, this article will challenge the traditional range of threats associated with biological terrorism by providing an illustrative case study.

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