



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES \$1.17 BILLION BUDGET FOR U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

America's wildlife conservation programs would receive \$1.17 billion under President Bush's FY 1993 Budget, the highest level ever proposed by the Administration for the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"This budget proposal reflects the President's commitment to careful stewardship of our beautiful lands and wildlife for the benefit of present and future generations," said Service director John Turner. "This is the second consecutive \$1 billion-plus proposed budget for the Service. In addition, the Service's overall operating budget will increase by more than \$31 million."

Proposed funding for the President's "America the Beautiful" initiative to protect the nation's natural and cultural resources and enhance recreational opportunities increased to \$330.0 million from \$323.3 million enacted last year. This amount includes \$207.1 million for the Service's resource protection programs, recreation operations, and land acquisition and \$125.9 million for rehabilitation and restoration projects.

Specifically, America the Beautiful includes \$195.0 million for protecting, enhancing, restoring, and acquiring wetland and

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associated upland habitats. For example, the Service would expand its bay/estuary protection and enhancement program to cover new areas in Texas, Michigan, Alabama, and Florida.

As part of America the Beautiful, the Administration also proposes to increase funding for rehabilitation and restoration projects under "Legacy '99," Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan's stewardship initiative aimed at improving Service facilities by 1999. This encompasses funding for maintenance, rehabilitation projects, management and clean-up of hazardous wastes, and dam safety. The proposed budget calls for \$125.9 million for this initiative, a \$3.4 million increase over the 1992 enacted amount. Maintenance and rehabilitation of Service facilities would receive \$69 million.

"Much of the work under 'Legacy 99' will be done by private contractors, which means the funds spent on the initiative will help stimulate local economies and produce jobs," said Mike Hayden, Assistant Interior Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. "We not only are getting improved facilities for the future but also are helping the American worker today."

Another \$17.2 million is proposed for acquisition of land to protect endangered species, initiate trustee responsibility, and increase opportunities for public enjoyment of natural resource areas. Refuges also would benefit from a \$4 million increase in operational funding.

Endangered species conservation efforts would receive \$54.7 million under the President's proposal, up \$4.3 million from last year and the largest amount ever for that program. Nearly half this increase would fund activities such as status surveys and conservation activities aimed at keeping species from reaching the point of being threatened.

The Service's law enforcement efforts also would get a significant boost from the President's proposed budget. This would involve \$670,000 to establish a new special agent training class to better combat poaching and illegal trading of wildlife.

The proposed budget also calls for continued acquisition of new lands for wildlife refuges. The Administration proposes to create a number of new refuges including Canaan Valley NWR in West Virginia, Lake Wales Ridge NWR in Florida, and Rappahannock NWR in Virginia.

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President Bush's proposed budget would also recompense counties and other jurisdictions for loss of tax revenue from Service lands. This would be accomplished through \$14.1 million in appropriations and \$4.6 million from refuge receipts.

Other highlights of the President's proposed FY 1993 budget for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service include:

- o \$15 million in appropriations is requested for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund. This funding, in combination with \$10 million in permanent revenues, would be used for acquisition and management of lands in cooperation with Canada and Mexico in support of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. "This funding is critical to the Plan's goal of restoring America's waterfowl populations," Turner said.
- o \$5 million is requested for natural resource damage assessment and restoration.
- o The Department is also anticipating \$5 million in recoveries from parties responsible for hazardous material and oil spills. This funding will allow the Department to conduct additional natural resource damage assessments, which in turn will enable the U.S. Government to collect monetary damage awards for the restoration of other damaged natural resources.
- o In addition to the General Assessments just mentioned, as much as \$45 million may become available to the Federal Government for restoration work in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska as a result of the Exxon Valdez settlement.