



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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TWENTY-TWO COASTAL WETLANDS CONSERVATION PROJECTS **FUNDED BY U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced that more than 20 of the Nation's premier coastal wetland areas in 13 states and one U.S. territory will be protected using more than \$7 million in grant funding to be made available this year under the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program.

"Coastal wetlands nurture a broad diversity of plants, fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife, as well as hundreds of this Nation's endangered species," said Service Director Mollie Beattie. "Through this program we are forging important partnerships with the states to protect these unique, wildlife-rich areas for future generations."

States to receive funding this year include Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. The U.S. Virgin Islands also will receive a grant. The 22 approved projects involve the acquisition and restoration of more than 9,500 acres of coastal wetlands.

Since 1990, when Congress passed the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act establishing the grant program, the Service has awarded nearly \$24 million in grants to 22 coastal states and one U.S. territory for the conservation of more than 92,000 acres of coastal wetlands.

Under the program, the Service makes annual matching grants to coastal states and U.S. territories for projects involving the acquisition, restoration, or enhancement of coastal wetlands, which must be administered for long-term conservation benefits. All grants are awarded through a competitive process and funding for the program is generated from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels. These taxes are deposited into the Sport Fish Restoration Account of the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund (commonly called Wallop-Breaux after its Congressional sponsors).

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Coastal habitats sustain numerous major U.S. industries such as tourism, transportation, and commercial fishing; accommodate nearly half the country's population; and support many commercial and industrial centers. Because of this, coastal habitats are particularly susceptible to degradation resulting from development, agricultural and urban runoff, shoreline modification, municipal waste disposal, oil spills, and the overharvesting of resources.

A total of 31 project proposals were considered by the Service for funding in 1995. A summary list of 20 of the 22 approved project sites, descriptions, and cost-sharing amounts for 1995 is attached. Two projects, one in Maine and the other in Virginia, were also approved but are not listed since negotiations are still under way.



FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Facts

U.S. Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
1995 COASTAL WETLANDS CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM PROJECTS

ALABAMA:

1) Mon Louis Island

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will acquire 278 acres of coastal salt marsh adjacent to Mobile Bay, part of the largest contiguous salt marsh in the state. The site is an important migratory bird feeding area. Several other partners will assist in management of the island.

State Share: \$83,692

Federal Share: \$63,735

DELAWARE:

2) Augustine Creek

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control will restore 1,130 acres of impounded tidal wetlands adjacent to the Delaware River. The area is important habitat for waterfowl, neotropical migratory songbirds, and bald eagles. Restoration will be a cooperative effort among several partners, including the Fish and Wildlife Service and private landowners.

State Share: \$103,600

Federal Share: \$270,800

FLORIDA:

3) Homosassa Springs State Wildlife Park

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection will restore 20 acres of wetlands within Homosassa Springs State Wildlife Park. Efforts will include restoring wetland plants, improving habitat for saltwater fish, and improving water quality by restoring the natural flow of water. Part of the spring is an important habitat area for captive and recovering manatees' managed in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

State Share: \$27,500

Federal Share: \$82,500

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4) King's Island at Fish House Cove

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection will acquire, restore, and manage 190 acres of mangrove swamp and maritime forest along the east shore of the Indian River lagoon, recognized as one of the most diverse estuarine systems in the world. The site will be included in a county preservation area. Species to benefit include the roseate spoonbill, brown pelican, wood stork, bald eagle, piping plover, and Eastern indigo snake. Several partners will contribute to management of the island.

State Share: \$2,550,000

Federal Share: \$600,000

GEORGIA:

5) Oldnor Island

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, will acquire 1,136-acre Oldnor Island to protect an upland maritime forest on a coastal hammock and pristine tidal salt marsh. The area is important habitat for neotropical migratory songbirds and colonial wading birds. Other species to benefit include the wood stork, bald eagle, manatee, loggerhead and Kemp's ridley sea turtles, shortnose sturgeon, and several anadromous fish species and crustaceans.

State Share: \$161,000

Federal Share: \$160,000

MARYLAND:

6) Blackwater-Naticoke Rivers Wetlands

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources will acquire 696 acres of primarily estuarine intertidal wetlands to add to an existing Wildlife Management Area. The site is habitat for nesting peregrine falcons, the largest nesting population of bald eagles in Maryland, and the largest population of black rails on the East Coast.

State Share: \$405,700

Federal Share: \$547,500

NEW JERSEY:

7) Magnesite Property, Cape May

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will acquire 153 acres of coastal wetlands, beachfront, dunes, and maritime forest in Cape May, a critical part of a world-renowned stopover for neotropical migratory songbirds, raptors, and

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shorebirds. Specific species to benefit include the peregrine falcon, piping plover, least tern, and shortnose sturgeon. Management will be a cooperative effort among several partners, including The Nature Conservancy.

State Share: \$2,500,000

Federal Share: \$500,000

NEW YORK:

8) Long Beach Bay

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation will restore 250 acres of diked and ditched estuarine intertidal wetlands on a 476-acre state-owned tidal wetland area. The area provides habitat for the piping plover, roseate tern, sea turtles, nesting birds, anadromous fish, crustaceans, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Restoration is a cooperative effort among several partners, including the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency.

State Share: \$78,333

Federal Share: \$235,000

9) Shinnecock Bay Barrier Beach

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation will acquire 17 acres of tidal wetlands, beach, dune, and uplands on the Shinnecock Bay Barrier Beach, one of the most important waterfowl wintering areas on Long Island. Other species to benefit include harbor seals, least terns, piping plovers, and numerous fish.

State Share: \$163,000

Federal Share: \$489,000

NORTH CAROLINA:

10) Kitty Hawk Woods

The North Carolina Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Town of Kitty Hawk and The Nature Conservancy, will acquire 254 acres of undisturbed maritime forest within one of the largest maritime forests in the Outer Banks to add to an existing nature preserve. Protection of the site will benefit peregrine falcons, bald eagles, and numerous other species. The area supports two globally imperilled ecosystems: maritime deciduous forest and maritime swamp forest.

State Share: \$1,301,000

Federal Share: \$1,000,000

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SOUTH CAROLINA:

11) Pine and Old Islands

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources will acquire nearly 3,300 acres of coastal barrier islands containing maritime forests and tidal and nontidal wetlands. The islands support wood storks, bald eagles, loggerhead sea turtles, alligators, shortnose sturgeon, peregrine falcons, waterfowl, shore- and wading birds, neotropical migratory songbirds, and more than 60 fish and shellfish species. Partners who will contribute to management of the islands are The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, and private landowners. Acquisition is a cooperative effort among several partners, including private landowners.

State Share: \$1,382,100

Federal Share: \$657,100

TEXAS:

- 12) Guadalupe Delta Wildlife Management Area - Keen Tract**
- 13) Guadalupe Delta Wildlife Management Area - Meitzen Tract**
- 14) Guadalupe Delta Wildlife Management Area - Landgraf Tract**
- 15) Guadalupe Delta Wildlife Management Area - Custer Tract**

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will acquire the following parcels to add to the Guadalupe Delta Wildlife Management Area: 200 acres of the Keen Tract, 311 acres of the Meitzen Tract, 200 acres of the Landgraf Tract, and 400 acres of the Custer Tract. Management of the area is an ongoing partnership among the Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas General Land Office, and Ducks Unlimited. The delta is a diverse environment of freshwater lakes; swamps; grass-covered delta plains; and fresh, brackish, and salt marshes. It is excellent habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and many other species such as alligators, brown pelicans, bald eagles, and peregrine falcons.

Keen Tract

State Share: \$25,250

Federal Share: \$75,750

Meitzen Tract

State Share: \$39,125

Federal Share: \$117,375

Landgraf Tract

State Share: \$25,250

Federal Share: \$75,750

Custer Tract

State Share: \$50,250

Federal Share: \$150,750

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16) Mad Island Wildlife Management Area - Heiligbrodt Tract

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will acquire 700 acres of coastal prairie and freshwater marsh on the Robbins Slough estuary to add to the Mad Island Wildlife Management Area. The site is used by bald eagles and wintering peregrine falcons, various species of ducks and geese, and shorebirds. Management of the area is an ongoing partnership with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Nature Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited.

State Share: \$88,000

Federal Share: \$264,000

VIRGIN ISLANDS:

17) Salt River Bay National Historic Park and Ecological Preserve

The Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources will restore nearly 4 acres of maritime forest within the Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve at St. Croix. The largest remaining intact system of mangroves in the territory, the site serves as essential nesting habitat for 26 species of birds, including many neotropical migratory songbirds, and the most productive habitat for recreational and commercially important finfish and crustaceans. The brown pelican, least tern, roseate tern, green and hawksbill sea turtles, and peregrine falcon also inhabit the area. Several partners will contribute to restoration efforts, including the National Park Service.

Territory Share: \$0

Federal Share: \$9,268

WASHINGTON:

18) Third Lagoon Natural Area Preserve

The Washington Department of Natural Resources will acquire a 25-acre coastal area containing a low-elevation salt marsh and a rare temperate lagoon. The area contains one of the highest quality saltwater wetlands remaining in the state. It is a bald eagle and great blue heron nesting site, haul-out grounds for seals and river otter, and an important waterfowl wintering area. The area will be managed for the state by the National Park Service.

State Share: \$2,335,000

Federal Share: \$305,000

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19) Duckabush River Estuary

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, will acquire 83 acres of salt marsh and tidal flats in the lower Hood Canal to be managed as a state wildlife area. The site is used by such species as black brant, trumpeter swans, salmon, great blue herons, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, ospreys, loons, and harbor seals.

State Share: \$67,000

Federal Share: \$67,000

20) Union River Estuary

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, will acquire 100 acres of salt marsh and tidal flats in the Union River Estuary of Hood Canal to be managed as a state wildlife area. The site is used by the largest population of wintering waterfowl on the canal and provides habitat for a host of other species including salmon, great blue herons, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, ospreys, loons, and harbor seals.

State Share: \$245,000

Federal Share: \$245,000

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