



NEWS

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

October 2, 1998

Rachel F. Levin 202-208-5631
rachel_levin@fws.gov

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AWARDS \$9.4 MILLION FOR WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECTS IN 1999

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded more than \$9 million in wetlands conservation grants to 18 projects aimed at conserving some of the Nation's most valuable resources: coastal wetlands.

Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark announced the grants, all of which match funds provided by the coastal states, private partners or both. For fiscal year 1999, the Service awarded a total of \$9,400,000 in grants to projects in 10 coastal states: Alabama, California, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

The projects, supplemented by more than \$10 million in state funds and more than \$2 million in monies from other partners, will benefit a host of wetland-dependent species such as waterfowl, shorebirds, fish, sea grasses, and endangered species such as manatees and sea turtles. The projects also will benefit humans by conserving and enhancing wetlands that act as natural water filters.

"Wetlands serve as 'nature's purifiers,' helping to maintain high water quality and contributing to sustaining groundwater supplies while providing critical habitat for hundreds of species including more than one-third of the Nation's endangered species," said Clark.

"It is especially appropriate that we recognize these projects today since tomorrow, October 3, has been designated 'National Estuaries Day' in an effort to raise awareness about critical coastal estuaries that are an important piece of the Nation's network of coastal wetlands," she added.

Since 1990, when Congress passed the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act establishing the grant program, the Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded more than \$52 million in grants to 24 coastal states and one U.S. territory for the conservation of more than 87,000 acres of vital coastal wetlands.

Under the program, the Service makes yearly 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. 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).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 500 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Descriptions of the 1999 Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant projects are attached.



FACTS

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1999 COASTAL WETLANDS GRANTS PROJECTS

ALABAMA

Mobile-Tensaw River Delta Acquisition: The Game and Fish Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will acquire forested wetlands in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta in Baldwin and Mobile counties. The delta and adjacent Mobile Bay Estuary comprise one of the largest wetland ecosystems in the United States. Gulf and Alabama sturgeon, striped bass, and paddlefish will benefit directly, and the land will be managed by the Alabama Game and Fish Division.

State share: \$1,330,000 Federal share: \$940,000
Partners share: \$29,000

CALIFORNIA

Goleta Slough Estuarine Restoration: The California State Coastal Conservancy will restore tidal circulation and estuarine wetland functions to 38 acres of Goleta Slough in Santa Barbara. The restoration will benefit the Federally endangered light-footed clapper rail, as well as steelhead trout. The area will be managed by the California Department of Fish and Game and the University of California at Santa Barbara.

State share: \$400,000 Federal share: \$938,000
Partners share: \$42,000

South Morro Bay Acquisition and Restoration: The California State Coastal Conservancy will acquire tidal wetlands, including mud flats, eelgrass beds, salt marsh, and shoreline coastal dune scrub habitat, in South Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County. This area supports several threatened and endangered species, including peregrine falcons, brown pelicans, sea otters and steelhead trout, and it contains one quarter of the tidal wetlands in the entire Morro Bay. The area will be managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

State share: \$300,000 Federal share: \$550,000
Partners share: \$125,000

Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration, Phase II: The California State Coastal Conservancy will restore 20 acres of intertidal wetland and tidal creeks in the Tijuana Estuary in San Diego County. This project is part of the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program, a 500-acre intertidal wetland restoration

program at the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. Federally endangered light-footed clapper rails, salt marsh bird's beaks, and California least terns will benefit.

State share: \$2,360,000 Federal share: \$800,000
Partners share: \$ 0

FLORIDA

Queen's Island, Segment 2, Acquisition: The Florida Department of Environmental Protection will acquire barrier island natural communities, including coastal saltmarsh, mangrove swamp, maritime forest, coastal strand, and dunes, in St. Lucie County. This is the second phase of the Queen's Island-Ocean to River Project and will protect sea turtle nesting habitat and shorebird foraging habitat as well as provide nursery habitat for fish. The site will be managed by the St. Lucie County Mosquito Control Division.

State share: \$1,178,750 Federal share: \$940,000
Partners share: \$ 178,750

Tarpon Bay Hydrologic Restoration: The Division of Marine Resources of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection will hydrologically restore natural flushing of 840 acres of sea grasses, oyster bars, mud flats, mangroves, and tropical hardwood hammocks in Collier County. The area provides critical nursery habitat for shellfish and endangered manatees.

State share: \$429,571 Federal share: \$940,000
Partners share: \$ 0

Ten Thousand Islands Acquisition: The Department of Environmental Protection will acquire barrier islands, sea grasses, oyster reefs, mangrove forested wetlands, tropical hardwood hammocks, coastal strands, and sandy beaches in the Ten Thousand Islands in Collier County. These islands are a labyrinth of undeveloped barrier and back-bay islands and include critical nesting habitat for the endangered loggerhead sea turtles, as well as habitat for the threatened bald eagle and for neo-tropical migratory birds.

State share: \$231,750 Federal share: \$285,455
Partners share: \$ 0

MAINE

Mill Pond Acquisition: The Bureau of Resource Management of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife will protect wetlands, an associated coastal island upland buffer, and shoreline of Mill Pond/Little Kennebec Bay Estuary in Machias and

Machiasport. The area supports bald eagles, waterfowl, wading and shore birds, and anadromous fish.

State share: \$10,000 Federal share: \$175,000
Partners share: \$93,500

MASSACHUSETTS

Lower Neponset River Estuary Restoration: The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, through the Wetlands Restoration and Banking Program, is providing funds to restore 29 acres of salt marsh in the Lower Neponset River Estuary. The estuary runs through the cities of Boston and Quincy and the Town of Milton in Suffolk County. Dredged spoils will be removed and a system of low marsh, high marsh, creeks, pools, and pannes will be developed. Peregrine falcon habitat also will be restored. The Neponset estuary is used by more than 200 bird species, including bald eagles and snowy owls, and is the most significant rainbow smelt spawning habitat in the Massachusetts Bay area.

State share: \$ 11,000 Federal share: \$425,500
Partners share: \$708,000

NEW JERSEY

Stouts Creek/Oyster Creek Acquisition: The Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will acquire waterfront wetlands and associated upland buffers in Ocean County. Endangered peregrine falcons, as well as thousands of migrating and wintering birds, use the area, which also serves as a nursery, feeding, and resting spot for American eel, white perch, flounder, striped bass, and black sea bass.

State share: \$300,000 Federal share: \$740,750
Partners share: \$440,750

NORTH CAROLINA

Buckridge Swamp Forest Acquisition: The Division of Coastal Management of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources will acquire portions of Buckridge Swamp Forest in the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system. This system is the second largest estuary in the continental United States and provides habitat for threatened and endangered red wolves, bald eagles, short-nosed sturgeons, and red-cockaded woodpeckers. The site will be managed as part of the North Carolina Coastal Reserve system.

State share: \$1,000,000 Federal share: \$860,500
Partners share: \$ 0

PENNSYLVANIA

Sara's Cove Acquisition and Restoration: The Office of Water Management of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection will acquire forested and seasonally saturated wetlands in Sara's Cove at the head of Presque Isle Bay in Erie County. The campground currently in the cove will be removed and wetlands restored and the area will become part of the Presque Isle State Park. This is an important nursery area for walleye, steelhead, coho salmon, sturgeon, and lake trout.

State share: \$45,000 Federal share: \$31,795
Partners share: \$ 0

TEXAS

Jumbilee Cove Restoration: The Resource Protection Division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will restore 169 acres of intertidal marsh, submerged aquatic beds, salt flats, and high marsh on Galveston Island, a barrier island in Galveston Bay. Federally threatened and endangered species living in the area include brown pelicans, peregrine falcons, Kemp's ridley and loggerhead sea turtles, and piping plovers. The area will be managed either by the Galveston Bay Estuary Program or the Galveston Bay Foundation.

State share: \$86,000 Federal share: \$258,000
Partners share: \$ 0

WASHINGTON

Grays Harbor Eelgrass Beds Acquisition: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will acquire tidelands, including eelgrass beds, mud flats, sloughs, and channels, in Grays Harbor. The area is critical feeding habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds. Grays Harbor is designated a Hemispheric Site by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and provides important wintering habitat for endangered peregrine falcons. The Humptulips River is used by chinook, chum, and coho salmon and steelhead. The area will be managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife under the Wildlife Area Management program.

State share: \$150,000 Federal share: \$150,000
Partners share: \$ 0

Middle Fork Meander-Nooksack Acquisition: The Washington State Department of Ecology will acquire Middle Fork Nooksack riverine forested wetlands in Whatcom County. This area is at the confluence of the three forks of the Nooksack River and contains habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and bald eagles. The river is prime spawning habitat for chinook, chum, and pink

salmon as well as steelhead trout. The area will be managed under easement with the Whatcom Land Trust, a conservation organization.

State share: \$ 0 Federal share: \$370,000
Partners share: \$406,000

Nemah Estuary Acquisition-Phase II: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will acquire low and high marsh in the Willapa Bay in Pacific County. This is the second phase of a project to provide permanent protection for the entire lower Nemah watershed, one of the largest and most pristine estuaries on the west coast of the United States. The area is critical staging and feeding habitat for migratory waterfowl and is classified as part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. It will become a part of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wildlife Area Management Program.

State share: \$1,000,000 Federal share: \$350,000
Partners share: \$ 0

South Sequim Bay Estuary Acquisition and Restoration: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will acquire tidelands, estuary, and intertidal riparian area in the South Sequim Bay Estuary in Puget Sound. The area provides important foraging and resting habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and other neotropical migratory birds, as well as habitat for chinook and chum salmon. Federally threatened marbled murrelets nest in the upper reaches of Dean Creek. The department will manage the area under its Wildlife Area Management Program.

State share: \$1,000,000 Federal share: \$350,000
Partners share: \$ 0

Woodard Creek Estuary Acquisition: The Washington State Department of Natural Resources will acquire wetlands and conservation easements in Woodard Creek Estuary within the Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area in Thurston County. The area provides important nesting and foraging habitat for bald eagles, critical winter habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds, and spawning and feeding areas for coho, chinook, and chum salmon.

State share: \$295,000 Federal share: \$295,000
Partners share: \$ 29,500