

## Project Planning

		2006 Actual	2007 CR	2008			Change From 2007 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Project Planning	(\$000)	30,605	30,163	+1,023	0	31,186	+1,023
	FTE	245	248		0	248	0

## Program Overview

Since the inception of the Project Planning Program over 60 years ago, Service biologists have been helping to integrate fish and wildlife conservation with needed infrastructure development. The Program has lead responsibility to analyze the environmental impacts of federally licensed or funded projects on fish and wildlife and to recommend options that would minimize detrimental impacts and enhance benefits to trust resources. These reviews are conducted under several Federal statutes. The Program also has the lead responsibility to participate in large-scale land and water planning conducted or authorized by other Federal agencies.

The Project Planning Program plays a central role in advancing energy, transportation, water, and restoration projects – all Administration priorities. The Program’s mission is to help create “win-win” projects for economic development and fish and wildlife conservation. The Program’s biologists provide customer service at more than 80 Ecological Services field offices across the country. They work with project proponents and other partners to develop projects that simultaneously meet economic development needs and conserve natural resources.

The technical assistance provided by program staff supports three of the Department of the Interior’s Strategic Plan Mission Goals. They include:

Resource Protection Goal - *Improve the Health of Watersheds, Landscapes, and Marine Resources and Sustain Biological Communities*: Since 2004, the Project Planning Program has cumulatively conserved 4,852,479 acres of wetlands, 380,008 acres of uplands, 46,322 acres and 5,452 miles of riparian habitat, and opened 5,738 miles of stream for fish passage.

Resource Use Goal - *Provide for the Use of Resources in an Environmentally Responsible and Cost Efficient Manner*: The Project Planning Program continues to address our Nation’s priorities by emphasizing four major project types– energy, transportation, water supply, and restoration. Program biologists will continue to be active partners on development teams and help to build conservation measures into projects during the planning phase.

Serving Communities Goal - *Protect Lives and Property*: The Project Planning Program works with others to foster healthy fish and wildlife populations by maintaining healthy habitats, which in turn contribute to healthy people and healthy economies. For example, coastal wetlands can protect people and property from storm damage by reducing storm surge (e.g., a single acre of wetland can absorb 1-1.5 million gallons of floodwater), and streamside wetlands can remove up to 90% of pollutants from adjacent waters.

**Long-term Goals:** Project Planning will complete its own specific strategic plan in 2007 (part of the larger HC plan) and this will guide its efforts until 2011. A cornerstone of the Program's new strategy is to increase focus on large-scale planning and restoration efforts. Unlike other Service programs, Project Planning's role is not limited to management of threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, or anadromous fisheries, nor is it focused solely within Refuge boundaries. The Program includes all trust resources in its recommendations, and has the ability to foster conservation by integrating many of the Service's programs at the landscape scale. Project Planning serves in a "boots-on-the-ground" capacity, providing a field presence for those Service programs that do not typically have it (e.g., Migratory Bird Management). For others, Project Planning sets the stage for the involvement of other programs. For example, the Program is responsible for working with sponsors and regulators of the Nation's hydropower projects. The licensing process often includes settlement agreements that contain measures to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat, creating opportunities for other programs to get involved.

Other key long-term goals include concentrating efforts on geographic focus areas and improving cross program communication and problem solving. Working with other Service programs to coordinate efforts in regionally or locally-selected areas that are important for trust resources will improve the Services' ability to deliver our product to the public.

Because Project Planning's broad roles and responsibilities position the Program to coordinate among many Service programs, land-use planners, and project proponents, we also have a large role to play in two relatively new planning processes – the State Comprehensive Wildlife Action Plans and the Service's National Ecological Assessment Team (NEAT) effort. Integrating the State Comprehensive Wildlife Action Plans into other planning efforts presents opportunities to form new partnerships with state and local planning groups, and to define geographic focus areas in which to combine our conservation efforts. The 'Strategic Habitat Conservation' framework described in NEAT includes: 1) biological planning, 2) conservation design, 3) conservation delivery, and 4) monitoring and research. While all of these involve Project Planning to some degree, our most substantial contributions are in the categories of planning and conservation design.

**Performance Measures:** The Habitat Conservation Program recently underwent a Program Assessment Rating Tool review conducted by the Office of Management and Budget and received a positive review. As a result, a set of new output and outcome measures were established to track performance. PART measures to which the Program directly contributes are denoted in the performance overview table

#### **Use of Cost and Performance Information**

Project Planning has completed several actions to collect and review cost and performance information and target resources to the highest priorities.

- **Results of the Habitat Conservation PART:** Project Planning participated in the Habitat Conservation PART (Program Assessment Rating Tool) review, where the program received a rating of "adequate." The program will help implement the action items in a Habitat Conservation Performance Improvement Plan and begin reporting on a suite of new output and outcome measures as described below.
- **Performance Measures and the On-Line Tracking System:** Project Planning implemented new performance measures in 2004 that tie our work to the Department's Strategic Plan and more clearly describe results of our technical assistance. We developed a web-based, nationwide tracking system to increase efficiency and foster consistency in reporting. The pilot system, field-tested in FY 2006, was released for nationwide use in FY 2007. We anticipate an improved ability to assess and compare performance across regions, as well as improve predictive ability.
- **Transfer Funding Partnerships to Streamline Transportation Projects:** To more efficiently meet the mission of the Service, Project Planning continues to build upon its partnership with the Department of Transportation, receiving some transfer funds so biologists can focus exclusively on critical transportation projects, in concert with the President's Executive Order on Transportation Streamlining.
- **Activity Based Costing:** One example of how Project Planning continues to use ABC codes is for Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydropower licensing to more effectively track costs associated with supporting municipal and privately owned dams.

below. The Program's accomplishments will also contribute to three PART outcome measures: 1) % of migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels; 2) % of threatened and endangered species habitat needs met (note that this measure is still under development); and 3) % of native aquatic non-threatened and endangered species that are self-sustaining.

### **2008 Program Performance**

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In 2008, Project Planning anticipates:

- Conserving approximately 24,921 acres of wetlands; 755,997 acres of uplands; and 6,323 acres and 1,488 miles of riparian habitat used by migratory birds and other trust species.
- Conserving approximately 1,272 in stream miles for fish.
- Opening over 800 stream miles for fish passage.

Project Planning will continue to work closely with partners on development projects to achieve outcomes that help conserve fish and wildlife species and their habitats. The Program has undertaken efforts to increase focus on projects that support the administration's priorities (i.e., energy, transportation, water supply/delivery, and restoration). These project categories present some of the most important current and future resource challenges, and many have impacts across large areas. By working with our industry partners and encouraging landscape-level approaches, we can substantially improve the outcome of such developments for all parties. We strive to engage project sponsors early in their project formulation process to allow for broader geographic and temporal planning perspectives, to streamline project reviews, and to achieve greater conservation benefits. In FY 2008, we anticipate early involvement in the following priority projects:

- Approximately 5,022 advanced planning partnerships for priority projects (energy, transportation, water supply/delivery, and restoration) will occur
- Approximately 2,045 transportation projects will have early involvement.
- Advanced planning partnerships will occur on approximately 472 water supply/delivery and 653 restoration projects.

In addition to addressing these priority projects, Project Planning also provides targeted technical assistance for other types of projects that are important to local and State economies. For example, our biologists help local governments and State and Federal partners plan navigation and harbor construction projects that are important for economic development that also minimize adverse environmental effects; we help craft measures to protect coral reefs, which are particularly rich ecosystems and nurseries for many important commercial and recreational fisheries; and we partner with project sponsors and communities to plan flood control and beach nourishment projects that protect property, foster tourism, and conserve fish and wildlife habitat. In FY 2008, we also anticipate that advanced planning partnerships will occur on over 9,700 other types of projects.

**Planned Activities:** The cornerstone of the strategic plan is to focus on large-scale planning and conservation efforts in geographic areas having important trust resources, in order to achieve maximum conservation benefits. Examples of such efforts that will begin or continue in FY 2008 include:

**The Puget Sound Partnership, including the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project** – This initiative was launched in December 2005 to develop an aggressive 15-year plan to solve Puget Sound's most vexing problems. The Project Planning Program plays a key role in the partnership. The Nearshore Restoration Project Partnership includes the Corps of Engineers; tribes; industries; state, local and federal governments; and environmental organizations.

**Coastal Louisiana Restoration** – The Program is extensively involved in the newly launched (2006) South Louisiana Comprehensive Coastal Protection and Restoration Project. This Corps of Engineers project will analyze and design a full range of hurricane protection and ecosystem restoration objectives for the entire southern Louisiana coast. Using the Service's authorities under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Program is helping plan projects that provide Category 5 hurricane protection, as well as landscape level ecosystem restoration projects. Other large-scale planning and restoration efforts include the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act of 1990 (CWPPRA), and the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) Comprehensive Plan.

**Restoring America's Everglades** – The Program's biologists play a major role working cooperatively with other agencies in planning and prioritizing efforts in the regional-scale Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), which consists of 68 integrated water management projects affecting more than 13 million acres in southern Florida.

**Energy Projects** – Project Planning has the lead for the Service in implementing the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This tremendous workload requires extensive coordination across bureaus in DOI and other Departments, as well as cross-program coordination with Refuges, Endangered Species, Fisheries, and other programs within the Service.

**Transportation Planning** - Transportation projects frequently traverse several watersheds and major portions of a landscape, and transportation planning provides us with opportunities to engage early and incorporate conservation actions into long-term transportation projects. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Service and the Department of Transportation allow the Service to receive some transfer funds. Currently, there are over 35 reimbursable agreements that allow Service biologists to focus exclusively on critical transportation projects, in concert with the President's Executive Order on Transportation Streamlining.

**Hydropower Projects** – Working with the sponsors and regulators of the Nation's hydropower projects is inherently a Project Planning function. These projects are large in scope, and have myriad landscape-level and larger effects on fish and wildlife species, watersheds, and communities. The Service works with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and hydropower license applicants on in stream flow, habitat conservation, fisheries, fish passage, and endangered species issues to minimize and mitigate impacts. The Project Planning Program negotiates settlement agreements for projects that contain measures to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat. An important component of almost all relicensing agreements is ensuring consideration of fish passage in the final license.

## Program Performance Overview: Project Planning

Habitat Conserved Through Biological Assistance a/	2004 Actual b/	2005 Actual b/	2006 Plan b/	2006 Actual	2007 Plan c/	2007 Change from 2006 d/	2008 Plan	2008 Change from 2007
4.4.6 Wetlands (acres) Annual (SP) (PART)	3,032,031 e/	93,291	516,578 e/	1,727,159 e/	25,560	n/a	24,921	-639
4.5.3 Uplands (acres) - Annual (SP) (PART)	143,995	152,315	55,976	83,698	42,704	n/a	755,997 f/	+713,293
3.2.8 Riparian (acres) - Annual	19,158	20,271	14,304	6,894	6,485	n/a	6,323	-162
3.2.5 Riparian/shore (mi) - Annual (SP) (PART)	737	3,050	1,872	1,948	1,527	n/a	1,488	-39
3.2.4 In-stream (miles) - Annual (SP)	3,250	2,734	1,463	1,716	1,305	n/a	1,272	-33
Stream miles opened for fish passage - Annual	3,998	1,001	723	698	830	n/a	809	-21

# Early project reviews g/								
Energy:								
Oil and Gas	834	737	567	969	798	+231	776	-22
Coal	550	162	70	148	91	+21	230	139
Hydropower— FERC Licenses	61	88	23	87	86	+63	54	-32
Hydropower—FERC Relicenses *	169	134	50	209	214	+164	141	-73
Hydropower—Other *	176	221	153	234	177	+24	162	-15
Wind Power *	65	162	91	140	152	+61	128	24
Energy – Other *	344	238	150	417	281	+131	361	-80
Transportation:								
Federal Highway	2,366	2,103	1,512	1,732	1,313	-199	1,357	44
Other Surface	1,024	691	480	855	499	+19	541	42
Airport	266	240	152	228	143	-9	147	4
Water Supply/ Delivery	679	801	156	789	761	+605	472	-289
Restoration	1,293	828	571	986	660	+89	653	-7
All other project types	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10,034	n/a	9,785	-249