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More Than \$4 Million in Coastal Grants will go to Hawaii and Washington, Interior Secretary Announces

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Assistance Program, will award more than \$15 million in Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants to 12 states. The states of Hawaii and Washington will receive \$4.1 million of these grants, Interior Secretary Gale Norton announced today.

Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants provide federal funding for one project in Hawaii and four in Washington and will be supplemented with \$1.9 million from state and private partners. The grants will be used to acquire, restore or enhance more than 4,400 acres of coastal wetlands for long-term conservation benefits to wildlife and habitat. Partners, in this year's projects, include state and local governments, Tribal partners, local Audubon Society chapters, Washington Trout, local land trusts, private land owners, academia, and many others.

"These grants will help protect and restore an ecosystem which provides very important habitat for aquatic species," said Regional Director, Dave Allen. "We look forward to working with our partners in Hawaii, Washington as they address their conservation priorities."

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants are awarded to states through a competitive process. The program is funded under provision of the 1990 Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, with money generated from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels. The following are descriptions of the five projects which received grants this year in Hawaii and Washington.

Hawaii

Kawainui Marsh Wetland Restoration and Enhancement -- Today, more than 30 percent of Hawaii's natural lowland wetlands have been filled or converted to other land uses such as agriculture and urban expansion. Kawainui Marsh is the largest remaining freshwater wetland in the State providing a unique opportunity for wildlife protection, watershed and historical cultural resource education.

Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources plans to restore 20 acres and enhance 60 acres of coastal wetlands and associated uplands at Kawainui Marsh in Honolulu County. The project area is part of a wetland complex that was recently added to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, recognizing it as an internationally significant wetland.

Partners: Castle Foundation, The Wildlife Society, Le Jardin Academy, Kailua Urban Design Task Force, City and County of Honolulu.

Coastal grant:	\$646,250
State share:	\$50,000
Partners share:	\$262,500
Total cost:	\$958,750

Washington

Crockett Lake Coastal Wetlands Acquisition and Protection -- Washington State Parks and Recreation will acquire and permanently protect 355 acres at Crockett Lake. With the addition of this acreage, almost the entire Crockett Lake wetland system (approximately 700 acres) will be protected. Crockett Lake is a shallow, brackish lake and complex of salt and freshwater marshes, is an important habitat for resident and migratory birds, and provides estuarine rearing and foraging habitat for salmonids and other fish species.

Partners: Whidbey Camano Land Trust, Washington Trout, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Trust Board, National Park Service, Whidbey Chapter of the Audubon Society, and an individual landowner.

Coastal grant:	\$850,700
Partners share:	\$345,000
Total cost:	\$1,195,700

Triple Creek Farm at Eld Inlet, Tidelands and Freshwater Wetlands Protection -- The Washington Department of Ecology, in conjunction with the Washington State Coastal Protection Fund, will purchase a conservation easement to permanently protect 2.5 miles of marine shoreline and restrict development on 203 acres in Eld Inlet, which is in the southern portion of Puget Sound. The project would benefit a variety of species including anadromous fish and migratory and resident waterfowl.

Partners: The Trust for Public Lands, Capitol Land Trust, and Entrix.

Coastal grant:	\$799,000
State share:	\$50,000
Partners share:	\$339,000
Total cost:	\$1,188,000

Port Susan Phase 2 -- Acquisition and Protection -- The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, in conjunction with Washington State Salmon Recovery Board, will purchase 3,318 acres and conservation easements on another 63 acres in Port Susan Bay in Puget Sound. When combined with existing reserves in Port Susan Bay, this proposal will contribute to a contiguous tidelands system totaling more than 7,000 acres. Over 30 shorebird species regularly use Port Susan Bay and it provides important habitats for several species of fish, including federally threatened Chinook salmon and bull trout.

Partners: Whidbey Camano Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Washington Trout, Pacific Coast Joint Venture, Stillaguamish Tribe, Ducks Unlimited, and individual community volunteers.

Coastal grant:	\$928,000
State share:	\$385,000
Partners share:	\$15,000
Total cost:	\$1,328,000

Qwuloolt Project, Phase IV — Estuarine Restoration -- The Washington Department of Ecology plans to remove segments of a dike along Ebey Slough in the lower Snohomish River watershed to restore about 390 acres of intertidal estuarine wetlands. This project will restore important intertidal transitional salmon habitat benefiting the threatened Puget Sound Chinook salmon and many other species, including resident and migratory birds.

Partners: Tulalip Tribes, the Natural Resources Damage Assessment Trustees for the Tulalip Landfill Superfund Site, and the City of Marysville.

Coastal grant:	\$902,400
Partners share:	\$440,000
Total cost:	\$1,342,000

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 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 and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.