

**SECRETARY NORTON ANNOUNCES \$70 MILLION IN GRANTS TO SUPPORT
LAND ACQUISITION AND CONSERVATION PLANNING FOR
ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants by State:

Arkansas:

- **Potlatch and Plum Creek (Union, Ashley, Drew, Bradley and Calhoun Counties)** - A \$250,000 grant award will help acquire and protect 1,680 acres of shortleaf-loblolly pine habitat adjacent to acreage covered by two other Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), and will contribute to the recovery of the federally listed endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. The habitat will be managed to encourage growth in the existing population of woodpeckers and in its range. In addition, protection of habitat on this acreage will allow juvenile red-cockaded woodpeckers to disperse from the conservation areas to the nearby Warren Prairie Natural Area, where habitat management to attract red-cockaded woodpeckers is planned for the next two years. The acquisitions compliment the present conservation initiatives and requirements of the HCPs.

California:

- **Assessment District AD 161 HCP (Riverside County)** - A \$6,250,000 grant award will enable the acquisition of properties in North Warm Springs Creek, the Santa Margarita Watershed, and Ramsgate area of Riverside County. The acquisition will benefit wildlife populations by conserving habitat in large, interconnected blocks. In addition to providing core habitat areas for the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), both of these areas support more than 100 Federal and State listed species proposed to be covered under the Plan. These species include the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, endangered least Bell's vireo and Stephen's kangaroo rat. The plant communities found in the area, including sage scrub and riparian habitat, are representative of the original, native habitats of the region. The public benefits of maintaining these areas as open space, include the use for various recreational purposes such as hiking and mountain biking.
- **Colton Substation HCP (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties)** - A \$2,156,675 grant will enable the acquisition and protection of portions of the Colton Dune ecosystem, unique to this region of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Approximately two percent of the Colton Dune ecosystem still exists. The acquisition will permanently conserve habitat occupied by a suite of federally and State listed species endemic to the area, including the federally endangered Delhi Sands flower-loving fly, threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, Los Angeles pocket mouse, and western burrowing owl. These lands are critical for the survival and recovery of the Delhi Sands flower-loving fly and the many other species that occur within this ecosystem.

- **Echilet Ranch, San Joaquin MSCP (San Joaquin County)** - A \$3 million grant award will be used to acquire this property in order to protect one of the two last remaining natural habitats of the federally listed large flowered fiddleneck in partnership with the San Joaquin County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan. This property acquisition will significantly reduce the possibility that this species will become extinct, while also supporting the recovery of State and federally listed species such as the San Joaquin kit fox and California red-legged frog.
- **San Mateo, Ohlone Shell Mound Site, San Bruno Mountain HCP (San Mateo County)** - An \$860,000 grant award will be used for the acquisition of the Preservation Parcel on San Bruno Mountain to protect 26 acres of high-value endangered species habitat and an ancient cultural site in perpetuity. The Preservation Parcel contains habitat for the federally endangered Callippe silverspot butterfly, a butterfly restricted in range to San Bruno Mountain. The site also offers the potential to be a recovery site for two additional butterfly species. The acquisition of the Preservation Parcel will compliment the San Bruno Mountain HCP and assist in the conservation of the endangered butterflies and native ecosystems.
- **Sloan Canyon - San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (San Diego County)** - \$4,875,000 grant will enable project partners to acquire important habitat along the Sweetwater River in Sloan Canyon downstream from Loveland Reservoir. The San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) identifies this property, which includes 17 parcels totaling approximately 876 acres, as linking habitat for numerous threatened and endangered species covered by the plan, while simultaneously providing core areas for several sensitive biological resources. The parcels are known to support several pairs of threatened California gnatcatchers and a significant population of endangered arroyo toads. While located within the County of San Diego's MSCP sub-area plan, the property has an approved permit for a sand mine that predates development of the MSCP. Acquisition of this property will greatly enhance the County's preserve, while preventing development of the sand mine and eliminating the threat it poses to an area that supports approximately 30 of the 85 species covered by the MSCP.

Georgia:

- **Georgia Statewide Conservation Plan for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers on Private Land (Georgia Statewide)** - A \$2 million grant will help project partners acquire permanent conservation easements on up to 7,900 acres in four tracts currently managed as quail habitat. The tracts are some of the most important remaining properties for conservation in the Red Hills region, a priority area for the conservation of longleaf pine and wiregrass. It also provides the habitat for the largest red-cockaded woodpecker population found on private land (and sixth largest overall in the world), two of the best remaining old growth longleaf sites, and some of the best remaining native groundstory vegetation in the southeast. Acquisition of easements on these tracts will ensure the maintenance and protection of key components of the Red Hills area.

Indiana:

- **Protection of Indiana Bat Hibernacula within the Garrison Chapel Valley of Monroe County, Indiana (Monroe County)** - A \$593,325 grant will support the acquisition of a 293 acre parcel known as the Hancock property, home to Coon and Grotto caves that provide winter shelter for hibernating endangered Indiana bats. Since 1985, when winter disturbances to the caves were removed, the winter population of Indiana bats has increased steadily to more than 20,000 in both caves. This acquisition will not only protect the critical winter habitat, but also ensure protection for fall swarming, spring staging, and summer foraging for Indiana bats. This property is within the largest karst area of Monroe County, containing more than 17 miles of known cave passages and hosting a diversity of cave species that have not been fully surveyed. Other known state-listed species to benefit through this acquisition include the bobcat, a cave crayfish, and two cave beetles.

Montana:

- **Plum Creek Thompson-Fisher and Bull River/Lake Lands, Montana (Flathead and Sanders Counties)** - A \$1 million grant will enable project partners to purchase a conservation easement on 4,400 acres of Plum Creek Timber lands in the Thompson River Valley to maintain the fish and wildlife habitat values and public access to 86,000 acres of corporate timberland in perpetuity while allowing for continued commercial timber harvest and other consistent resource management activities. The conservation easement would maintain or improve current fish and wildlife values by removing the threat of subdivision and development and protect in perpetuity prime habitat for the grizzly bear, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, Canada lynx, bald eagles, golden eagles, black bears, mountain lion, fisher, upland game birds, and big game ungulates including moose, elk, white-tail deer, mule deer and, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. These lands are contiguous with 34,824 acres of conservation easement lands acquired with grant funds obtained in 2001 and 2002.

Texas:

- **Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (Travis County)** - A \$4,993,794 grant will allow project partners to purchase high priority tracts within an area of approximately 700 acres that provide habitat for the endangered black-capped vireo and the golden-cheeked warbler. The acreage that will be acquired is adjacent to already protected areas that support the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan. In 1996, the Service issued a regional permit to Travis County and the City of Austin for the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan, which required the protection of at least 30,428 acres. In seven years since the permit's inception, 26,361 acres have been protected. The preserve is designed to protect eight federally endangered species and 27 species of concern throughout seven watersheds in Western Travis County. Partners in this current habitat conservation effort include the City of Austin, Travis County, the Lower Colorado River Authority, The Nature Conservancy of Texas, and Travis Audubon Society, as well as private sector

landowners.

- **Bexar County Karst Invertebrate Habitat Preserve (Bexar County)** - A \$3.5 million grant will be used to acquire 855 acres around La Cantera's Canyon Ranch Karst Preserve that will enhance and complement the long-term preservation and viability of three endangered karst invertebrates in three caves within the preserve as well as endangered karst invertebrates in four caves on the acquisition tract. The property also hosts the endangered golden-cheeked warbler. This tract is adjacent to Government Canyon State Natural Area and the City of San Antonio's Iron Horse tract purchased, for Edwards aquifer recharge. Preservation of this acreage will bring the total contiguous, undeveloped land to approximately 11,000 acres, which will benefit eight other sensitive species dependent upon the aquatic ecosystems of the Edwards Aquifer.

Utah:

- **Washington County Utah Desert Tortoise Reserve (Washington County, UT)** - An \$8,348,525 grant will enable project partners to purchase of up to ten parcels of Mojave desert tortoise habitat to ensure the viability of a reserve created as mitigation under the Washington County, Utah HCP. The reserve, vital to the long term survival and recovery of the desert tortoise, also benefits additional species, including six federally listed species such as the bald eagle, southwestern willow flycatcher, Virgin River chub, woundfin, dwarf bear poppy, and silar pincushion cactus, one proposed endangered plant, the Shivwits milkvetch, and at least two dozen species of concern. The purchase of these pristine parcels will significantly reduce habitat fragmentation in the reserve.

Washington:

- **Cedar River Watershed HCP (King County, WA)** - A \$1.5 million grant will ensure the protection of 300 acres of riparian habitat along a corridor on the Cedar River, near the city of Seattle. Acquisition of numerous parcels from willing sellers will extend conservation benefits from the protected upper watershed, which supplies Seattle's drinking water, down through the lower third of the watershed, where development pressure intensifies. Salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout and bald eagles, as well as other resident wildlife will benefit from the acquisition of these habitats, which represent the best of what remains in the rapidly-urbanizing lower Cedar River watershed. Partners include King County, Seattle Public Utilities, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Public Utilities, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- **Washington Department of Natural Resources HCP (Washington State)** - A \$9,959,400 grant will help the Washington Department of Natural Resources and other partners acquire more than 3,400 acres of mature conifer forest on the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas, providing benefits to many fish and wildlife species. Northern spotted owls, marbled murrelets, bald eagles, bull trout, and salmon all use the lands to be acquired. Protection of these lands for conservation will provide linkages between high quality habitats, protect nesting murrelets and owls, and expand protection from already-

conserved areas.

- **Yakima River Wildlife Corridor - Phase II (Kittitas County, WA)** - A \$1,849,720 grant will be used by a partnership including the Cascades Conservation Partnership, the Trust for Public Lands, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to acquire and protect more than 1140 acres of mature riparian and conifer forests in the Cascade Mountain Range, along Snoqualmie Pass. Habitat acquisition achieved by this project will help ensure the protection of habitats necessary for wildlife movement across Interstate 90.

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants by State:

Arizona

- **Altar Valley HCP (Pima County)** - A \$40,000 grant will help the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance, a group of landowners representing nearly all of the private property in the valley, develop a watershed-wide habitat protection and restoration plan in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arizona State Land Department, and Arizona Department of Water Resources. The valley harbors one of the last intact Sonoran savanna grasslands in southern Arizona, as well as riparian and Madrean oak woodland habitats, and is home to 24 species of concern, including five species listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The Altar Valley provides habitat for the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl and is important for the recovery of Pima pineapple cactus. It is the largest unfragmented landscape in eastern Pima County, encompassing approximately 700,000 acres on the US/Mexico border, including the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, the Baboquivari Wilderness Area, the Coyote Mountains Wilderness Area, a half-million acres of Arizona State School Trust Lands and private ranch holdings.
- **City of Tucson HCP (Pima County)** - A \$327,990 grant will help the City of Tucson develop an HCP through a collaborative conservation planning effort for more than 45,000 acres within the city's jurisdiction in Southeast Tucson, along the Santa Cruz River corridor and for extra-territorial holdings of the Tucson Water Department in the Avra Valley west of the city. The plan, critical to the conservation and recovery of the endangered cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl and Pima pineapple cactus, will also provide for the connection of habitat for vulnerable species and improvement of conservation for riparian species associated with the Santa Cruz River. The planning area spans the boundary separating Pima County, Marana, and the Tohono O'odham Nation in southern Arizona and includes multiple landowners, both public and private.
- **Town of Marana HCP (Pima and Pinal Counties)** - A \$134,990 grant will enable a total of 13 partners, including the Town of Marana, Pima County and the Arizona State Land Department, to continue development of an HCP to complement other important regional conservation planning efforts. The primarily Sonoran desert scrub planning area encompasses approximately 200,000 acres, and includes varied topography ranging from

the effluent-fed Santa Cruz River, with its cottonwood-willow riparian forest and emergent wetlands, to the Tortolita Mountains, a vertical rise of 2,800 feet from the river. Marana's plan will be critical in the conservation and recovery of the endangered cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl. Within the 75,000-acre town boundaries, more than 50 percent of the land has been proposed as Critical Habitat for the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, and additional lands within the town are included within proposed Recovery Units for the owl. Aside from the pygmy-owl, there are 24 other species being considered for inclusion on the Section 10 permit associated with the HCP.

California

- **East Contra Costa HCP (Contra Costa County)** - A \$100,000 grant will enable project partners to develop an HCP to benefit the endangered San Joaquin kit fox, threatened California red-legged frog, and many other declining species found in the area. Their survival in this rapidly developing area depends upon the protection of large blocks of contiguous habitat. This HCP provides the opportunity to plan urban development in such a manner as to provide habitat for sensitive species and open space for residents.
- **Kern County Valley Floor HCP (Kern County)** - A \$90,000 grant will be used by this partnership to develop the Kern Valley Floor HCP, which proposes to include approximately 1.9 million acres on the San Joaquin Valley floor. Among the 28 covered species are several protected by the Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act, including the San Joaquin kit fox, two kangaroo rat species, Bakersfield cactus, and Kern mallow. As planned, the HCP should allow most urban development activities, normal oil and gas exploration and development activities to occur. Using weighted habitat values will encourage potential development within low value habitat while mitigating impacts on high value habitat. Habitat credits based on habitat value are created by willing participants, who may then sell those credits to project proponents seeking mitigation credits. proponents seeking mitigation credits.
- **Placer County HCP / NCCP (Placer County)** - A \$100,000 grant will support a large regional planning effort to conserve habitat for 35 listed and unlisted animals and plants and their ecosystems within one of the fastest growing Counties in California. Species likely to benefit from this project include the Lahontan cutthroat trout, foothill yellow-legged frog, and Pacific fisher. The area is currently experiencing intense development pressure and this grant will enable the County to gather the land cover and habitat inventory information, an essential and fundamental step in the next phase of the HCP/NCCP planning process. Entire interrelated natural communities will be protected, which will ensure the viability of populations for a wide range of plants and animals.
- **Sandhills Regional HCP (Santa Cruz County)** - A \$100,000 grant will provide funding to the County of Santa Cruz and City of Scotts Valley to complete Phase 2 of the development of the Sandhills Regional HCP in Santa Cruz County, California. The project will result in the development of a conservation strategy for the Sandhills ecosystem to benefit numerous Federal and State-listed species, including the Mount

Hermon June beetle, Zayante band-winged grasshopper, Ben Lomond spineflower and Ben Lomond wallflower. The HCP will identify ways to conserve Sandhills habitat for listed species in perpetuity as well as sites for mitigating impacts from development. In addition, the HCP will outline the development of a program for monitoring and managing listed species in the area, and institute a streamlined and more cost-effective permitting process for development projects proposed by landowners.

- **Santa Clara County HCP/NCCP (Santa Clara County)** - A \$300,000 grant will enable Santa Clara County to initiate a countywide HCP/NCCP. The first phase of the project is being undertaken in partnership with the City of San Jose, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, with potential involvement from other cities in the southern portion of the county. Santa Clara County has experienced enormous population growth over the past 50 years and is continuing to experience growth pressures which pose a threat to more than 100 endangered, threatened, and other rare species. The HCP/NCCP will provide a comprehensive approach to conservation and management of multiple species across the 841,000-acre county, including preservation of much of the remaining habitat for several federally listed species, establishment of habitat preserves, habitat restoration, and streamlined regulatory permitting processes.
- **Shasta Plains HCP/NCCP (Shasta County)** - A \$200,000 grant award will support the development of an HCP to cover approximately 250 square miles in southern-central Shasta County. Vernal pools in the Shasta plains region provide valuable habitat for a host of rare and sensitive vernal pool species, including several federally listed species. Many of the remaining vernal pools occur on privately owned lands and are vulnerable to loss and degradation. This HCP will protect the vernal pools, riparian habitat and stream corridors, and oak woodlands, while providing the development community with a streamlined permitting process.
- **Solano HCP/NCCP (Solano and Yolo Counties)** - A \$100,000 grant will help in the development of the Solano HCP/NCCP, which proposes to cover approximately 900 square miles, including all of Solano County and a small portion of Yolo County. The HCP/NCCP proposes to cover a minimum of 36 species, 17 of which are federally threatened or endangered. Vernal pool, grassland, riparian, and marsh habitats comprise a large portion of the planning area which is under intense development pressure. This HCP/NCCP will protect existing habitat, restore degraded habitats, and contribute to responsible planning for the expected and mandated growth of four major cities within Solano County.
- **South Sacramento HCP (Sacramento County)** - A \$200,000 grant will benefit up to 51 species, including seven federally threatened and endangered species, within an area of approximately 490 square miles. The development community and environmental groups are actively involved in this planning effort that will streamline the regulatory process and provide benefits to a wide variety of biological resources including two species of orcutt grass that are restricted to Sacramento County.

- **West Mojave Plan HCP (San Bernardino, Kern, Los Angeles and Inyo Counties) -** A \$300,000 grant will provide funding to assist the development of an HCP associated with the 9.4 million-acre West Mojave Plan, in San Bernardino, Kern, Los Angeles and Inyo Counties. The Service is consulting with the Bureau of Land Management to minimize impacts to listed species on Bureau of Land Management lands in the western Mojave Desert of California, while developing an HCP to cover non-Federal lands in that area. Funding will help project partners finalize conservation strategies for protecting listed species, enabling them to delineate boundaries for desert wildlife management areas, develop protection strategies for species in these areas, and implement the final management plan. Development of the West Mojave Plan and its associated HCP will benefit numerous local agencies and private landowners in the western Mojave Desert by promoting a streamlined permitting process. The funding would also benefit the State and federally threatened desert tortoise, the State threatened Mojave ground squirrel, and approximately 50 additional covered species, as well as the ecosystem upon which many other non-listed species depend.
- **Yuba-Sutter HCP (Yuba and Sutter Counties) -** A \$200,000 grant will help project partners develop an HCP to protect vernal pool plants and animals currently listed as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act, as well as other sensitive species in this area. Yuba and Sutter counties are currently undergoing development pressure as Sacramento County becomes more populated. The primarily agricultural landscape of Yuba and Sutter Counties is attractive to both developers and home buyers, and development of an HCP will also help maintain agricultural activities such as grazing that are beneficial to several sensitive species.

Delaware/Pennsylvania

- **Development of an HCP for the Bog Turtle and Other Wetland Species of Concern in the Southern Portion of the Delaware West Recovery Subunit (Chester County, Pennsylvania and New Castle County, Delaware) -** A \$595,482 grant will help develop a comprehensive, large-scale HCP for the southern portion of the Delaware West Recovery Subunit, encompassing significant portions of Chester County, Pennsylvania and New Castle County, Delaware. The HCP will benefit the threatened bog turtle and other wetland species of concern, by identifying bog turtle recovery areas in the HCP planning region.

Georgia

- **Etowah River Basin (Cherokee, Lumpkin, Pickens, and Forsyth Counties) -** A \$355,634 grant will help develop a comprehensive habitat conservation plan covering the Etowah River basin allowing county and municipal development agencies to authorize projects while contributing to the conservation of numerous aquatic species in the Etowah River basin.

Hawaii

- **Coordination and Planning of a Programmatic Habitat Conservation Plan for Endangered and Threatened Seabirds on Kauai. (Kauai County)** - A \$148,989 grant will fund a 2-year coordinator position in the Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife to facilitate development of a programmatic HCP to minimize, mitigate, and monitor the effects of urbanization on two listed seabird species on the island of Kauai, Hawaii. HCP mitigation measures will call for protection of seabird nesting colonies by controlling non-native mammalian predators, and will also benefit one candidate species, several non-listed bird species and up to 18 species of endangered plants. The programmatic HCP will provide regulatory certainty for diverse economic interests, contribute to the recovery of two imperiled seabird species, and increase public awareness of the community's responsibility to preserve native Hawaiian species and ecosystems.

Idaho

- **Greater Priest Lake Multi Species HCP (Bonner and Boundary counties)** - A \$563,000 grant will assist the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as they work with other stakeholders to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan to minimize the impact of any IDL activity in northern Idaho on listed species. The HCP will provide conservation benefits to listed threatened and endangered species, including grizzly bear, bull trout, lynx, and the critically endangered woodland caribou, while providing the State of Idaho with assurances of immunity for any "take" of these species that might occur incidentally to its lawful activities. Both Idaho and the species will benefit from this HCP. The IDL will be able to fulfill its mandate to maximize the long term return from these endowment lands to the beneficiaries without fear of violating the Endangered Species Act, and the conservation of listed species will be enhanced.

Montana

- **Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway HCP (Glacier and Flathead Counties)** - A \$75,000 grant will help fund development and implementation of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway HCP, providing a unique opportunity to benefit a large number of species in a geographic area that includes a wild and scenic river corridor and is adjacent to Glacier National Park and the Great Bear Wilderness. While the emphasis is on minimizing and mitigating the effects of railroad operations on grizzly bears, these efforts will also minimize effects on other predators including gray wolves, Canada lynx, bobcats, wolverines, black bear, and mountain lions. Additionally, efforts to enhance habitat will benefit a variety of other species including bald eagles, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, moose, elk, mule deer, whitetail deer, beaver, mink, otter and waterfowl. This HCP will foster existing positive working relationship among industry, governmental and conservation interests that was developed through the formation of the Great Northern Environmental Stewardship Area.

Oregon

- **Agate Desert Multi-species Vernal Pool HCP/WCP (Jackson County)** - A \$143,000 grant will be used to develop an HCP, coordinated with a State Wetland Conservation Plan, for the vernal pool wetlands in the urban core of the Agate Desert north of Medford, Oregon, in and around the unincorporated town of White City. These plans would provide the framework for the coordinated conservation of three federally listed species (threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp and two endangered plants associated with vernal pools) and a host of other rare species associated with the unique vernal pools. Coordinated planning will reduce degradation and loss of this unique habitat.
- **HCP/EIS for Western Snowy Plover in Oregon (Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, Lane, Douglas, Coos, and Curry counties)** - A \$200,000 grant will help the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department develop an HCP/EIS that not only provides for the conservation of the western snowy plover, but also takes into account the importance of some 230 miles of sandy ocean beaches for human recreation. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has jurisdiction over most coastal beaches, including much of the critical habitat essential for the conservation and recovery of the species.

Texas

- **Barton Springs / Edwards Aquifer Conservation District HCP (Hays and Travis Counties)**- A \$316,000 grant will assist the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (the District), a groundwater conservation district mandated to conserve, protect, and enhance the groundwater resources of the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards aquifer. By preparing the Environmental Impact Statement and developing and implementing the regional HCP the District will identify the effects of groundwater pumping on the Barton Springs and Austin blind salamanders and set forth comprehensive measures to minimize and mitigate for those impacts, including incidental take, as a result of permitted pumpage. The District, together with plan partners, through this regional HCP, hopes to secure the survival and recovery of the Barton Springs and Austin blind salamanders, and also provide protection and security for the Balcones cave and bifurcated cave amphipods as well as the Edwards Aquifer diving beetle.
- **Williamson County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (Williamson County)**- A \$200,000 grant will be used to assist the Williamson County Karst Foundation in developing a regional HCP for the conservation of 9 species, including 5 endangered species, 1 candidate, and 3 other rare animal and plant species, found in Williamson County, one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. Habitat protection for listed and rare species therefore is essential to the conservation of the listed and rare species found in that county. Of the three endangered karst invertebrates included in the proposal, two of the species occur in only one other county outside of Williamson County and one species occurs only in Williamson County. Since very few caves and their associated ecosystems have been preserved in perpetuity for any of the three species, preservation of lands under the HCP that provide perpetual protection and management of

caves containing these species will contribute to their recovery and potential downlisting. Preservation of high quality habitat in Williamson County will remove threats associated with suburban development and benefit all of the listed and rare species proposed to be covered under the HCP.

Washington

- **Broughton Land Company Native Fish HCP (Columbia County)** - A \$24,200 grant will be used to help finalize the development of an HCP covering more than 38,000 acres of farm, forest, and range lands in eastern Washington state. These privately owned lands contain several miles of streams supporting bull trout, steelhead, and chinook salmon. HCP conservation measures will improve stream and riparian conditions.
- **Dungeness CIDMP/HCP (Clallam and Jefferson counties)** - A \$70,000 grant will help project partners develop an HCP associated with a pilot Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan (CIDMP). Together, the CIDMP and the HCP will provide conservation benefits for federally listed fish while meeting the long-term water needs of irrigation districts. Significant aquatic habitat improvements would be realized through improvements to irrigation infrastructure, operations, and maintenance, which would result in increased stream flows.
- **Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan for Lewis County (Lewis County)** - A \$389,259 grant will fund development of an HCP providing a programmatic, multi-landowner approach for small family forests seeking management flexibility and an alternative from state forest practices rules. The HCP is expected to provide equal or better conservation than current state forest practice rules, and cover private lands in Lewis County.
- **Washington Forests and Fish HCP (Statewide)** - A \$1,127,047 grant will be used to complete the HCP planning process. This HCP would result in obtaining federal assurances for Washington State's forest practices rules. Conservation benefits are expected for aquatic and riparian species on 10.3 million acres of non-federal forest lands.
- **Washington State Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance (Statewide)** - A \$121,304 grant, will support an HCP planning effort, funded in part by activities undertaken in both fresh and saltwater areas regulated and leased by Washington State's Department of Natural Resources, covering more than 2.4 million acres in 39 counties. The HCP has the potential to complement riparian and aquatic protection provided by state forest practices rules, and to ensure environmental protection while encouraging direct public use and access of aquatic lands.

West Virginia

- **West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel and Cheat Mountain Salamander HCP at Snowshoe Mountain Resort (Pocahontas County)** - An \$84,880 grant will help fund

development of an HCP to benefit the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel and Cheat Mountain Salamander. The project will determine the presence or absence of the West Virginia northern flying squirrel along the western slope of Cheat Mountain; develop a habitat quality ranking and define the breeding season for West Virginia northern flying squirrels at Snowshoe; survey for the Cheat Mountain salamander in areas covered by the focused HCP; identify and evaluate potential translocation sites for the salamander; and use satellite imagery of Snowshoe to identify squirrel and salamander habitat.

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants by State:

Alaska

- **Spectacled Eider Nesting Habitat Protection Project (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta)** - A \$178,446 grant will support acquisition of conservation easements or fee title to approximately 2,000 acres of high quality spectacled eider nesting habitat on privately owned parcels within designated critical habitat on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, in western Alaska. Spectacled eider populations on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta declined by 96 percent between the 1970's-1990's. The coastal fringe of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta provides the species' highest density breeding habitat. Acquisition of easements or title to key private inholdings within this coastal fringe will improve management of lands under diverse ownership, minimize the threat of habitat fragmentation, and aid public-private efforts to reduce impacts to nesting habitat from use of all-terrain vehicles. This project is intended to be a catalyst for a large-scale waterfowl and wetlands protection effort.

Arizona:

- **Coal Mine Springs (Santa Cruz County)** - A \$750,000 grant will support the protection of 1,400 acres around Coal Mine Springs, providing a high recovery benefit to the endangered Gila topminnow, the second largest population in existence and only one of fourteen surviving natural populations. Securing this area will help protect the whole Lower Sonoita Creek population of Gila topminnow, a key objective of the draft Recovery Plan for the species. In addition, the area protected is free of competing non-native fishes, a primary threat to the Gila topminnow. The proposal will also provide protected foraging habitat for the endangered lesser long-nosed bat and a riparian corridor for the Mexican spotted owl. Partners include the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Trust for Public Land and Arizona State Parks.
- **Hayhook Ranch (Pima County)** - A \$353,478 grant will help acquire and protect a corridor of habitat for the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl. The 839-acre acquisition provides nesting habitat and allows pygmy owls to move between the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Coyote Mountain Wilderness Area. The 839 acre parcel occurs within Recovery Area 1 of the pygmy owl's draft Recovery Plan. The proposed acquisition may also provide foraging habitat for the endangered lesser long-nosed bat and as many as

fifteen Priority Vulnerable Species that could occur on the property.

Arkansas

- **Pondberry and red-cockaded woodpecker land acquisition (Clay, Jackson, Monroe Counties)** - A \$288,930 grant will provide funding for targeted land acquisitions harboring populations of endangered pondberry where they currently have no protection, and will also provide a buffer to protect a large population at the Stateline Sand Ponds Natural Area. The recovery plan for the pondberry lists 36 extant populations distributed in 6 states. The major threat to the continued existence of pondberry is alteration or destruction of its habitat through land clearing, drainage modification, or timber harvesting. Additional habitat will be protected at the Pine City Headwater Swamp Conservation Area for potential reestablishment efforts. Acquisition of additional lands in Arkansas suitable to support stable populations of pondberry and/or to provide buffers to currently protected populations will be important to the recovery of this plant and will protect it from further loss of habitat. The acquisitions will also protect the last remaining breeding group of the Mississippi Alluvial Plain population of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and provide it with the potential for population growth.

California:

- **Buena Vista Property (Santa Cruz County)** - A \$540,215 grant will help project partners, including the Service, California Department of Fish and Game and the Trust for Public Lands, acquire and protect 187 acres in Santa Cruz County. The acquisition will protect one of only eleven breeding ponds of the long-toed salamander and help connect habitat that supports another population at the nearby Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge and Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander State Ecological Reserve. It also provides habitat for one of the larger of only seven populations of the robust spineflower, and for the California tiger salamander, a candidate species.
- **Colton Dune Ecosystem (San Bernardino County)** - A \$500,000 grant will help fund the acquisition of between five and 15 acres intended to protect portions of the Colton Dune ecosystem and prevent extinction of the Delhi Sand flower-loving fly, which is declining due to widespread habitat loss and degradation. Acquisition will also protect several other federally and State listed species native to this area, including coastal California gnatcatcher, Los Angeles pocket mouse and western burrowing owl. Partners include California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Transportation, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, local jurisdictions, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Federal Highway Administration.
- **Kanaka III/Gabbro Soil Plant Habitat (El Dorado County)** - A \$465,000 grant will enable project partners acquire 247 acres in the central Sierra Nevada foothills of California. The acquisition falls within the approximately 5,000-acre conceptual boundary of the Pine Hill Preserve and will help prevent many endangered and threatened plant species from declining irreversibly due to the conversion of habitat to urban uses.

The remaining natural communities are highly fragmented and depend on marginal habitat. Partners include the Service, California Department of Fish and Game, American Rivers Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management and El Dorado County.

- **La Sierra Canyon, Santa Monica Mountains (Los Angeles County)**- A \$450,000 grant will enable the Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the Mountains Restoration Trust to acquire 91 acres in the Santa Monica Mountains. This biologically diverse, prime land provides habitat for important plants including the endangered Lyon's pentachaeta and threatened marcescent dudleya, as well as four State listed birds. The acquisition will connect major park holdings from Topanga State Park, Point Mugu State Park and Malibu Creek State Park and is part of an ongoing multi-agency effort to protect critically important habitats in the Santa Monica Mountains.
- **Yreka Phlox at China Hills (Siskiyou County)** - A \$122,000 grant will help acquire and protect 35 acres that provide important habitat for federally endangered Yreka phlox. The objective of the acquisition of these three parcels is to conserve the China Hill population of the Yreka phlox, a plant that is also protected by the State of California. The China Hill population is one of only four known occurrences of this species. Partners include the Service, California Department of Fish and Game, the City of Yreka, and private landowners.

Florida

- **Warm Mineral Springs Creek Protection Program (Sarasota County)** - A \$455,835 grant will help acquire lands adjacent to Warm Mineral Springs Creek and identify management procedures to protect the endangered West Indian manatees that use the area as a refuge. Acquisition of a 32.5 acre parcel will allow the County to control access and protect manatees within the creek and its critical warm water refuge. The site is a winter/cold weather refuge for up to 100 manatees. It is one of the largest refuges in southwest Florida and possibly the only naturally occurring mineral spring. The manatee recovery plan identifies land adjacent to Warm Mineral Spring in Sarasota County as property that should be considered for acquisition due to its importance as manatee habitat. The surrounding scrubby flatwoods support foraging habitat for gopher tortoises and Florida scrub-jays. Several listed plant species occur, including the golden leather fern, bromeliads, and the Florida coontie.

Illinois/Iowa

- **Eastern prairie fringed orchid (Grundy County, IL, Jackson County, IA)** - A \$199,409 grant will be used by project partners to acquire an easement in Illinois within the Hildy Prairie and purchase a 50-acre parcel within Baldwin Marsh in Iowa for eastern prairie fringed orchid conservation. Both parcels contain stable populations of the threatened orchid. When the easement is acquired in Illinois, the property will be dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve, giving it the strongest perpetual protection available under Illinois law. Hildy Prairie, one of the largest known flowering sites within the range of the eastern prairie fringed orchid, is also the primary source of seed for conservation efforts throughout Illinois. Baldwin Marsh, Iowa, one of only four known

eastern prairie fringed orchid populations in the State, is the largest site having about 2,000 blooming plants. In 1994 this site contained only 400 blooming specimens.

Michigan

- **Mitchell's satyr habitat - Grand River Fen (Hillsdale and Jackson Counties)** -A \$375,000 grant will enable project partners including the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Nature Conservancy of Michigan to acquire and protect 154 acres adjacent to the Grand River Fen Preserve located in south-central Michigan. The site provides excellent habitat for the endangered Mitchell's satyr, as well as additional globally rare species including the Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, a candidate for ESA protection; tamarack tree cricket; blazing star borer; Powesheik skipper; spotted turtle, and others. This purchase will increase the management and protection of habitat to a total of 630 acres for these species, connect parcels currently owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy, and increase the lands within the primary protection boundary for the Preserve.

Missouri

- **Indiana and Gray Bat Cave Acquisition (Laclede County)** - A \$60,000 grant will be used by the Missouri Department of Conservation to acquire 52 acres surrounding a cave located in south-central Missouri's Ozark region. The cave provides important shelter for a maternal colony of gray bats and functions as a hibernation site for wintering Indiana bats. The cave has about one-half mile of mapped passages; future exploration of the cave system will yield additional biodiversity information. It is expected that the acquisition of this cave will provide additional recovery actions that will assist in the downlisting of gray bats from endangered to threatened status.
- **Ozark cavefish land acquisition (Newton County)** - A \$80,000 grant award will help the Missouri Department of Conservation acquire a one-acre inholding within the Capps Creek Conservation Area. This property is located within 100 yards of a state-owned well that was recently discovered to harbor threatened Ozark cavefish. The acquisition costs also include planting vegetation, site clean-up, and well capping.

Nevada

- **Lockes Ranch (Nye County)** - A \$900,000 grant will help secure key habitats essential for recovery of the threatened Railroad Valley springfish. The acquisition of 460 acres in Nye County will protect source pools and/or outflows for three major spring systems containing identified recovery populations and critical habitat for the springfish. Project partners include the Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife and the BLM.

New York

- **Karner blue butterfly & Prairie Peninsula/Lake Plain bog turtle habitat acquisition**

(Saratoga County) - A \$347,381 grant will help project partners including the Nature Conservancy and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation acquire and protect Saratoga West and Saratoga Sandplains properties. Acquisition of these parcels will significantly advance Karner blue butterfly recovery and open-space conservation efforts in New York.

Nebraska

- **Land Acquisition for American Burying Beetle (Lincoln County)** - A \$252,000 grant will enable the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to acquire and protect 670 acres of important prairie grassland habitat to benefit populations of American burying beetle. This area of Nebraska harbors one of the largest populations of burying beetles in the nation. The project acquisition will also serve as a demonstration site for prairie management to encourage similar improvements by neighboring private landowners. Protection of this habitat also provides significant benefits for prairie grasslands and declining grassland birds.

North Carolina

- **Acquisition of the Beck Tract (Onslow County)** - A \$556,150 grant will help acquire 2,432 acres of longleaf pine habitat to provide perpetual protection to an essential habitat corridor linking two forested sections of Camp Lejeune. The acquisition will provide foraging habitat and future nesting habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW). Having this parcel under appropriate management will also facilitate RCW recovery efforts on the base by preventing further encroachment and land use conversion. The area has been identified as having good foraging habitat and having potential to provide good nesting habitat within 30 to 40 years. Protection of this habitat will enable project partners, including the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Nature Conservancy and U.S. Marine Corps, to establish additional breeding groups within the area's primary core recovery population and to create a more contiguous land mass for this population. This proposed site also has a good probability of supporting the rough leaved loosestrife. Camp Lejeune is listed as one of the nine known population centers for this endangered plant in its recovery plan.

North Dakota

- **Conservation of Critical Habitat at Missouri/Yellowstone River Confluence (McKenzie County)** - A \$250,000 grant will enable the North Dakota Game and Fish Dept, American Foundation for Wildlife, The Conservation Fund and the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust acquire approximately 1,387 acres at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers to protect and enhance habitat for the endangered pallid sturgeon. This land represents the last stronghold and best remaining habitat for the pallid sturgeon, one of strongest populations of paddlefish, and strong populations of sicklefin and sturgeon chub, and will improve management opportunities for least terns and piping plover.

Oklahoma

- **Least Tern & Arkansas River Shiner Habitat Protection (Ellis County)** -A \$307,464 grant will help protect 3,370 acres of the Canadian River floodplain and associated uplands, including three miles of essential nesting habitat for the least tern. Protecting this habitat will benefit a stable population of breeding terns 10 miles away at the Packsaddle Wildlife Management Area (funded in FY02 through Recovery Land Acquisition) by extending available habitat along the river. The proposed acquisition lies within the Oklahoma reach of the Canadian River and harbors a significant population of the Arkansas River shiner. Protecting this stretch of the river from development will buffer the area and protect water quality. Intact lesser prairie chicken habitat also exists on the proposed acquisition site, and chickens exist both on the property and on neighboring parcels. Private lands management is the best opportunity for long-term recovery of the species, and The Nature Conservancy will use this area as a demonstration area for prescribed burning, grass banking, and other management strategies.

Tennessee

- **Asher Farm Tract - Clinch River (Hancock County)** - A \$1.685 million grant will help acquire and protect a significant portion of the shoal along the Clinch River at Kyles Ford, which harbors the most diverse mussel community in Tennessee. The Clinch River is one of the last major strongholds of Cumberlandian mussel fauna, and the Nature Conservancy's scientific planning process has identified Kyles Ford mussel shoal as the most biologically diverse, endangered mussel habitat on Earth. The 850-acre parcel that will be acquired is home to 10 federally listed mussel species. By acquiring property along the river corridor, instituting buffer strips, stabilizing stream banks and preventing runoff and sedimentation, this project will mark a significant step in efforts to permanently protect the Clinch River, its habitats, and fauna. The acquisition includes almost 3 miles of river front and 850 acres of adjacent riparian frontage to the Clinch River.
- **Large-flowered skullcap Land Acquisition (Hamilton County)** - A \$562,500 grant will help acquire a large tract of land along the Cumberland Plateau stream gorge that harbors populations and habitat for the threatened Virginia spiraea, large-flowered skullcap, and bald eagle. The parcel will connect to an even larger area of conservation lands, including a Forest Legacy project area and the North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Natural Area. The acquisition encompasses approximately 1,500 acres of privately owned timber land that has been protected voluntarily as a Registered State Natural Area. In 2001, a total of 321 plants was found in two populations of large-flowered skullcap. In 2002, a total of 1,005 plants was found in four populations. Placing this property in public ownership will help the Service reach its recovery goals and will likely contribute to the future delisting of this plant.

Texas

- **Petersen Ranch (Kendall County)** - A \$252,300 grant will enable the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Nature Conservancy of Texas, Bexar Land Trust, Environmental Defense and a private landowner to protect 150 acres through a conservation easement. The acquisition funded by the grant is adjacent to the 500 acre Petersen Ranch, currently managed for endangered black capped vireo and the subject property of a draft Safe Harbor Agreement. This parcel will expand management opportunities to the total 650 acres, allowing for a greater variety of management techniques such as prescribed burns to be employed. The acquisition will be used as a showcase to encourage conservation on private lands by providing a demonstration of proper management techniques and compatible land uses. In addition, the proposed parcel contains golden-cheeked warbler habitat, and golden-cheeks have been documented on the adjacent Petersen Ranch. By providing a successional mosaic of forest types for the black-capped vireo habitat will continue to grow into suitability for this endangered warbler.

Utah

- **Provo River/Hobble Creek Restoration (Lake and Utah Counties)** - A \$235,237 grant will partially fund the purchase of land along the Provo River and Hobble Creek to protect the only known spawning and rearing habitat for the endangered June sucker. Project partners, including the Nature Conservancy, Central Utah Water Conservancy, Utah Department of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited will also create and restore wetland and aquatic habitat. Acquisition of 14 parcels totaling 164 acres will protect open space within the rapidly developing Salt Lake City urban corridor.

Virginia

- **Purchase of Virginia sneezeweed habitat (Augusta County)** - A \$206,054 grant will help project partners purchase two tracts of land totaling approximately 120 acres at Mt. Joy Church Pond in Augusta County, Virginia. These parcels will be dedicated as a state natural area preserve. State natural area preserves are protected in perpetuity and managed to maintain and restore natural processes and the native species and natural communities on site. The benefit of this project will be to protect and manage one of the largest and most viable population of the threatened Virginia sneezeweed.
- **Purchase of Virginia big-eared and Indiana bat habitat (Tazewell County)** - A \$56,362 grant will enable the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the West Virginia Cave Conservancy to complete the acquisition of two caves and an uphill site that encompasses the watershed for surface drainage into the caves. It will provide permanent protection for a major Virginia big-eared bat hibernation and maternity cave, and will also protect a colony of hibernating Indiana bats. This is a major step towards recovery efforts and will help in the reclassification of the Virginia big-eared bat.

Washington

- **Asotin Creek (Asotin County)** - A \$600,000 grant will help the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation acquire and protect 8,500 acres of quality steppe grassland and 5.5 miles of riparian habitat in southeastern Washington. This strategic acquisition, surrounded by federal and State lands, will contribute to the implementation of recovery plans for threatened bull trout, bald eagle, and other species. It will also benefit chinook salmon, Columbia spotted frog and the State-listed sharp-tailed grouse.
- **Ebey's Landing (Island County)** - A \$1.5 million grant will help fund a land acquisition that will result in the permanent protection of one of the last eleven golden paintbrush populations in the world. The 33-acre site is one of the three largest extant habitats for this species, with the greatest potential for meeting recovery goals for the species. Threats to the species are imminent. Project partners include the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, National Park Service, Washington Natural Heritage Program, and Department of Natural Resources.

West Virginia

- **Habitat acquisition for the flat-spined three-toothed land snail (Monongalia, Preston Counties)** - A \$295,485 grant will support the acquisition of an additional 500 acres of habitat for the federally threatened flat-spined three-toothed land snail and add that habitat to the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources's existing Snakehill Wildlife Management Area. This land is currently occupied by the snail and will be managed to protect and conserve the species.