

# News Release



For immediate release: Friday, July 18, 2014

For further information:

Miles Grant (NWF), 617/855-9486, [grantm@nwf.org](mailto:grantm@nwf.org)

Margie Brenner (USFWS), regional public affairs specialist, 413/253-8280, [Margie\\_Brenner@fws.gov](mailto:Margie_Brenner@fws.gov)

---

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Federation team up to highlight Hurricane Sandy restoration efforts in Great Marsh to protect local communities

*Newburyport, M.A.* – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today joined the [National Wildlife Federation](#) (NWF) in highlighting efforts to restore the Great Marsh in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and strengthen New England’s largest contiguous estuarine system to protect communities against future storms predicted with a changing climate.

During a week in which President Obama pledged federal aid for state, tribal and local actions to battle climate change, Service Director Dan Ashe lauded complementary projects funded through the Department of the Interior and managed by the Service and NWF to protect communities by enhancing the Great Marsh’s natural defenses.

“The Great Marsh provides critical habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife. At the same time, it provides a natural defense system that can help reduce the risk from coastal storms, flooding and erosion to coastal and inland communities,” Ashe said. “Through funding from Interior and support and contributions from local partners, on-the-ground efforts guided by the Service and our partners at the National Wildlife Federation can help safeguard the Great Marsh so it can continue to sustain the people and wildlife of Massachusetts’ North Shore.”

Last month Interior Secretary Sally Jewell announced [\\$102.7 million in competitive matching grants](#) to support 54 projects along the Atlantic coast. The grants will fund science-based solutions to restore wetlands and other natural areas, better manage storm water using green infrastructure and assist states, tribes and local communities in protecting themselves from major storms such as Hurricane Sandy, which devastated much of the East Coast in 2012. The funds will be administered by the [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#).

Among the competitive grants is [\\$2.9 million awarded to NWF](#) to work with local partners to protect coastal communities along the North Shore from storms and flooding by strengthening the resiliency of natural systems upon which those communities depend.

NWF President and CEO Collin O’Mara said the grant managed by NWF will fund five separate projects coordinated through the Great Marsh Resiliency Partnership, a coalition of local conservation groups, regional planning entities, state and federal agencies (including [Parker](#)

[River National Wildlife Refuge](#)), local communities, and two existing regional environmental coalitions. Together, the partnership will work to provide dune nourishment and native vegetation planting; native habitat restoration through invasive species removal; hydrological barrier assessment and prioritization; hydrodynamic and sediment transport modeling; and coastal community resilience planning.

“Restoring the Great Marsh with our allies in the Great Marsh Resiliency Partnership is a top priority for the National Wildlife Federation,” O’Mara said. “Especially in the face of a changing climate, the investments we make now to protect this natural treasure and other places like it will pay off for generations to come.”

O’Mara joined other NWF and Service staff, as well as Congressional supporters, partners and other local officials, to tour the project site on Friday.

“Great Marsh restoration efforts will benefit an incredibly broad range of Massachusetts residents, from families that live in flood-prone areas to the fishing industry to weekend bird-watchers,” said Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass. “By taking a climate-smart approach to coastal restoration, we can leave a lasting conservation legacy.”

“I am pleased that my office was able to work with the National Wildlife Federation to help facilitate the \$2.9 million federal restoration grant that will enable NWF and its partners to undertake the Great Marsh Restoration project,” said Rep. John Tierney, D-Mass. “This important project will strengthen the local ecosystem while helping to protect local communities from the threat of erosion, flooding and other extreme weather related events. I look forward to working with NWF and the Great Marsh Resiliency Partnership as they move forward on this important environmental project.”

Funding for the competitive grants is part of the \$787 million the Department of the Interior received in supplemental appropriations for recovery and resiliency in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received \$102 million of this funding for 31 projects to restore coastal marshes, wetlands and shoreline, create habitat connectivity, improve flood resilience and undertake other efforts to protect nearby areas from future storms.

Among these is a \$340,000 [project](#) that complements the NWF-led effort in the Great Marsh by assessing salt marsh conditions; improving channel hydrology and tidal flow; combating invasive plant species; and restoring native maritime forest.

The Great Marsh is the largest contiguous salt marsh in New England, stretching from Cape Ann, Massachusetts to New Hampshire. It includes more than 20,000 acres of marsh, barrier beach, tidal river, estuary, mudflat, and upland islands extending across the Massachusetts North Shore from Gloucester to Salisbury.

For more information on the Service’s Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts, including a state-by-state list of funded projects, visit <http://www.fws.gov/hurricane/sandy/index.cfm>

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen in the Northeast region, visit [www.fws.gov/northeast](http://www.fws.gov/northeast). Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#) and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).*

--FWS--