



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Region

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: April 27, 2009

Contact: Amy Gaskill
503/231-6121
amy_gaskill@fws.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces 94 Projects in Pacific Region Under President's Economic Recovery Plan

Portland, Ore. – From the mountains of Idaho to the tropical islands of Hawai‘i, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will undertake 94 construction, energy efficiency, habitat restoration and other improvement projects at national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, fish technology centers and other public and private lands to create jobs and ensure our nation’s fish and wildlife resources, treasured landscapes, and rich heritage are conserved for future generations, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced today.

These projects total approximately \$37.2 million for improvements within the Pacific Region.

Funding for these projects and hundreds more across the nation comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Of the \$3 billion appropriated to the Department of the Interior, the Act provides \$280 million for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – which includes \$115 million for construction, repair and energy efficiency retrofit projects at Service facilities, and \$165 million for habitat restoration, deferred maintenance and capital improvement projects. The Service will benefit from an additional \$10 million, which is administered by the Department of Transportation and is not included in the Service’s \$280 million appropriation that will be used to rebuild and improve roads on several national wildlife refuges. Projects will immediately create local jobs in the communities where they are located, while stimulating long-term employment and economic opportunities for the American public.

“These projects are an investment in America’s future that will help get our country moving again,” Salazar said. “They will enable us to preserve our rich history and natural heritage by conserving and restoring awe-inspiring landscapes, important historic sites and crucial wildlife habitat.”

The \$37.2 million announced today for the Pacific Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will fund projects such as:

- Capital improvements and deferred maintenance for the restoration and improvement of National Wildlife Refuges, National Fish Hatcheries and a Fish Technology Center:

\$24.77 million (including \$4.2 million for energy efficiency retrofits of Service facilities);

- Other reconstruction and repair of National Wildlife Refuges: \$5.425 million;
- Construction of a new visitor center and other facilities destroyed by fire in 2006 at Keālia Pond NWR in Hawai‘i: \$7.3 million; and
- Habitat restoration: \$2.270 million.

The 94 projects are spread throughout the Service’s Pacific Region, which includes Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Hawai‘i and the Pacific Islands. They will benefit National Wildlife Refuges, National Fish Hatcheries and a Fish Technology Center, and provide habitat restoration on private lands and environmental reviews of federal projects. Examples include:

- \$1.9 million to restore and improve facilities at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, which is also known as the Battle of Midway National Memorial and is a part of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.
- \$3.4 million for fish passage and screening projects to benefit redband trout and other native fish at Malheur NWR.
- \$3.7 million to restore Chinook salmon salt water marsh habitat and visitor facilities at Nisqually NWR.
- \$2.2 million to restore and improve facilities at the Abernathy Fish Technology Center.
- \$1.4 million to restore and improve facilities at four Columbia Gorge National Fish Hatcheries and a habitat restoration project at Rattlesnake Creek.
- \$2.6 million to restore and improve facilities at three Olympic Peninsula National Fish Hatcheries (Makah NFH, Quinault NFH and Quilcene NFH).

“We are honored to help local communities during these difficult economic times,” said Robyn Thorson, Regional Director, Pacific Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “Our projects will benefit local communities by conserving and protecting fish and wildlife resources, increasing tourism and delivering quality outdoor experiences to the American public, improving the energy efficiency of our facilities, and creating youth employment opportunities.”

All the projects announced today represent long-standing priority needs identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its capital planning process. The Service worked through a rigorous merit-based process to identify and prioritize investments meeting the criteria put forth in the Recovery Act: namely, that a project addresses the Department’s highest priority mission needs; generates the largest number of jobs in the shortest period of time; and creates lasting value for the American public.

Under the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Department of the Interior is making an investment in conserving America's timeless natural and historical treasures, while also focusing on renewable energy projects, employing youth and promoting community service.

For a full list of funded projects nationwide, go to the Department’s Recovery Web Site at <http://recovery.doi.gov/>. Secretary Salazar has pledged unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Department of the Interior’s economic recovery projects. The public will be able to follow the progress of each project on the recovery web site, which will include an interactive map that enables the public to track where and how the

Department's recovery dollars are being spent. In addition, the public can submit questions, comments or concerns at recoveryact@fws.gov.

Secretary Salazar also has appointed a Senior Advisor for Economic Recovery, Chris Henderson, and an Interior Economic Recovery Task Force. Henderson and the Task Force will work closely with the Department of the Interior's Inspector General to ensure the Recovery Program is meeting the high standards for accountability, responsibility and transparency that President Obama has set.

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, visit www.fws.gov.

Idaho Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

**Contact: Dennis Mackey, Idaho Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Coordinator
208-378-5267**

**RECIPIENT OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009: Crystal Creek Ranch
Habitat Restoration Project, Idaho**

The Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has received \$430,000 to restore 150 acres of wetland habitat, and enhance over 1,000 acres of wetland, riparian, and upland habitat on the Crystal Creek and Spring Creek Ranches, in Blaine County, Idaho. The project will be cost-shared with the owners of the two ranches, and a conservation easement will be established on over 1300 acres, to permanently protect the area from development. Ducks Unlimited and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game are also cooperators on the project. The goal of this habitat restoration project is to restore and permanently protect habitat on the ranch to conserve migratory birds, and a variety of sensitive wildlife species including: bald eagles, great blue herons, long-billed curlews, sandhill cranes, and trumpeter swans. This project will employ a number of contractors and crews with expertise in heavy equipment operation and environmental restoration. The project will also provide economic benefits to multiple secondary businesses that will provide supplies and materials for the project such as water control structures, pipe, fuel, rock and other materials. In addition, stream restoration and development of an Interpretive Center is planned as part of the larger project. The Interpretive Center would be a place where the public could learn the history of early settlement and ranching in the Wood River Valley, the restoration of habitat and conservation of fish and wildlife on the ranch, and how a working cattle ranch and conservation preserve can coexist.