

News Release



External Affairs
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NEWS RELEASE
May 25, 2011

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Rhode Island and Massachusetts Tribes Awarded Nearly \$350 Thousand for Conservation Projects

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced more than \$7 million in Tribal Wildlife Grants that will go to 37 Native American Tribes in 16 states to fund a wide range of conservation projects.

The Narragansett Indian Tribe (Rhode Island) and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (Massachusetts) were the two Tribes selected in the Northeast to receive Tribal Wildlife Grants funds to conduct fish and wildlife activities.

“The Service and Tribes have partnered together for many years towards shared species and habitat conservation goals,” said Northeast Regional Director Marvin Moriarty. “The Service is pleased again this year to provide funding support to Tribes for their significant landscape conservation work.”

More than \$3.6 million has gone to 11 different Native American Tribes in the Northeast through the Tribal Wildlife Grants program since 2003, providing support for 23 conservation projects administered by participating federally-recognized Tribes. The grants provide technical and financial assistance for the development and implementation of projects that benefit fish and wildlife resources and their habitat, including non-game species.

The grants have enabled Tribes to develop increased management capacity, improve and enhance relationships with partners (including state agencies), address cultural and environmental priorities and heighten Tribal students’ interest in fisheries, wildlife and related fields of study. Some grants have been awarded to support recovery efforts for threatened and endangered species.

Examples of this year’s Tribal Wildlife Grants in the Northeast include:

Massachusetts

The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) will use \$181,590 in Tribal Wildlife Grants funds to develop a Cooperative Management Plan for the Menemsha Pond complex on Martha’s Vineyard. The management plan would not only ensure the proper management of the bay scallop resource in Menemsha Pond, but also create a framework for management of other important resources, such as American oysters, herring species, winter flounder, American eels, and any other resource found in the connected pond system. The management plan would also be used as a platform to resolve historically

difficult issues between parties, such as reciprocity between Town and Tribe field staff, uniform regulations between towns, uniform oil-spill response and creating a dredging plan for Menemsha Pond. The implemented plan will create a template for shared management that does not currently exist, and which will benefit the sustenance resources in the ponds to the benefit of both the Tribe and neighboring towns. This plan would be solidified in the form of an Agreement between the Tribe and Towns of Aquinnah and Chilmark.

Rhode Island

The Narragansett Indian Tribe will use \$160,497 in Tribal Wildlife Grants funds to identify areas for New England cottontail (NEC) conservation on their lands. The project would allow the Narragansett Indian Tribe to be a fully engaged partner in the conservation of this species. Specifically, the project will fund; (1) baseline surveys to determine if the NEC is present on tribal lands; (2) an assessment of management opportunities available on tribal lands; (3) outreach to enhance tribal membership's knowledge of the NEC and its status; (4) development and implementation of 25 acres of habitat improvement; and (5) follow-up monitoring to evaluate wildlife (NEC) and habitat response.

The Tribal Wildlife Grants are provided exclusively to federally-recognized Indian tribal governments and are made possible under the Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2002 through the State and Tribal Wildlife Grant program. The Request for Proposals for the 2012 grant cycle will be open until September 2, 2011. For more information and a TWG Application Kit, visit <http://www.fws.gov/nativeamerican/grants.html>.

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. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>