

News Bulletin

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Oregon Groups Receive \$2.2 Million to Protect Rare Species under Endangered Species Act Grants Program

Funding will help collaborative efforts to conserve our most imperiled species

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) provides millions of dollars in funding each year for conservation efforts through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF). This year, threatened and endangered species in 20 states will benefit from \$44.8 million in grants from the fund. Authorized under Section 6 of the ESA, the CESCF enables states to work with private landowners, conservation groups and other government agencies to develop projects that conserve federally-listed species and their habitats.

"If our children are to inherit a world with something called a leatherback sea turtle, northern long-eared bat or California tiger salamander, we need to commit to conservation at every level," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "By strategically investing in projects that have a proven track record of success, we are putting our limited resources to the most effective use and building a sustainable conservation legacy."

"These grants will enable state fish and wildlife agencies to advance the stewardship of our nation's fish and wildlife resources," said Dave Chanda, President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Director of New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. "We appreciate the strong ties formed by state agencies and their partners to protect these imperiled wildlife species and their habitats, which are critical to the on-the-ground success of these projects."

CESCF funding is provided through three competitive grant programs: the *Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program*, which provides funds to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) that protect habitat for listed species; the *Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program*, which provides funds for the acquisition of habitat in support of approved and draft species recovery plans; and the *HCP Land Acquisition Grants Program*, which provides funds to acquire habitat for listed species to complement approved HCPs.

The grants are funded in part by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was established by Congress in 1965. The fund promotes access to outdoor recreation resources for present and future generations by providing funding to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. For the past 51 years, the fund has supported more than

40,000 conservation and outdoor recreation projects nationwide. President Obama proposed full funding at \$900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget, and is pursuing full, permanent and mandatory funding for the fund's programs beginning in 2018.

Oregon's funded projects for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 CESCO include:

The Rogue River Recovery Project will help with acquisition of a 352-acre property, including two miles of Rogue River frontage in Jackson County. Few large parcels of land remain in such a natural state along this stretch of the river. Acquisition by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy will ensure the site's exceptional natural characteristics will be protected and enhanced in perpetuity. The property provides connectivity between other protected areas and contains multiple threatened landscapes. Over 100 species of birds and 300 plant species are found on the property and acquisition will permanently protect habitat for federally-listed species including the endangered large-flowered woolly meadowfoam and Gentner's fritillary as well as the threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp.

The Deschutes Basin Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan is being prepared by eight Irrigation Districts and the City of Prineville to maintain and improve habitat for the federally-listed Oregon spotted frog, bull trout, Middle Columbia River steelhead, sockeye salmon, and Chinook salmon in the Upper Deschutes Basin, while meeting current and future irrigation and municipal water needs in a balanced, economically viable, and sustainable manner. The plan will bring certainty to endangered species management and irrigated agriculture in the Upper Deschutes Basin, and will serve as a model for coordinated and cooperative use of water resources throughout the irrigated western United States.

The Mountcrest Working Forest Conservation Easement will allow permanent conservation on over 2000 acres of privately-owned mature forestland straddling the Siskiyou Crest that divides the Rogue River and Klamath River watersheds, strategically linking habitats for the northern spotted owl. The property is also used by Pacific fisher and other species of the Pacific Northwest forests. Without this project, the property would likely have been developed in time. Acquisition of the easement by the Pacific Forest Trust not only ensures the forest remains intact and undeveloped but it also guides forest management to maintain and enhance ecological and hydrologic function while also retaining a continued contribution to the economic health of the region.

The ESA provides a critical safety net for North America's native fish, wildlife and plants. The Service is working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. For a complete list of FY 2016 CESCO funded projects visit: <https://www.fws.gov/angered/grants/index.html>. To learn more about the Service's Ecological Services Program visit www.fws.gov/angered.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels:



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