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News Release



For Release on September 27, 2005
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05-94

Grants to Benefit Endangered Species in the Pacific Region Total \$17 Million

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced \$17 million in grants in the agency's Pacific Region to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered fish, wildlife and plants. The grants, awarded through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, are among \$70.5 million awarded nationally to benefit species throughout the United States ranging from mussels to bull trout.

"Recovery of threatened and endangered species cannot be accomplished without the active support of private landowners," said Dave Allen, director of the Service's Pacific Region. "These grants will enable our State partners to work cooperatively with landowners, communities, and Tribes to restore and protect habitat and undertake other management actions that will benefit dozens of imperiled species across the nation."

The Pacific Region states of Oregon, Washington and Hawaii received a large share of the grants, with projects in Washington receiving \$14.5 million, projects in Hawaii receiving \$2.6 million and one project in Oregon receiving \$446,000.

Authorized by Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act, the grants enable States to work with private landowners, conservation groups and other agencies to initiate conservation planning efforts and acquire and protect habitat to support the conservation of threatened and endangered species.

Nationwide, the cooperative endangered species fund this year provides \$8.5 million through the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program; \$48.6 million through the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants Program; and \$13.4 million through the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program. The three programs were established to help reduce potential conflicts between the conservation of threatened and endangered species and land development and use.

Under the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Program, the Service provides grants to States or Territories for land acquisitions associated with approved Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs). These HCPs, which are agreements between a landowner and the Service, allow a landowner to incidentally take threatened or endangered species in the course of otherwise lawful activities when that landowner agrees to conservation measures designed to minimize and mitigate the impact of taking. HCPs may also be developed by a county or state to cover certain activities of all landowners within their own jurisdiction; it may address multiple species.

There are more than 469 HCPs currently in effect covering 588 separate species on approximately 40 million acres. The grants are targeted to help landowners who want to undertake proactive conservation work on their lands to conserve imperiled species.

The Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Program provides grants to States and Territories to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans, through funding of baseline surveys and inventories, document preparation, outreach, and similar planning activities. The Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program provides funds to states and territories to acquire habitat for endangered and threatened species in approved recovery plans. Acquisition of habitat to secure long term protection is often an essential element of a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species.

For a complete list of the 2005 grant awards for these programs (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 15.615), see the Service's Endangered Species Grants home page at <http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/section6/index.html>.

Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants in Washington:

Plum Creek Central Cascades HCP - Kittitas, Okanogan, and Yakima Counties, WA \$7,417,805

This grant will provide funding to purchase habitat to support the Plum Creek Central Cascades Habitat Conservation Plan. In Yakima County, permanent habitat protection will be provided for bird, mammal, amphibian, and fish species on approximately 7,000 acres of contiguous mature ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and riparian habitats in the Tieton River Canyon. In Kittitas County, this funding will purchase and permanently protect 297 acres of forested hillside on Amabilis Mountain and adjacent areas that flow into Swamp Lake within the Yakima River Watershed. Protection of these lands would protect the north/south wildlife corridor that runs between Keechelus and Kachess Lakes and provide habitat for marbled murrelet, spotted owl, and numerous terrestrial species. And in Okanogan County, this grant will acquire 600 acres securing more than 6,000 acres and 10 miles of stream frontage to protect mature conifer and riparian habitat corridors for 40 priority species including spotted owls, grizzly bears, gray wolves, lynx, bull trout, and salmon in the Methow River Watershed.

Cedar River HCP, Phase 3 - King County, WA \$1,617,138

This land acquisition will protect and restore up to 100 acres of habitat in the lower Cedar River ecosystem and improve habitat connectivity to areas beyond the Cedar River watershed to benefit species covered under the Cedar River HCP. It will create a more contiguous protected area that greatly improves the physical connection between habitats of the lower river valley and upper watershed. Bald eagles, bull trout, listed salmon, and unlisted species will benefit.

Washington DNR HCP - Jefferson, WA \$2,052,250

These funds will be used to protect 1,176 acres of riparian and upland forest habitat which will contribute to the larger Hoh River Conservation Corridor. The project will conserve habitat for marbled murrelets, bull trout, northern spotted owls, and bald eagles in the lower Hoh River valley.

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants in Oregon and Washington:

Elliott State Forest HCP - Coos and Douglas County, OR \$446,261

The Habitat Conservation Plan being developed by Oregon Department of Forestry for the 93,000-acre Elliott State Forest will contribute to the conservation of the marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, bald eagle, and coastal coho salmon and numerous unlisted species. The conservation strategies developed for this Habitat

Conservation Plan are intended to improve habitat for these species through time by combining two approaches to protecting species through sustainable forest ecosystem management and a set of specific strategies for covered species.

Washington State Hydraulic Project Approval HCP - Statewide, WA \$660,000

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will initiate the habitat conservation planning process for the state's primary fish-protection regulatory program, the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) program. WDFW is seeking a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) as a means of continuing conservation of fish and shellfish species and habitat, consistent with earlier conservation plans such as "Forest and Fish", while achieving long-term certainty that the HPA Program meets federal species-protection requirements. Development of the HCP would entail a five-year process, including significant public involvement.

Washington Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Resources HCP - Statewide, WA \$813,500

Washington Department of Natural Resources manages more than 2.4 million acres of submerged land in marine, estuarine and freshwater habitats. This grant will support the planning process to develop a multi-species programmatic Habitat Conservation Plan to ensure authorized activities on state-owned aquatic lands promote sustainable ecosystems, minimize cumulative impacts and increase protection, conservation, and recovery efforts for approximately 86 species proposed to be covered under the Habitat Conservation Plan.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Wildlife Area HCP - Statewide, WA \$544,555

WDFW will initiate the habitat conservation planning process for its land management program. As a long-term multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the conservation of endangered and threatened species on 830,000 acres of WDFW-owned and managed wildlife areas, an HCP offers benefits to protected species and land users by providing certainty that land management activities meet federal species-protection requirements. Development of the HCP would entail a multi-year process, including significant public involvement.

Family Forest HCP for Lewis County - Lewis County, WA \$525,000

This Habitat Conservation Plan is a first of its kind effort to address the needs of endangered species, family forest landowners, and regulatory agencies. This final phase of funding will complete the planning process which will provide landowners and agencies with a programmatic approach to HCP implementation while providing critical aquatic and upland habitat needs for threatened, endangered, and species of concern on family forest land in Lewis County.

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants:

Washington

Nelson Creek Property Acquisition - Wahkiakum County, WA \$651,533

The acquisition of this 180-acre parcel will enhance the recovery of the endangered Columbia white-tailed deer by providing secure foraging, resting, and breeding habitat adjacent to the Julia Butler Hansen Columbian White-Tailed Deer National Wildlife Refuge. Many other species will benefit from preservation of the habitat including bald eagles, songbirds, Canada geese, ducks, mink, river otter, and amphibians.

Hawaii

Moanalua Valley Watershed Protection Project - Honolulu County, HI \$1,634,364

Funding will help acquire 3,714 acres of the best remaining native forest on Oahu. It is home to 14 federally listed or candidate endangered plant species, three listed birds and three listed or candidate invertebrates. These lands will be added to existing State owned conservation lands in the Ko'olau Mountains and be administered by

the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

Manuka Natural Area Reserve - Hawaii County, HI

\$78,750

This grant will fund acquisition of a 1-acre parcel located near the center of the Manuka Natural Area Reserve (NAR), established to protect in perpetuity a diverse range of natural communities including dry and mesic forests, subalpine shrublands and forests, lowland and coastal shrublands and grasslands, anchialine pools, pioneer vegetation on lava flows and lava tubes. These communities provide habitat for native plants and animals including the endangered Hawaiian hawk, Hawaiian hoary bat, and an endangered fern *Diellia erecta*. The parcel will be added to the NAR and managed in conjunction with the surrounding area for native species conservation.

Carlsmith Trust Property - Hawaii County, HI

\$875,000

Funding will acquire a 1,336-acre parcel located between 2,400 and 3,800 feet elevation on the wet windward side of Mauna Loa. The property is directly adjacent to the Waiakea Forest reserve and the parcel contains native lowland wet forest. To date, no formal biological surveys have been conducted on this property but the surrounding area provides habitat for the endangered Hawaiian hoary bat and Hawaiian hawk along with other globally rare species. Due to its remote nature and pristine condition these species are likely present on the property as well.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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