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News Release



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Awards State Wildlife Agencies Base Funding For Landowner Incentive Program

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last week announced nearly \$8 million that will be made available in base funding grants to state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies under the innovative Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). The Pacific Region states received a total of \$720,000.

The program provides base funding and competitive grants to states to form collaborative partnerships with private landowners interested in conserving natural habitat for species at risk on private lands while continuing to engage in traditional land-use practices.

"More than 70 percent of lands in this country are privately owned. This means conservation, especially for imperiled species, must be a partnership between the American people and their government," said Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne. "By providing these grants, we are helping citizens restore habitat on their land and take other steps to protect and enhance endangered, threatened and at-risk species."

In making these grants, the Service uses a two-tiered award system. Tier 1 grants are intended to provide a base for states to fund staff and associated support necessary to develop new or enhance existing landowner incentive programs. Tier 2 grants are generally intended to implement landowner incentive programs through on-the-ground conservation work and are generally larger matching grants allocated through a separate competitive program. A request for proposals for Tier 2 grants will be announced in the next few weeks. The Landowner Incentive Program is funded through the Soil and Water Conservation Fund.

Landowners interested in participating in the LIP should first contact their state fish and wildlife agency. For additional information about the grant programs, please visit the Service's Website at: <http://federalasst.fws.gov/lip/lip.html> . You may also contact: Landowner Incentive Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS-FA4020, Arlington, VA 22203. Phone: (703) 358-2156.

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 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources 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 Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.