

# News Release

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## Wetlands Projects in Oregon and Washington Get Boost from Federal Grants

Wetlands-dependent fish, wildlife and plants will benefit from grants announced June 16 by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. The grants, approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, include a \$75,000 grant to the Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District in Oregon and a total of \$150,000 to the Whatcom Land Trust in Washington.

The grants are among a total of \$35.7 million the commission approved for refuge acquisitions and wetlands grants for migratory birds: \$30.4 million in federal funding for grants to conserve more than 319,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats in the United States and Canada under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and \$5.3 million in Federal Duck Stamp funds to add more than 1,849 wetland acres to six units of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

“Besides providing habitat for fish, wildlife and plants, our nation’s wetlands provide vital storm protection for coastal areas, hold and slowly release flood waters, act as filters to cleanse water of impurities and provide recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities for millions of people,” said Salazar, who chairs the Commission.

The Commission includes Senators Thad Cochran of Mississippi and Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas, Representatives John Dingell of Michigan and Robert Wittman of Virginia, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, as well as state representatives serving as ex officio members who vote on projects located within their respective states.

In Oregon, the Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District and its partners will match their grant with \$169,995 to help fund the South Yamhill River-Turner Bottoms Wetlands Restoration and Enhancement Project. The project is part of a larger effort to reverse habitat loss in the Willamette Valley by restoring 191 acres of high-quality native habitat and seasonal wetlands, wetland-prairie grasslands and riparian habitats. In addition, the project partners intend to enhance another 34 acres of severely degraded remnant wetland habitats located on the project sites.

In Washington, the Whatcom Land Trust will use its two \$75,000 grants to fund two projects: the Deer Lagoon Wetlands in Island County and Phase II of the Samish River Riparian and Wetland Protection Project. The Land Trust and its partners will contribute another \$75,000 to the Deer Lagoon project and \$166,000 to the Samish River project.

The goal of the Deer Lagoon project is to acquire a permanent conservation easement on 31 acres of tidal lagoon and diked wetlands at Deer Lagoon on the southwest end of Whidbey Island. Deer Lagoon is home to more than 170 bird species, including 31 species of waterfowl, 21 shorebird species and 62 species of songbirds. Preserving a connection between the Deer Lagoon wetlands and open adjacent agricultural fields is a key component to protecting the entire ecosystem.

The Samish River project builds on prior successes in the Samish by providing perpetual protection to significant freshwater wetland complexes in the basin that contribute to the protection of water quality and habitat conditions in Samish Bay. Through Phase II of the project, the Whatcom Trust will expand its existing Samish River Preserve by acquiring 65 acres along the river in Whatcom County. The acquisition will protect fresh water wetland and riparian habitat along the Samish River that will support migratory and resident birds, waterfowl, fish and wildlife.

More information about the grants approved by the commission is at <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/index.shtm>. More information on the Oregon and Washington grants is available at [http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA\\_small/2010.shtm](http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA_small/2010.shtm)

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