

News Release



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Secretary Jewell, Director Ashe Announce \$16.5 Million in Grants to Conserve Coastal Wetlands

Hawaii to receive \$344,400 to Restore and Protect 'Ahihi-Kina'u on Maui

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Director Dan Ashe today announced \$16.5 million in grants to support 21 critical coastal wetland projects in 12 states and Puerto Rico under the National Coastal Grants Wetlands Conservation Grants Program.

State and local governments, private landowners, conservation groups and other partners will contribute an additional \$18.2 million to these projects, which include acquiring, restoring or enhancing coastal wetlands and adjacent uplands to provide long-term conservation benefits to fish and wildlife and their habitats.

“Coastal wetlands not only provide key habitat for fish and wildlife but they also improve water quality, support local economies through jobs and provide flood protection,” Jewell said. “These grants, funded through excise taxes paid by anglers and boaters, give us the opportunity to join with states and territories and other partners to conserve and restore these areas that are so vital to our environment and our quality of life.”

The Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources is awarded a \$344,400 grant to restore and permanently protect coastal ecosystems and species in the `Ahihi-Kina`u Natural Area Reserve on Maui from damage by feral goats, invasive non-native plants, and marine debris.

The 770 acre restoration area includes globally rare anchialine pools, rocky intertidal areas, coral reefs, and unique coastal lava fields with rare plant communities. This project supports goals of the state's Reserve Management Plan. Specifically, it will fence goats out of the anchialine pools and remove them from the project area, remove invasive vegetation from anchialine pools and adjacent uplands, replant degraded areas with native vegetation, and remove marine debris from shorelines and coral reefs. The state will also conduct critical public outreach to describe the biological importance of the area and how visitors can minimize their impacts. This project will benefit many rare species, including anchialine pool shrimp and federally listed Hawaiian stilts, green sea turtles, coastal plants, and Hawaiian monk seals.

Coastal wetlands comprise less than 10 percent of the nation's land area yet support a significant number of wildlife species, including 75 percent of migratory birds, nearly 80 percent of fish and shellfish, and

about half of all our threatened and endangered species. Wetlands in coastal watersheds in the U.S. are experiencing a net annual loss of about 80,160 acres according to a [new study](#) by the Service.

“With the latest data showing dramatic annual loss of coastal wetlands, these grants become even more important,” Ashe said. “These wetlands are invaluable resources we must protect, and, with these grants, states, territories and partners will be able to undertake high priority projects.”

States and territories receiving funds are Alabama, Alaska, California, Georgia, Hawai‘i, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia, Washington and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The complete list of projects funded by the 2014 grant program can be found [here](#).

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is administered by the Service and funded under provisions of the 1990 Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act. Funding is provided by Sport Fish Restoration Act revenue – money generated from an excise tax on fishing equipment, motorboat and small engine fuels.

The Service awards grants of up to \$1 million to states based on a national competition, which allows states to determine and address their highest conservation priorities in coastal areas. Since 1992, the Service has awarded \$336 million in grants under the program.

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>

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