

# Land Acquisition

## Land Acquisition

### Appropriations Language

For expenses necessary to carry out the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, (16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.), including administrative expenses, and for acquisition of land or waters, or interest therein, in accordance with statutory authority applicable to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, [\$47,535,000]\$58,500,000, to be derived from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and to remain available until expended: Provided, That none of the funds appropriated for specific land acquisition projects may be used to pay for any administrative overhead, planning or other management costs. (*Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015.*)

### Authorizing Statutes

***The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956***, as amended (16 U.S.C. 742a). Authorizes acquisition of additions to the National Wildlife Refuge System for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources by purchase or exchange of land and water or interests therein.

***Refuge Recreation Act of 1962***, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460). Authorizes acquisition of areas that are adjacent to or within existing fish and wildlife Conservation Areas administered by the Department of the Interior, and suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreation development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of listed, threatened, or endangered species, or (4) carrying out two or more of the above.

***Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965***, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460l). Authorizes appropriations to the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire land for National Wildlife Refuges as otherwise authorized by law. Authorization of Appropriations: Expires September 30, 2015.

***National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act of 1966*** (16 U.S.C. 668dd). Established overall policy guidance, placed restrictions on the transfer, exchange, or other disposal of refuge lands, and authorized the Secretary to accept donations for land acquisition.

***Endangered Species Act of 1973***, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1534). Authorizes the acquisition of land, waters, or interests therein for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, including those that are listed as endangered or threatened species, with Land and Water Conservation Fund Act appropriations.

***Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986*** (16 U.S.C. 3901). Authorizes the purchase of wetlands, or interests in wetlands, consistent with the wetlands priority conservation plan established under the Act.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**Land Acquisition**  
**Justification of Fixed Costs and Internal Realignments**  
*(Dollars In Thousands)*

<b>Fixed Cost Changes and Projections</b>	<b>2015 Total or Change</b>	<b>2015 to 2016 Change</b>
Change in Number of Paid Days This column reflects changes in pay associated with the change in the number of paid days between the 2015 and 2016.	+0	+38
Pay Raise The change reflects the salary and health benefit impacts of programmed pay raise increases.	+96	+118
Employer Contribution to FERS The change reflects the directed increase of 0.5% in employer's contribution to the Federal Employee Retirement System.	+0	+4
Rental Payments The adjustment is for changes in the costs payable to General Services Administration (GSA) and others resulting from changes in rates for office and non-office space as estimated by GSA, as well as the rental costs of other currently occupied space. These costs include building security; in the case of GSA space, these are paid to Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Costs of mandatory office relocations, i.e. relocations in cases where due to external events there is no alternative but to vacate the currently occupied space, are also included.	+3	+0

<b>Internal Realignments and Non-Policy/Program Changes (Net-Zero)</b>	<b>2016 (+/-)</b>
<b>Land Protection Planning</b> The National Wildlife Refuge System's Land Protection Planning Program directly supports the Land Acquisition program. The Service will transfer funding from the Resource Management Appropriation to the Land Acquisition Appropriation to better align the purpose of this program.	+465

**Appropriation: Land Acquisition**

		2014 Actual	2015 Enacted	2016 Request				Change from 2015 Enacted (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Land Acquisition Management	(\$000)	10,500	12,613	+160	0	0	12,773	+160
Land Protection Planning	(\$000)	0	0	0	+465	0	465	+465
Exchanges	(\$000)	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	1,500	0
Inholdings / Emergencies and Hardships	(\$000)	7,351	5,351	0	0	0	5,351	0
Highlands Conservation Act	(\$000)	0	3,000	0	0	-3,000	0	-3,000
Sportsmen and Recreational Access	(\$000)	0	0	0	0	+2,500	2,500	+2,500
Federal Refuges/Projects	(\$000)	35,071	25,071	0	0	+10,840	35,911	+10,840
<b>Subtotal, Land Acquisition-Discretionary</b>	<b>(\$000)</b>	<b>54,422</b>	<b>47,535</b>	<b>+160</b>	<b>+465</b>	<b>+10,340</b>	<b>58,500</b>	<b>+10,965</b>
	<b>FTE</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>0</b>
Land Acquisition Management	(\$000)	0	0	0	0	+12,000	12,000	+12,000
Land Protection Planning	(\$000)	0	0	0	0	+3,000	3,000	+3,000
Exchanges	(\$000)	0	0	0	0	+1,000	1,000	+1,000
Inholdings / Emergencies and Hardships	(\$000)	0	0	0	0	+3,000	3,000	+3,000
Federal Refuges/Projects	(\$000)	0	0	0	0	+87,272	87,272	+87,272
<b>Land Acquisition – Mandatory</b>	<b>(\$000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+106,272</b>	<b>106,272</b>	<b>+106,272</b>
	<b>FTE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>+40</b>
<b>Total, Land Acquisition</b>	<b>(\$000)</b>	<b>54,422</b>	<b>47,535</b>	<b>+160</b>	<b>+465</b>	<b>+116,612</b>	<b>164,772</b>	<b>+117,237</b>
	<b>FTE</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+40</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>+40</b>

**Summary of 2016 Program Changes for Land Acquisition (Discretionary)**

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Land Acquisition Projects	+10,840	0
• Sportsman and Recreational Access	+2,500	0
• Highlands Conservation Act	-3,000	0
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>+10,340</b>	<b>0</b>

### Justification of 2016 Program Changes

The 2016 discretionary budget request for Land Acquisition is \$58,500,000 and 88 FTE, a net program change of +\$10,340 and +0 FTE from the 2015 Enacted.

#### Land Acquisition Projects (+\$10,840,000/+0 FTE)

With this increase, the Service can protect over 37,700 acres of land across the country to conserve important habitat for native fish, wildlife, and plants. All of these projects have willing sellers who wish to work with the Service. The Service will also collaborate with a multitude of Federal, State, county, non-governmental organizations, and private partners. About two-thirds of these acres will be protected through conservation easements; such easements help preserve rural communities by keeping landowners on and running their working ranches, farms, and forests, and by making it financially easier to pass lands onto the next generation. The project descriptions later in this section provide more detail about the natural resource values of the proposed projects, and how they will further support the Department's network of connected conservation lands.

#### Sportsman and Recreational Access (+\$2,500,000/+0 FTE)

With these additional funds, the Service can acquire and conserve important wildlife habitat to share with the public for recreational use, including hunting and fishing. Refuges that may not have project funding but have willing sellers, may request funds to acquire land to provide access for families and recreationalists to enjoy wildlife recreation, such as observation and photography of wildlife, and enjoying environmental education and interpretation. The Service will be able to acquire choice lands quickly and make them more accessible, for young people and the country's growing urban population that lives within an hour's drive from a Refuge.

#### Highlands Conservation Act (-\$3,000,000/+0 FTE)

The Service will shift this funding to higher priority conservation projects as identified by the Targeted Resource Acquisition Comparison Tool (TRACT), that have both ready and willing sellers, and support from partners and other stakeholders.

### Program Overview

The Service uses Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies appropriated by Congress to acquire and protect important fish, wildlife, and plant habitat. Acquired lands and waters become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System or National Fish Hatchery System, and when acquired in fee, provide the public opportunities to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation.

The Service requests land acquisition funding only for properties within approved National Wildlife Refuge acquisition boundaries and only acquiring land from willing sellers. The Service acquires the minimum necessary to reach management objectives, and often a conservation easement will provide adequate habitat protection by preventing development while allowing landowners to continue working their farms, ranches, and forests.



*Visitors birdwatching on Hakalau Forest NWR.  
Credit: David Boyle/NPS volunteer.*

For every project for which the Service requests LWCF funding, the Service has an approved Land Protection Plan and has completed the required National Environmental Policy Act review process.

### Local Benefits

In 2014, nearly 47 million people visited National Wildlife Refuges to enjoy bird watching, hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. These visitors support local economies by staying in local lodges, eating at local restaurants, and shopping in local stores. Local employment increases, and increases in tax revenues go to local, county, and state governments.

The presence of National Wildlife Refuges also increases local land values. According to [Amenity Values of Proximity to National Wildlife Refuges](#), prepared by the Center for Environmental and Resource Economic Policy at North Carolina State University in 2012, property values of lands surrounding National Wildlife Refuges are higher than values of equivalent properties elsewhere.

### **FWS Refuge System Lands<sup>1</sup>**

Nearly 47 million people visited, generating \$2.6 billion of sales in regional economies; supporting 35,400 jobs; and generating \$370.5 million in tax revenue at the local, county, State and Federal level for a total economic contribution of \$4.5 billion.

<sup>1</sup> Refuge System-wide estimated economic benefits are based upon a recent analysis conducted by the FWS' Division of Economics using the latest visitation numbers and analysis methods used in the Banking on Nature Report published in 2013.

The Department of the Interior's FY 2016 budget request for projects includes two sources: Mandatory and Discretionary.

### Conservation Design

Conservation design combines geospatial data with biological information and models to create maps and other tools that evaluate every acre of habitat's potential to support a fish or wildlife species population. The Service also works collaboratively with conservation partners to determine the kind, quality, and configuration of the needed habitat. With these tools and data, the Service can determine the current habitat-acre capability and what it needs to be to achieve specific biological objectives or outcomes.

### Strategic Growth Policy of the National Wildlife Refuge System

The Service's 2014 Strategic Growth Policy identifies priority conservation targets for the strategic growth of the National Wildlife Refuge System to ensure the best choices are made when adding lands or waters to the Refuge System. The Policy directs the Service to focus on acquiring lands and waters in fee, conservation easement, and/or donation that support three priorities:

1. Recovery of threatened and endangered species;
2. Implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; and
3. Conserving migratory birds of conservation concern.

Using these three priorities, a Service interdisciplinary team developed the Targeted Resource Acquisition Comparison Tool (TRACT) that replaces the Land Acquisition Priority System (LAPS). The TRACT provides a biological, science-based, transparent process for ranking proposed Refuge System land acquisitions by generating separate rankings for each of the three priorities, for each proposed acquisition. TRACTS does not assign weights to the three priorities, and unlike the LAPS, it does not produce a single numerical ranking that combines all of the Service's priorities. The TRACT's rankings are intended to provide decision makers with an objective analysis that is grounded in the best available science; it is a decision support tool to inform the decision maker but not make the decision.

The land acquisition projects proposed for the FY 2016 budget reflect additional important factors, including contribution of leveraged funds, conservation partner participation, and urgency of project completion to protect natural areas from development or other incompatible uses. The proposed projects support the Service's mission-oriented priorities as well as potential Collaborative Landscape Planning (CLP) projects such as the Island Forests at Risk; Upper Rio Grande; High Divide; Rivers of the Chesapeake; National Trails; Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine; Pathways to the Pacific; and Northern Coastal California.

### **Use of Residual LWCF Funds**

Federal land acquisition projects sometimes have small amounts of funds remaining after land has been acquired. These residual funds are insufficient to acquire additional land. In 2014, the Service instituted a policy of reallocating residual project funds of less than \$50,000 to the Inholdings line item to be used to protect other lands that do not have project funding. This shift enables the Service to acquire valuable wildlife habitat within approved refuge acquisition boundaries that becomes available for acquisition in between appropriations cycles. (Projects funded in 2009 are excluded from the policy due to existing reprogramming restrictions.)

### **Conservation Success Stories**

Each year the Service acquires land in fee title or conservation easement through LWCF. The acquired lands provide improved habitat for wildlife, and often enhance resource management capability. Fee title acquisitions generate economic benefits for local communities and provide the public with opportunities to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation. FY 2014 acquisition highlights include:

#### ***Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico***

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, located just south of Albuquerque, New Mexico, is the Southwest's first urban refuge and an oasis for wildlife and people. Through the EPA's Urban Waters program, Valle de Oro NWR was recognized in 2013 as part of key conservation and restoration projects along the Rio Grande River. Along with several partners, the Service recently acquired the refuge's remaining acres. Now complete, the 570-acre Valle de Oro NWR and its valuable water rights will enhance the river corridor and fulfill the goals of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative by working with community partners to establish a 21st century conservation ethic and connect New Mexico's youth to the natural world.



*Newest acquired land completing Valle de Oro NWR. Credit: USFWS.*

The restoration of native habitats will begin within the next few years with an expansion of the Bosque habitat into the refuge, the creation of wetlands and the regrowth of naturally occurring grasses and brushland. The different habitats within a small area will create rich opportunities for diverse wildlife viewing. In the meantime, the Service is in an agreement with a local farmer to continuously farm the land until habitat restoration efforts can begin.

***James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge, Hawai‘i***

The Service acquired 113 fee acres at James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge on the north shore of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. This property finishes the 750-acre expansion that began in 2008, adding both mixed shrub/scrub and wetland habitat to the Refuge. When restored, this land will have the potential to help conserve four of Hawai‘i’s endangered waterbirds, the ae‘o (Hawaiian stilt), ‘alae ke‘oke‘o (Hawaiian coot), ‘alae ‘ula (Hawaiian moorhen), and koloa maoli (Hawaiian duck), as well as other indigenous shorebirds, seabirds, and migratory birds.



*The newly acquired coastal strand and dunes provide needed resting and nesting habitat for some of Hawaii’s endangered animals.  
Credit: Charlie Parrott, USFWS.*

The property adds an additional half mile of undeveloped shore land of coastal strand and dunes that provide resting habitat for the endangered ‘ilio holo i ka uaua (Hawaiian monk seal) and nesting habitat for the threatened honu (green sea turtle) and endangered honu ‘ea (hawksbill turtle). The refuge will work with partners to restore the ecosystems to their natural condition by removing invasive plants and planting native plants.

***Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, Oregon, and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, Nevada***

The Service partnered with the Greater Hart-Sheldon Conservation Fund and Nevada Land Trust to identify willing landowners at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge (NAR) and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. Our partners negotiated transactions and held properties until appropriated funds were available to purchase these lands.



*The new Hart Mountain NAR properties preserve high quality sagebrush-steppe habitat.  
Credit: Jonathan Bloomfield, USFWS.*

The Service acquired 280 fee acres at Hart Mountain NAR and 90 fee acres at Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. Both Refuges, located in Southeast Oregon and Northwest Nevada, have some of the best remaining areas of sagebrush-steppe habitat. They are home to over 300 species of wildlife, including greater sage-grouse; pronghorn antelope; pygmy rabbit; and California bighorn sheep. All of the tracts acquired are within known sage-grouse breeding and nesting areas, and two of the tracts are within proposed wilderness areas.

Hart Mountain NAR was established in 1936 to provide range for nearly extinct antelope herds.

The Refuge encompasses a massive fault block ridge that abruptly ascends above the Warner Valley floor in a series of rocky cliffs, steep slopes, and knife-like ridges. The Refuge descends on the east side of the mountain into a series of rolling hills and low ridges to the sagebrush-grasslands, creating a rich mix of habitat types. Many declining migratory bird populations use this habitat, including the Brewer’s sparrow, sage thrasher, and loggerhead shrike.

The primary purposes for Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge are to provide breeding ground habitat for wild animals and birds, conserve endangered and threatened species, and provide an inviolate sanctuary for migratory birds. The Refuge, encompassing 575,000 acres of sagebrush-steppe habitat within the Great Basin, conserves habitat for a number of native, rare, and imperiled species of fish, wildlife, and plants. Eight proposed wilderness areas of 341,500 acres, vast expanses of sagebrush habitats dotted with springs, pockets of aspen, and isolated stands of mountain mahogany are also included.

#### ***Camas National Wildlife Refuge, Idaho***

The Service acquired 80 acres of grassland and sagebrush habitat at Camas National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Idaho with LWCF Inholding funds. Pheasants Forever, a long time conservation partner, helped the Service protect this land from development into pivot irrigation agricultural land. Water withdrawals for pivot agriculture would have exacerbated the falling water table on the Refuge and further complicated the management of wetland habitats for the benefit of wildlife. With these 80 acres, the Service can restore Basin Big Sagebrush, a critically endangered habitat in Idaho's Snake River Plain. The property is also part of a larger collaboration with the State of Idaho and the Department of Agriculture's National Resources Conservation Service to protect habitat along an important migration corridor in eastern Idaho.



*Credit: Charles Houghten, USFWS.*

The Refuge was established to provide habitat and breeding grounds for migratory birds and other wildlife. Half of the refuge is lakes, ponds, and marshlands, and the rest is grass sagebrush uplands, meadows, and farm fields. During migration periods up to 50,000 ducks and 3,000 geese come to the refuge, and tundra and trumpeter swans number in the hundreds.

#### ***San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, California***

In February 2014, the San Pablo NWR added not only over 651 acres of uplands and marshes to its property, but also its first Refuge Headquarters facility. Over 38,000 vehicles pass the Refuge daily on Highway 37, making the land highly visible. The Sonoma Land Trust donated this new property and the historic barns and dairy buildings as a partial purchase to the Service as part of the Sonoma Land Trust 2005 acquisition of the North Point Joint Venture, now called Sears Point. The Refuge will use the buildings to maintain the historic look of the farm and provide the public with a refuge they can enjoy. The Sonoma Land Trust also provided the Baylands Center on the Refuge for education, meetings, and conservation purposes for Friends groups to discuss conservation projects.

The San Pablo Bay NWR was created in 1970, with the first property acquired in 1974, to protect wetland habitat, endangered species, and migratory birds in the Pacific Flyway. This area supports the largest wintering population of canvasbacks on the West coast, and Golden eagles can be seen foraging over the Refuge. The land protects the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse and California clapper rail, and the State listed California black rail, San Pablo song sparrow, and Suisun shrew. The Refuge lies along the north shore of San Pablo Bay in Sonoma, Solano, and Napa Counties in northern California and includes open bay/tidal marsh, mud flats, and seasonal and managed wetland habitats.



*Sears Point Unit looking south from Cougar Mountain. A portion of the 1,128 acres conveyed to San Pablo Bay NWR is immediately south of Highway 37. The Refuge Headquarters and facilities are shown. San Francisco is off in the distance, center of photo, across San Pablo Bay.*

***Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge, Maine***

The Service acquired another island on Maine’s coast as part of the ‘Bed and Breakfast’ for birds from the Maine Coast Heritage Trust with LWCF and North American Wetlands Conservation Act funds. The newly acquired, almost seven-acre colonial seabird nesting island is naturally treeless and has an extensive intertidal area. It provides ideal feeding and nesting habitat for colonial seabirds such as common, Artic, and endangered roseate terns, as well as common eider, guillemots, razorbills, Atlantic puffins, Leach’s storm petrels, and black-backed herring, and laughing gulls.

The island is part of 49 coastal Maine islands that provide a multitude of habitat to seabirds, raptors, wading birds, shorebirds and songbirds. Some islands are forested, providing habitat for nesting bald eagles, while other islands are rocky and provide food and rest for peregrine falcons. Other islands provide open herbaceous natural habitat that supports seabirds including terns, alcids, Leach’s storm-petrels and great cormorants during the summer months.



*This new nearly seven-acre island adds to Petit Manan NWR’s habitat for a diversity of birds.*

### Update on Land Exchanges for FY 2016

Land exchanges provide unique opportunities to work in partnership with other Federal agencies and State and local governments; private landowners and organizations; and local and national conservation groups. Land exchange projects leverage the collective expertise of these partners to conserve critical habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife within the Refuge System, decrease habitat fragmentation, and provide public access to natural areas to hunt, fish, photograph and observe wildlife, and participate in environmental education or interpretation.

The Service estimates that \$1,924,500 will be needed for acquisition costs for exchanges of more than 324,987 acres. Exchanges may involve on-going expenditures over a period of years.

The following table lists National Wildlife Refuge, Waterfowl Production Area, Wetland Management District, and Alaska Native Corporation properties that are part of ongoing land exchange projects or are potential projects.

STATE	POTENTIAL EXCHANGES	ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED	MANAGEMENT COSTS
ALASKA	Arctic NWR - Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation	2,000.00	\$10,000
	Alaska Maritime - The Aleut Corp.	Undetermined	\$50,000
	Alaska Maritime - Shumagan Corp.	Undetermined	\$25,000
	Izembek NWR - State of Alaska	52,000.00	\$150,000
	Kenai NWR - CIRI	3,000.00	\$10,000
	Selawik NWR - NANA Corp.	30,000.00	\$80,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - Scammon Bay	3,600.00	\$60,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - Cherfornak	40,000.00	\$15,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - NIMA Corp	5,000.00	\$65,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - Napakiak	55,000.00	\$65,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - Kotlik	Undetermined	\$25,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - Bethel Native Corporation	10.00	\$55,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - Napaskiak	45,000.00	\$15,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - Aniak	Undetermined	\$10,000
	Yukon Delta NWR - Chevak	30,000.00	\$65,000
Yukon Delta NWR - Calista Corp. subsurface	40,000.00	\$80,000	
ARKANSAS	Cache River NWR	432.50	\$10,000
	Felsenthal NWR	878.08	\$15,000
	Felsenthal NWR	2,168.00	\$20,000
CALIFORNIA	Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR	7.00	\$20,000
COLORADO	Baca NWR	11.08	\$10,000
FLORIDA	Archie Carr NWR	8.00	\$10,000
	ARM Loxahatchee NWR	2,586.00	\$20,000
GEORGIA	Banks Lake NWR	106.00	\$5,000
	Bond Swamp NWR	188.00	\$10,000

STATE	POTENTIAL EXCHANGES	ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED	MANAGEMENT COSTS
	Savannah NWR	10.00	\$5,000
ILLINOIS	Cypress Creek NWR	109.00	\$20,000
INDIANA	Patoka River NWR	Undetermined	\$20,000
LOUISIANA	Big Branch Marsh NWR	5.00	\$5,000
	Bogue Chitto NWR	4.00	\$2,000
	Delta NWR	816.00	\$10,000
	Lacassine NWR	1,944.00	\$5,000
	Upper Ouachita NWR	80.00	\$10,000
MAINE	Rachel Carson NWR	47.00	\$5,000
	Moosehorn NWR	1,500.00	\$50,000
MARYLAND	Patuxent Research Refuge	2.00	\$10,000
MASSACHUSETTS	Oxbow NWR	20.00	\$10,000
MICHIGAN	Shiawassee NWR	302.00	\$50,000
MINNESOTA	Minnesota Valley NWR - MN DNR	279.60	\$25,000
	Pope County WPA	40.00	\$10,000
	Tamarac NWR	10.00	\$10,000
	Upper Mississippi River NW&FR	2.00	\$10,000
MISSISSIPPI	MS Sandhill Crane NWR	30.00	\$10,000
MONTANA	Pablo NWR	2.00	\$10,000
NEBRASKA	Rainwater Basin WMD	160.00	\$25,000
NORTH CAROLINA	Mackay Island NWR	383.25	\$10,000
NORTH DAKOTA	Various North Dakota WPA's & WMA's	100.00	\$80,000
NEVADA	Stillwater NWR	272.00	\$20,000
NEW JERSEY	E. B. Forsythe NWR	10.00	\$10,000
OREGON	Hart Mountain NAR	40.00	\$40,000
SOUTH CAROLINA	Santee NWR	32.80	\$2,000
SOUTH DAKOTA	Various South Dakota WPA's & WMD's	160.00	\$55,000
	South Dakota WMD State Land	4,022.00	\$15,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley - Hildalgo Co Irrigation District #3	5.00	\$5,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR FM 800	5.60	\$2,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley Cameron County CCRMA	73.00	\$10,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Fred Shuster	80.00	\$20,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Phillips Banco (279)	338.00	\$20,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Champion Bend (284)	82.00	\$10,000

	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Palo Blanco (253)	30.00	\$5,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Brownsville (207)	17.00	\$5,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Jeronimo Banco (286)	288.00	\$15,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Jeronimo Banco (286a)	11.00	\$5,000
	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Villanueva	405.00	\$20,000
	Trinity NWR - Sheppy Land Company	4.00	\$2,500
	Neches River NWR-Tetlin-through Exxon Exchange in Alaska	516.00	\$10,000
VERMONT	Silvio O. Conte NFWR	100.00	\$25,000
WASHINGTON	Little Pend Oreille NWR	120.00	\$50,000
	Little Pend Oreille NWR	80.00	\$60,000
	Willapa NWR	86.00	\$71,000
WEST VIRGINIA	Canaan Valley NWR	2.00	\$10,000
WISCONSIN	Necedah WMA	4.00	\$20,000
	Necedah WMA	1.00	\$10,000
	Upper MS River NW&FR - WI DOT	Undetermined	\$25,000
	Upper MS River NW&FR	280.00	\$10,000
	Whittlesey Creek NWR	1.14	\$10,000
WYOMING	Cokeville Meadows NWR	81.00	\$70,000
<b>Total Exchange Acres and Management Costs</b>		<b>324,987.05</b>	<b>\$1,924,500</b>

### Land Acquisition Projects for FY 2016

The FY 2016 request includes 34 proposed land acquisition projects totaling almost 108,000 acres that are funded from discretionary and mandatory sources. The list below is the current set of land acquisition priorities in priority order that has been vetted and approved by Service and Department leadership to meet the high priority programmatic needs of the Service.

#### Discretionary Funds

This funding allows the Service to continue conserving important wildlife habitat in the 13 projects and over 37,700 acres, of which over 25,000 acres will remain in private ownership under conservation easement. The project descriptions later in this section provide details about the resource values of the lands and waters proposed for addition to the Department's network of conservation lands.

#### Mandatory Funds

The Department of Interior will submit a legislative proposal to permanently authorize annual funding, without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation for the (Land and Water Conservation Fund) LWCF. Starting in 2017, \$900 million annually in permanent funds would be available. During the

transition to full permanent funding in 2017, the budget proposes \$900 million in total LWCF funding in FY 2016, comprised of \$500 million in permanent and \$400 million in discretionary funds. The amounts requested include the authorized levels for the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture. In 2016, the proposal includes \$58.50 million in discretionary funding and \$106.27 million in permanent funding, for the Service's Federal Land acquisition program.

In FY 2016, land acquisition funds will be used to secure access for the American public to their Federal lands. Concurrent with the America's Great Outdoor initiative, these funds will invest in acquisitions to better meet recreation access needs by working with willing landowners to secure rights-of-way, easements or fee simple lands that provide access or consolidate Federal ownership so that the public has unbroken spaces to recreate, hunt, and fish. All of these projects have willing sellers who wish to work with the Service. The Service will also collaborate with a multitude of Federal, State, county, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and private partners.

The complete listing of proposed projects would cover the top 31 Service priorities, located in at least 27 States. For project specific information, see the project data sheets that follow at the end of this section.



*The koa is a tree that Hawaiian Legacy Hardwoods uses as seed source for the Legacy Forest (partnered with JTB Hawaii, a tour company). The project allows tourists to plant a koa tree with a chip implanted into the tree that has the donor's information on it. The koa tree project raises money and helps rebuild the native forest. Over 200 thousand have been planted with a goal of 1.3 million. The trees being planted are adjacent to our acquisition project description property.*

### **Collaborative Landscape Planning (CLP)**

The national CLP priority projects contained in this document reflect the collaborative efforts between the Departments of Interior and Agriculture in specific focal areas.

As part of the landscape program, Interior bureaus collaborated extensively with the Forest Service and with government and local community partners to plan projects to achieve the highest priority shared landscape-scale conservation goals. An interagency team of Service, BLM, NPS, and USFS experts identified a number of ecosystems throughout the Nation where high priority shared conservation goals

could be achieved based on existing locally-driven conservation efforts. The prospective projects were evaluated according to criteria that included:

- Process: Ensure proposals are community-driven, collaborative, and cost-effective;
- Outcome: Ensure proposals contribute to informed, science-based, important local landscape-scale outcomes, so that Federal resources strategically achieve land management objectives;
- Urgency: Ensure funding decisions acknowledge where funds much be spent sooner rather than later to achieve outcomes or prevent harm, versus areas where outcomes could be achieved even if funding were postponed; and,
- Contribution to National/Regional Priorities: Ensure outcome goals contribute to regional and national priorities.

After analyzing the results of this process, bureau directors advised the Secretary on the development of the final CLP acquisitions to be incorporated in the integrated land acquisition lists.



*The crimson red 'Apapane are usually found in 'ohia-lehua trees. Common to the Island of Hawai'i, 'Apapane are nectarivorous relying heavily on the nectar of the 'ohio-lehua blossoms.  
Credit: Vladimir Kasho.*

**FY 2016 LWCF Discretionary Funding**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>State(s)</b>	<b>Collaborative Landscape/Project Name or Core Project Name</b>	<b>Collaborative</b>	<b>Core</b>
1	CLP: Island Forests at Risk HI	Island Forests at Risk: Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge	\$8,589,000	
2	ND/SD	Dakota Grassland Conservation Area		\$6,500,000
3	CLP: Upper Rio Grande CO/NM	Upper Rio Grande: Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area	\$1,000,000	
4	ND/SD	Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area		\$3,000,000
5	CLP: High Divide ID	High Divide: Camas National Wildlife Refuge	\$280,000	
	MT	High Divide: Red Rocks Lake National Wildlife Refuge	\$1,000,000	
6	FL	Everglades Headwaters Conservation Area		\$2,091,000
7	CLP: Rivers of the Chesapeake VA	Rivers of the Chesapeake: Rappahannock River National Wildlife Refuge	\$1,600,000	
	MD	Rivers of the Chesapeake: Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge	\$1,511,000	
8	FL	Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge		\$2,500,000
9	CLP: National Trails System ID	National Trails System: Gray's Lake National Wildlife Refuge	\$2,500,000	
10	MN/IA	Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge		\$500,000
11	CT/MA/NH/VT	Silvio O. Conte NFWR		\$2,000,000
12	ID/UT/WY	Bear River Watershed Conservation Area		\$2,000,000
13	KS	Flint Hills Conservation Area		\$840,000
		<b>Subtotal, Line Item Projects (Core)</b>		\$19,431,000
		<b>Subtotal, Line Item Projects (CLP)</b>	\$16,480,000	
		<b>Total Line Item Projects - Discretionary</b>		<b>\$35,911,000</b>

**ISLAND FORESTS AT RISK  
Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge  
Hawai'i**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 1 of 40

**Location:** 10 miles north of Hilo on the windward side of the Island of Hawai'i and near Honaunau on the leeward side of the Island

**Congressional Districts:** Hawai'i, District 2 **FWS Region 1**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$28,181,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$8,589,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	4	38,005	\$26,178,265	\$689
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	3	42	\$60,900	\$1,450
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>38,047</b>	<b>\$26,239,165</b>	<b>\$690</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	2	6,908	\$8,589,000	\$1,243
Remaining	6	27,235	\$31,184,075	\$1,145
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>72,190</b>	<b>\$66,012,240</b>	<b>\$914</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** Funding of this fee title acquisition would provide protection for and enhance populations of numerous threatened and endangered plant and forest bird species. It would also protect the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of wet ecosystems or those requiring a moderate water supply such as mesic forests.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy

**Project Description:** Funding would enable fee title acquisition of 6,908 acres, two of the three parcels comprising a 10,034 acre site in the Kona Forest Unit of Hakalau Forest NWR. This site has significance for recovery of listed plants and endangered forest birds and their habitats. It provides important watershed values including groundwater recharge and prevention of siltation of nearby marine environments. Specifically, this area supports small but biologically important populations of rare native birds, including 'akiapoia'au, 'akepa, 'io, and Hawai'i creeper, as well as abundant populations of native 'elepaio, 'i'iwi, 'amkihi, and 'apapane.

**O&M:** Once acquisition of all 10,034 acres is complete, the Service anticipates an initial expense of \$40,000 from NWRS base funds for boundary marking and sign posting.

**DAKOTA GRASSLAND CONSERVATION AREA**  
**North Dakota and South Dakota**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority:** No. 2 of 40

**Location:** North Dakota and South Dakota lying east of Missouri River

**Congressional Districts:** North Dakota, At Large **FWS Region 6**  
 South Dakota, At Large

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$12,150,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$6,500,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost*</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	70	26,879	\$11,915,309	\$443
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	1,071	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>27,950</b>	<b>\$11,915,309</b>	<b>\$426</b>
Planned FY 2015	47	18,910	\$8,679,802	\$459
Proposed FY 2016 (easement)	32	13,000	\$6,500,000	\$500
Remaining	Multi	1,880,140	\$560,904,889	\$298
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>1,940,000</b>	<b>\$588,000,000</b>	<b>\$303</b>

\* Includes Migratory Bird Conservation Fund funding.

**Purpose of Acquisition:** Purchase perpetual wetland and grassland easements to protect wildlife habitats of native grassland and associated wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR).

**Project Cooperators:** North Dakota Game & Fish Department, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., The Nature Conservancy, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, and private landowners.

**Project Description:** With these funds, the Service would acquire perpetual conservation easements on approximately 13,000 acres. The PPR ecosystem consists of native mixed-grass prairie intermingled with high densities of temporary, seasonal, semi-permanent, and permanent wetlands that support breeding habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, grassland birds, and the endangered piping plover.

Habitat fragmentation and loss due to conversion of wetlands and grasslands to cropland is the primary threat to wildlife species in the PPR. With the protection afforded by perpetual easements, this highly productive yet fragile ecosystem will remain intact, preserving habitat where biological communities will flourish. Acquisition of these easements would help maintain traditional farming and ranching operations while fostering landscape-level conservation.

**O&M:** The Service estimates approximately \$8,000 annually for compliance over-flights. NWRS base funding would support these costs.

**UPPER RIO GRANDE**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area  
Colorado and New Mexico**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 3 of 40

**Location:** Southeast corner of Rio Grande River headwaters on the western slope of Sangre de Cristo Mountains in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico

**Congressional Districts:** Colorado, District 3 **FWS Region 6**  
New Mexico, District 1

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$0

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	2	167,200	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>167,200</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	1,282	\$1,000,000	\$780
Remaining	88	81,518	\$62,548,310	\$767
<b>Totals</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>\$63,548,310</b>	<b>\$254</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** Conservation easements protect the high-elevation wildlife habitats of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the uplands of the southeastern San Luis Valley. The proposed acquisitions will promote the adaptive capacity and resilience of ecosystems by ensuring connectivity between existing protected areas and protecting wildlife movement corridors, particularly riparian areas.

**Project Cooperators:** Private landowners

**Project Description:** Funding would acquire approximately 1,282 easement acres. From soaring 14,000-foot peaks to spectacular river gorges, the Upper Rio Grande landscape captivates with unspoiled vistas and rich Hispanic and Native American heritage. Water is the lifeblood of this landscape, supporting wildlife resources and cultures today as it has for untold millennia. The Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area lies within a day’s drive of six metro areas and five million people. The Refuge is supported by an unparalleled community commitment to conservation motivated to protect the unique wildlife, ecological, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources.

**O&M:** The Service estimates approximately \$2,500 annually for over-flight monitoring of the conservation easements. NWRS base funding would support these costs.

**DAKOTA TALLGRASS PRAIRIE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA DISCRETIONARY**  
**North Dakota and South Dakota**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Rank:** No. 4 of 40

**Location:** Northeastern South Dakota and southeastern North Dakota

**Congressional Districts:** North Dakota, At Large **FWS Region 6**  
 South Dakota, At Large

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$10,173,750

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$3,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	207	62,852	\$10,178,131	\$162
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	2	20	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	160	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>63,032</b>	<b>\$10,178,131</b>	<b>\$161</b>
Planned FY 2015	Multi	6,122	\$3,000,000	\$490
Proposed FY 2016 (easement)	Multi	5,000	\$3,000,000	\$600
Remaining	Multi	115,846	\$50,300,709	\$434
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>\$66,478,840</b>	<b>\$350</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect the northern tallgrass prairie ecosystem and associated wildlife.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy and the local community

**Project Description:** Funds would be used to acquire perpetual conservation easements on approximately 5,000 acres of tallgrass prairie. Tallgrass prairie once covered 90 percent of the Dakotas, but less than three percent remains. Habitat fragmentation and conversion to crop production are the primary threats to this ecosystem. The Service plans to use conservation easements to protect 190,000 acres of the remaining tallgrass prairie in the eastern Dakotas, including 25,000 acres in North Dakota and 165,000 acres in South Dakota. Conservation easements will maintain traditional ranching operations while fostering landscape-level conservation.

The project area has a rich variety of plant, animal, and insect species, including more than 147 species of breeding birds ranging from neotropical migrants to waterfowl. Several candidate endangered species use the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, including Baird’s sparrow, loggerhead shrike, ferruginous hawk, and rare butterflies such as the Dakota skipper. These large blocks of grasslands help buffer prairie ecosystems from agricultural chemicals and invasive species, and provide the natural habitat mosaic required by prairie-dependent species. Existing prairie is a well-documented store of terrestrial carbon. Preventing conversion of tallgrass prairie with grassland easements ensures continued sequestration of this carbon.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates spending less than \$1,500 per year for annual compliance over-flights. NWRS base funding would support these costs.

**HIGH DIVIDE**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Camas National Wildlife Refuge  
Idaho**

**Acquisition Authorities:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 5 of 40

**Location:** Jefferson County, Idaho, near Hamer, ID

**Congressional Districts:** Idaho, District 2 **FWS Region 1**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$0

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$280,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	32	9,434	\$387,235	\$41
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	4	141	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9,575</b>	<b>\$387,235</b>	<b>\$40</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	35	\$280,000	\$8,000
Remaining	Multi	907,921	\$742,812,765	\$818
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>917,531</b>	<b>\$743,480,000</b>	<b>\$810</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** One inholding still remains as an island within the approved acquisition boundary for Camas National Wildlife Refuge. This land is currently used for production agriculture and has the potential to erode if potatoes are grown. Because of existing water rights and irrigation systems in place, the land may be sold as agriculture production land.

**Project Cooperators:** The Conservation Fund

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire fee title to the last 35-acre in-holding left within the refuge. If the Service is unable to purchase this property while available, the land will likely be purchased by another farmer who will produce potatoes or other crops here. Before and after crops are grown, the land is highly susceptible to wind erosion, which can cause damage to surrounding Refuge land and structures. By purchasing this property, the Service will restore it to sage habitat, home to the sage-grouse and sage thrasher. The restoration would also include planting milkweed to benefit Monarch butterflies.

**O&M:** The Service would use less than \$5,000 from NWRS base funding for annual maintenance of the new acquisitions, mainly for upkeep of the existing structures (house and barn).

**HIGH DIVIDE**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge  
Montana**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Rank:** No. 5 of 40

**Location:** 28 miles east of Monida, MT

**Congressional Districts:** Montana, At Large **FWS Regions 6**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$10,670,135

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners*</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost**</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	13	11,564	\$16,183,121	\$1,399
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	8	18,172	\$5,121,649	\$282
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	8	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	5	6,158	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014***	2	48,876	\$27,081	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>84,778</b>	<b>\$21,331,851</b>	<b>\$252</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	2,300	\$1,000,000	\$435
Remaining	Multi	14,784	8,918,149	\$603
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>101,862</b>	<b>\$31,250,000</b>	<b>\$307</b>

\* Includes land leased from additional Owners.

\*\*Includes Migratory Bird Conservation Funds (MBCF), North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) funds, and Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA).

\*\*\*Acres are from Primary and Secondary Withdrawal form BLM, Primary Transfer and Leases.

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To provide long-term viability for fish and wildlife habitat on a large landscape in the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge portion of the High Divide Collaborative Landscape. This project would protect, restore, and enhance native wet meadows, wetlands, uplands, and mountain foothills for migratory birds, including waterfowl, and other wildlife. Protection of this landscape would preserve the critical linkage corridor that Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge provides between Yellowstone National Park and the Frank Church Wilderness of Idaho.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Beaverhead County Commissioners, Bureau of Land Management, Heart of the Rockies, Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Council, and private landowners

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire a perpetual conservation easement on approximately 2,300 acres as part of the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in the High Divide Landscape. The mountains, valleys, and rivers of the High Divide are a crucial wildlife lifeline along the spine of the continent in Idaho and Montana that link Yellowstone National Park to Idaho’s Frank Church Wilderness.

The High Divide's boundaries are defined by tracked movements of signature wildlife: elk, pronghorn, grizzly, wolverine, sage grouse, salmon, and grayling, and its conservation vision is formed from assessments of wildlife migrations, cultural history, recreation values, and economies linking Yellowstone National Park to Idaho Wilderness. The High Divide is our nation's top keystone region for continental scale connectivity. Without this linkage, protected core areas would remain isolated and increasingly vulnerable to threats such as climate change. Securing this linkage is time-sensitive, as development threats are imminent.

**O&M:** The Service estimates that annual monitoring and inspection costs would require approximately \$1,000 from NWRS base funding.

**EVERGLADES HEADWATERS CONSERVATION AREA**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Florida**

**Acquisition Authority:** Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965  
Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 6 of 40

**Location:** Approximately 50 miles south of Orlando and 75 miles east of Tampa, in the counties of Polk, Osceola, Okeechobee, and Highlands

**Congressional Districts:** Florida, Districts 12, 15, and 16 **FWS Region 4**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$12,500,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,091,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	10	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Planned FY 2015	6	6,291	\$12,500,000	\$1,987
Proposed FY 2016	1	836	\$2,091,000	\$2,501
Remaining fee	Multi	44,363	\$191,369,000	\$4,314
Remaining (easement)	Multi	98,500	\$270,875,000	\$2,750
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>\$476,835,000</b>	<b>\$3,179</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect, restore, and conserve habitat for 278 Federal and State listed species, including Florida panther, Florida black bear, Audubon’s crested caracara, Florida scrub jay, red-cockaded woodpecker, whooping crane, Everglades snail kite, and the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow.

**Project Cooperators:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, U. S. Air Force, Avon Park Air Force Range, The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Refuge Association, Florida Cattlemen’s Association, and Florida Farm Bureau.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire fee title to 836 acres, which is part of a multi-year acquisition of a 2,000-acre parcel. This land would help protect a large landscape of diverse and high-quality habitats, including habitat for the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow. Acquisitions would protect, restore, and conserve the headwaters, groundwater recharge, and watershed of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Kissimmee River, and Lake Okeechobee region. This acquisition would also improve

water quantity and quality in the Everglades watershed, complementing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan goals, and protecting the water supply for millions of people.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates annual costs of up to \$28,000 for habitat management and restoration, including prescribed burning, hunting, and public use management. NWRS base funding would support these costs.

**RIVERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge  
Virginia**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, Endangered Species Act of 1973, Emergency Wetlands Resource Act of 1986, Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929

**FY 2016 Budget Priority:** No. 7 of 40

**Location:** From Skinkers Neck to Belle Isle State Park on the Rappahannock River, VA

**Congressional Districts:** Virginia, District 1 **FWS Region 5**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$15,628,500

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,600,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	20	5,593	\$12,546,843	\$2,243
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	7	1,918	\$4,277,027	\$2,230
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	2	1,196	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8,707</b>	<b>\$16,823,870</b>	<b>\$1,932</b>
Planned FY 2015	1	148	\$2,000,000	\$13,514
Proposed FY 2016	1	160	\$1,600,000	\$10,000
Remaining	20	10,985	\$32,776,130	\$2,984
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>\$53,200,000</b>	<b>\$2,660</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To provide nesting and roosting habitat for bald eagles, waterfowl, and other migratory birds by protecting forested bluffs above the river shore.

**Project Cooperators:** Commonwealth of Virginia, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Chesapeake Conservancy, National Park Service, The Conservation Fund

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire fee title to approximately 160 acres in the Farnham Creek Focus Area of the refuge. The acquisition would add significantly to the existing block of protected forest lands in this area. Increasing the interior core area of forested blocks is critical to the migratory birds such as the scarlet tanager, wood thrush, and hooded warbler which require isolated forest habitats to breed.

Many other migratory bird species use the forests and wetlands along Farnham Creek, including several Federal or State species of conservation concern. They include the Louisiana waterthrush, ovenbird, prothonotary warbler, Kentucky warbler, worm-eating warbler, yellow-throated vireo, chuck-will’s widow, and whip-poor-will, all of which are confirmed breeders on the Refuge.

**O&M:** The Service estimates \$3,000 annually from NWRS base funding for signage and boundary markings.

**RIVERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE  
Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge  
Maryland**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Budget Priority:** No. 7 of 40

**Location:** Sixty-five miles southeast of Baltimore, in the south central portion of Dorchester County on Maryland’s Eastern Shore

**Congressional Districts:** Maryland, District 1 **FWS Region 5**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$7,207,834

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,511,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	31	26,087	\$20,454,331	\$784
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	50	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	10	1,392	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	1	856	\$1,080,000	\$1,262
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>28,385</b>	<b>\$21,534,331</b>	<b>\$759</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	2	392	\$1,511,000	\$3,855
Remaining	53	31,148	\$33,927,768	\$1,089
<b>Totals</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>59,925</b>	<b>\$56,973,099</b>	<b>\$951</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect high quality habitat for the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel and other endangered species, along with nesting and wintering habitat for the American bald eagle, migratory waterfowl, colonial waterbirds, shorebirds, and forest interior dwelling bird species.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire fee title to approximately 392 acres of upland and marsh along the Nanticoke River and Owens Creek and wooded uplands in White Oak Swamp. The property on the Nanticoke River has prime riverine wetlands, extensive open fields and maturing woodlands. These areas provide excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife, including migratory birds such as osprey, black and wood ducks, Canada geese, marsh and water birds, and bald eagles, as well as grassland and immature woodland species. The White Oak Swamp tract includes freshwater marsh habitat and mature, low-lying woodlands. The woodlands provide excellent habitat for bald eagles and for the Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel, which was formerly listed as endangered.

The area is important to Federal and State endangered and threatened species and many migratory bird species. Acquisition would expand potential opportunities for wildlife-dependent forms of public recreation.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates no additional operations or maintenance costs associated with this acquisition as the parcel is located within Refuge boundaries and would add no additional workload.

**EVERGLADES HEADWATERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
Florida**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965  
Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 8 of 40

**Location:** Approximately 50 miles south of Orlando and 75 miles east of Tampa, in the counties of Polk, Osceola, Okeechobee, and Highlands

**Congressional Districts:** Florida, Districts 12, 15, and 16 **FWS Region 4**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$12,500,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,500,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	10	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Planned FY 2015	6	6,291	\$12,500,000	\$1,987
Proposed FY 2016	1	1,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,500
Remaining fee	Multi	44,199	\$190,960,000	\$4,320
Remaining (easement)	Multi	98,500	\$270,875,000	\$2,750
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>\$476,835,000</b>	<b>\$3,179</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect, restore, and conserve habitat for 278 Federal and State listed species, including Florida panther, Florida black bear, Audubon’s crested caracara, Florida scrub jay, red-cockaded woodpecker, whooping crane, Everglades snail kite, and the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow.

**Project Cooperators:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, U. S. Air Force, Avon Park Air Force Range, The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Refuge Association, Florida Cattlemen’s Association, and Florida Farm Bureau.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire fee title to 1,000 acres, which is part of a multi-year acquisition of a 2,000 acre parcel. The acquisition would help protect a large landscape of diverse and high-quality habitats, including habitat for the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow. Acquisitions would protect, restore, and conserve the headwaters, groundwater recharge, and watershed of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Kissimmee River, and Lake Okeechobee region. This acquisition

would improve water quantity and quality in the Everglades watershed, complementing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan goals, and protecting the water supply for millions of people.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates annual costs of up to \$33,000 for habitat management and restoration, including prescribed burning, hunting, and public use management. NWRS base funding would support these costs.

**NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM  
Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge  
Idaho**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956  
Refuge Recreation Act of 1962

**FY 2016 Priority:** No. 9 of 40

**Location:** Approximately 50 miles east of Pocatello, Idaho

**Congressional Districts:** Idaho, District 2 **FWS Region 1**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$3,500,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,500,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost*</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	19	4,437	\$2,337,100	\$527
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	18	2,421	\$8,893	\$4
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	27	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	160	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014**	1	13,080	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20,125</b>	<b>\$2,345,993</b>	<b>\$117</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	4	1,156	\$2,500,000	\$2,163
Remaining	24	12,460	\$18,030,591	\$1,447
<b>Totals</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>33,741</b>	<b>\$22,876,584</b>	<b>\$678</b>

\*Price per acre includes the cost of acre/feet of water.

\*\*80 acres reserved from public domain; 13,000 acres acquired through agreement.

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect and restore the historic Grays Lake marsh and provide nesting and feeding habitat for migrating waterfowl by maintaining and protecting the existing integrity of functional native habitat and restoring the natural range of degraded habitats. Acquisition will also provide essential forage for waterfowl and land birds within the Pacific and Rocky Mountain migratory corridors.

**Project Cooperators:** Bureau of Indian Affairs, Teton Land Trust, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire fee title to private landowners' interest both in the lakebed of Grays Lake as well as associated uplands. The lake has the world's largest hardstem bulrush marsh and contains high elevation (6,400 feet) montane wetlands, riparian inflows and outflows with willow shrublands, and sagebrush-steppe uplands. The Refuge hosts a large nesting population of greater sandhill cranes; as many as 1,200 individuals are counted in the valley during migration and staging times, and attracts large numbers of ducks, Canada geese, and trumpeter swans. In addition, the Refuge provides important habitat for a variety of native plant and wildlife species.

The Refuge is in the shadow of the historic Caribou Mountain (9,803 feet). Grays Lake NWR provides breeding habitat for over 200 species of mammals, fish, amphibians, waterfowl, and other migratory birds. This acquisition would protect plants, fish, and wildlife, restore sagebrush habitat for the benefit of sagebrush obligate species, including Greater Sage grouse, support working farms, ranches, and forests, and protect special landscapes and historic and cultural resources. The California National Historic Trail which led over 250,000 gold-seekers to the gold fields of California during the 1840s and 1850s, is located within the project area. The land surrounding the Refuge is managed by the private landowners, State of Idaho, BIA, BLM, and USFS.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates minimal expense would be required as consolidation of Federal ownership of lakebed lands requires minimal maintenance.

**NORTHERN TALLGRASS PRAIRIE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE DISCRETIONARY  
Minnesota and Iowa**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 10 of 40

**Location:** Located in portions of 48 counties in MN and 37 in IA, the Refuge is bounded by the US-Canada border to the north and Des Moines, IA to the south. The Refuge boundary weaves through the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands and Agassiz Beach Ridges of northwest MN and the Prairie Coteau regions of southwest MN and northwest IA.

**Congressional District:** Minnesota, Districts 1 and 7 **FWS Region 3**  
Iowa, Districts 2, 3, and 4

**Total Appropriations:** \$6,306,635

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$500,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	12	2,803	\$4,319,393	\$1,220
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	44	2,452	\$1,672,903	\$682
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	5	479	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other Means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>5,734</b>	<b>\$5,992,296</b>	<b>\$1,045</b>
Planned FY 2015	1	150	\$500,000	\$3,333
Proposed FY 2016	1	150	\$500,000	\$3,333
Remaining	793	71,445	\$18,007,704	\$252
<b>Totals</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>77,479</b>	<b>\$25,000,000</b>	<b>\$323</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect, restore, and enhance the remaining northern tallgrass prairie habitats and associated wildlife species.

**Project Cooperators:** Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, several county conservation boards, and several local Chambers of Commerce

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire approximately 150 fee title acres or easement acres in western Minnesota and/or northwestern Iowa to develop stewardship agreements and provide management assistance in the interest of preserving the prairie landscape regardless of ownership. The project conserves and restores one of the rarest and fragmented prairie/grassland ecosystems in America and one of the most important waterfowl production areas of North America.

The Service’s goal for the refuge is to preserve 77,000 acres, about 25 percent of the remaining native prairie, across portions of 85 counties in western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa.

Federally threatened and endangered species on the Refuge include four species of plants and seven species of animals, which include western prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover, and the piping plover. The Refuge contains nationally significant habitat for migratory birds, such as the marbled godwit and waterfowl, including mallards, northern pintail, lesser scaup, canvasback and blue-winged teal. Approximately 243 species of birds are known to regularly use the northern tallgrass prairie area during some time of the year with 152 species breeding here. Grassland nesting birds present at the Refuge includes black-billed cuckoo, bobolinks, red-headed woodpecker and the Connecticut warbler, dickcissels, and upland plovers. Several globally rare species can also be found here, including the last remaining populations of the Dakota skipper and the regal fritillary butterflies which are in steep decline.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates approximately \$10,000 for initial restoration and enhancement work (spraying, mowing, burning, and signage). NWRS base funding would support these costs.

**SILVIO O. CONTE NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
**Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Acquisition Authority:** The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Act (P.L.102-212)

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 11 of 40

**Location:** Within the Connecticut River Watershed located in CT, MA, NH, and VT

**Congressional Districts:** Connecticut, Districts 1, 2, and 3  
 Massachusetts, Districts 1 and 2  
 New Hampshire, District 2  
 Vermont, At Large  
**FWS Region 5**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$30,081,328

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee Through FY 2014	82	35,728	\$31,886,994	\$892
Acquired Easement Through FY 2014	2	169	\$126,000	\$746
Acquired Exchange Through FY 2014	1	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation Through FY 2014	9	185	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other Means Through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through 2014</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>36,082</b>	<b>\$32,012,994</b>	<b>\$887</b>
Planned FY 2015	11	779	\$2,000,000	\$2,567
Proposed FY 2016	10	1,409	\$2,000,000	\$1,419
Remaining	1,895	40,637	34,487,006	\$849
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>78,907</b>	<b>\$70,500,000</b>	<b>\$893</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect fisheries and wildlife resources and provide public access to Refuge lands.

**Project Cooperators:** The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, the Kestrel Land Trust, the Middlesex Land Trust, and the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 1,409 acres in fee title in seven Refuge divisions located within the Connecticut River watershed. These properties include 137 acres of riparian habitat within the Westfield River Division (MA) and the Mill River Division (MA), and three tracts totaling 136 acres as part of the River’s main stem known as the Quonotuck Division located in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Connecticut. About 1,000 acres would be added to the Mascoma Division (NH) where unfragmented forest blocks are home to a variety of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and valuable habitat for migrating and breeding birds. Another 67 acres of northern boreal forest, 13 acres in Pondicherry and 54 acres in the Mohawk River Divisions (NH), would protect nesting songbird habitat and provide the public opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation. The Service would acquire 69

total acres in the Refuge's Salmon River Division (CT), which contain extensive freshwater tidal marshes used by migrating and wintering waterfowl.

Acquisition of these tracts, in partnership with others, would enhance connectivity across area, elevation, latitude, aspect, and process within the 1.8 million acre Connecticut River watershed. Improving connectivity across the landscape will help waterfowl (27 species), other migratory birds (247 species), and threatened and endangered species (9 species) be resilient to temperature, precipitation and water level changes in their habitats. Connecting lands under Refuge stewardship within an extensive and expanding conservation mosaic will also promote representation, redundancy, and resiliency within the watershed. These benefits provide a robust foundation for nationally significant and vital wildlife habitat that will sustain high quality hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation opportunities for generations to come. The proposed acquisitions make clear and valuable contributions to each of the six legislated purposes for the Refuge while strategically integrating Service investments into the larger landscape.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates minimal additional costs associated with these acquisitions because the properties are located within the Refuge boundary and would create no additional workload.

**BEAR RIVER WATERSHED CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Acquisition Authorities:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 12 of 40

**Location:** Southeastern Idaho, northeastern Utah, and southwestern Wyoming

**Congressional Districts:** Utah, District 1 **FWS Regions 1 and 6**  
 Idaho, District 2  
 Wyoming, At Large

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$0

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	4	2,469	\$2,000,000	\$810
Remaining	Multi	917,531	\$743,200,000	\$810
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>920,000</b>	<b>\$745,200,000</b>	<b>\$810</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To conserve aquatic, riparian, wetland, and upland habitats; provide wildlife habitat connectivity and migratory corridors; maintain healthy population of native wildlife species; protect and maintain water quality and quantity; increase the watershed’s resiliency during climate and land use changes; conserve the area’s working landscapes, and promote partnerships for coordinated watershed-level conservation.

**Project Cooperators:** Three landscape conservation cooperatives—Great Northern, Great Basin, and Southern Rockies, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, local Audubon chapters, PacifiCorp, State and local land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, State agencies, tribes, and other Federal agencies.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire approximately 2,469 acres in conservation easements in the Bear River Watershed Conservation Area. Conservation easements on private lands would be administered and monitored by the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah, the Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho, and the Cokeville Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Wyoming. The Bear River is the largest river in the Western Hemisphere that flows into the Great Salt Lake. The wide range of altitudes in the Bear River watershed allow for diverse habitats. Grassland and shrubland dominate the flats and lowlands, while pinyon-juniper woodland and pine forest cover the higher slopes. Big sagebrush

is common on much of the landscape, although other shrubs, such as rabbit-brush, saltbush, and greasewood may dominate some areas.

Most of the lower elevation areas are privately owned with much of the land used for agriculture and grazing. Water from the Bear River is used to irrigate alfalfa, small grain crops, and ranchland.

The primary routes of migratory birds following the central and Pacific flyways converge in the Bear River watershed. More than 200 bird species have been documented in the project area, with half closely associated with wetlands. Marshbirds and shorebirds include white-faced ibis, black tern, American avocet, long-billed curlew, American bittern, sandhill crane, and trumpeter swan. Upland birds include the greater sage-grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. In addition, Elk, mule deer, moose, pronghorn, bear, lynx, and wolverine depend on key wintering areas and migration corridors throughout the Bear River watershed.

**O&M:** Within NWRS base funding, the Service would use less than \$5,000 for annual maintenance of the new acquisitions, mainly for easement enforcement.

**FLINT HILLS LEGACY CONSERVATION AREA**

**DISCRETIONARY**

**Kansas**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 13 of 40

**Location:** The Flint Hills of eastern Kansas run north-south in a long, narrow band

**Congressional Districts:** Kansas, Districts 1, 2, and 4 **FWS Region 6**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$2,191,450

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$840,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	0	0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	4	5,923	\$2,191,450	\$370
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	5	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5,928</b>	<b>\$2,191,450</b>	<b>\$370</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	2	1,680	\$840,000	\$500
Remaining	306	1,092,392	\$436,968,550	\$400
<b>Totals</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>1,100,000</b>	<b>\$440,000,000</b>	<b>\$400</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie ecosystem and associated grassland-dependent wildlife species.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, Kansas Land Trust, The Ranchland Trust of Kansas, Tallgrass Legacy Alliance, and the local community.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire perpetual conservation easements on 1,680 acres of tallgrass prairie. With less than four percent of the original acreage remaining, tallgrass prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States. Residential, commercial, and industrial development and woody vegetation encroachment have all fragmented this important habitat. Acquisition of perpetual conservation easements from willing sellers provides permanent protection for tallgrass prairie and fosters landscape-level conservation, while helping maintain traditional ranching communities. Landowner interest is high, and the Service will focus on lands with high quality tallgrass habitat and minimal fragmentation and woody vegetation encroachment. Conservation easements also protect habitat important for the threatened Topeka shiner and a wide variety of grassland-dependent birds. The Service will use these easements to ultimately protect 1,100,000 acres of the remaining Flint Hills tallgrass prairie.

**O&M:** Within NWRS base funding, the Service would spend \$1,000 for annual maintenance of the new acquisitions, mainly for easement enforcement.

**FY 2016 LWCF Mandatory Funding**

Rank	State(s)	Collaborative Landscape/Project Name or Core Project Name	Collaborative	Core
14	HI	CLP: Island Forests at Risk Island Forests at Risk: Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge	\$11,411,000	
15	ND/SD	Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area		\$6,548,000
16	CO	CLP: Upper Rio Grande Upper Rio Grande: Baca National Wildlife Refuge	\$3,439,000	
	CO/NM	Upper Rio Grande: Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area	\$1,890,250	
17	ND/SD	Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area		\$2,000,000
18	TX	Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge		\$1,000,000
19	KS	Flint Hills Conservation Area		\$1,134,000
20	TX	Lower Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge		\$1,500,000
	WA	CLP: High Divide	\$0	
21	MT	Montana Refuges		\$3,000,000
	VA	CLP: Rivers of the Chesapeake Rivers of the Chesapeake: Rappahannock River	\$3,890,000	
22	VA	Rivers of the Chesapeake: James River National Wildlife Refuge	\$950,000	
	MD	Rivers of the Chesapeake: Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge	\$1,900,000	
23	CA	Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge		\$2,000,000
24	IL/IA/MN/WI	Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge		\$2,000,000
25	VA	CLP: National Trails System National Trails System: Rappahannock River - Captain J Smith National Historic Trail	\$3,530,000	
26	CA	Grasslands Wildlife Management Area		\$2,000,000
27	AR	Cache River National Wildlife Refuge		\$2,000,000
28	TX	Neches River National Wildlife Refuge		\$3,000,000
29	FL	CLP: Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge	\$12,000,000	
30	AR	Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge		\$3,000,000
31	VA	Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge		\$2,000,000
32	GA/FL	Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge		\$2,000,000
33	WA	CLP: Pathways to the Pacific Pathways to the Pacific: Willapa National Wildlife Refuge	\$4,203,000	
	WA	Pathways to the Pacific: Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge	\$259,750	
34	FL	Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area		\$3,000,000
35	IA/MN	Northern Tallgrass National Wildlife Refuge		\$1,000,000
36	NJ	Cape May National Wildlife Refuge		\$1,000,000

37	TX	Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge		\$1,200,000
		CLP: Northern Coastal California		
38	CA	Northern Coastal California: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge	\$917,000	
39	WA	Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge		\$1,500,000
40	IL	Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge		\$2,000,000
		<b>Subtotal, Line Item Projects (Core)</b>		<b>\$42,748,000</b>
		<b>Subtotal, Line Item Projects (CLP)</b>	<b>\$44,390,000</b>	
		<b>Total Line Item Projects - Mandatory</b>		<b>\$87,138,000</b>

**ISLAND FORESTS AT RISK**

**MANDATORY**

**Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge  
Hawai'i**

**Acquisition Authority:** Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 14 of 40

**Location:** 10 miles north of Hilo on the windward side of the Island of Hawai'i and near Honaunau on the leeward side of the Island.

**Congressional Districts:** Hawai'i, District 2 **FWS Region 1**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$28,181,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$11,411,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	4	38,005	\$26,178,265	\$689
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	3	42	\$60,900	\$1,450
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>38,047</b>	<b>\$26,239,165</b>	<b>\$690</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	2	17,695	\$11,411,000	\$645
Remaining	6	16,448	\$28,362,075	\$1,724
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>72,190</b>	<b>\$66,012,240</b>	<b>\$914</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** Funding of this fee title acquisition would provide protection for and enhance populations of numerous threatened and endangered plant and forest bird species. It would also protect the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of wet ecosystems or those requiring a moderate water supply such as mesic forests.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i Trust for Public Lands

**Project Description:** Funding would enable fee title acquisition of 17,695 acres in the Hakalau Forest NWR, on the windward side of Hawai'i Island. Acquisition would consist of two parcels, one located apart from the Hakalau Forest Unit in the upper elevations, and the other reaching seaward down the east face of Mauna Kea, adjacent to the Refuge. Both sites will help recover listed plants and endangered forest birds and their habitats by providing groundwater recharge and preventing siltation of nearby marine environments. The outlying parcel located at a higher elevation provides added protection for Palila, Federally listed as endangered, which depend on the māmane and māmane/naio forests located near 7,550 feet elevation.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates an initial expense of \$65,000 for boundary marking and sign posting, which the Service would fund from NWRS base funds.

**DAKOTA GRASSLAND CONSERVATION AREA**  
**North Dakota and South Dakota**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority:** No. 15 of 40

**Location:** North Dakota and South Dakota, east of Missouri River

**Congressional Districts:** North Dakota, At Large **FWS Region 6**  
 South Dakota, At Large

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$12,150,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$6,548,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost*</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	0	0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	70	26,879	\$11,915,309	\$443
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	1,071	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>27,950</b>	<b>\$11,915,309</b>	<b>\$426</b>
Planned FY 2015	Multi	18,910	\$8,679,802	\$459
Proposed FY 2016 (easement)	33	13,096	\$6,548,000	\$500
Remaining	Multi	1,880,044	\$560,856,889	\$298
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>1,940,000</b>	<b>\$588,000,000</b>	<b>\$303</b>

\* Includes Migratory Bird Conservation Fund funding.

**Purpose of Acquisition:** Purchasing perpetual wetland and grassland easements protects wildlife habitats of native grassland and associated wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR).

**Project Cooperators:** North Dakota Game & Fish Department, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, and private landowners.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire perpetual conservation easements on 13,096 acres. The PPR ecosystem consists of native mixed-grass prairie intermingled with high densities of temporary, seasonal, semi-permanent, and permanent wetlands that support breeding habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, grassland birds, and the endangered piping plover.

Habitat fragmentation and loss due to conversion of wetlands and grasslands to cropland are the primary threat to wildlife species in the PPR. With the protection afforded by perpetual easements, this highly productive yet fragile ecosystem will remain intact, preserving habitat where biological communities will flourish. Easements help maintain traditional farming and ranching operations while fostering landscape-level conservation.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates spending less than \$8,000 annually from NWRS base funds for compliance over-flights.

**UPPER RIO GRANDE  
Baca National Wildlife Refuge  
Colorado**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 16 of 40

**Location:** Southern Colorado

**Congressional Districts:** Colorado, District 3 **FWS Region 6**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$14,589,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$3,439,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	3	54,081	\$14,459,200	\$267
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	160	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014*	2	31,700	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>85,941</b>	<b>\$14,459,200</b>	<b>\$168</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	3	6,614	\$3,439,280	\$520
Remaining	7	7,316	\$3,804,500	\$520
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>99,871</b>	<b>\$21,702,980</b>	<b>\$217</b>

\*Primary Transfers and Primary Withdrawals

**Purpose of Acquisition:** Purchasing the last large property owned by a partner organization within the Refuge, allows the Service to protect and preserve diverse habitats, including unique sand sheet uplands, that support a diversity of migratory birds and several native small mammals. Acquisition of these parcels is an integral component of the Service’s desire to restore playa wetlands in the closed basin of the San Luis Valley.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 6,614 fee acres owned by TNC within the approved acquisition boundary. From soaring 14,000-foot peaks to spectacular river gorges, the Upper Rio Grande landscape captivates with unspoiled vistas and rich Hispanic and Native American heritage. Water is the lifeblood of this landscape, supporting wildlife resources and cultures today as it has for untold millennia. The Refuge lies within a day’s drive of six metro areas and five million people, and is supported by an unparalleled community commitment to conservation and the motivation to protect the unique wildlife, ecological, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources.

TNC owns the last significant property within the Refuge. Service acquisition of these lands would permanently protect continuous habitat and hydrology between the Refuges and the adjoining Great Sand

Dunes National Park and Preserve. The acquisitions are a significant contribution to protecting the remaining 33,000 acres needed to create 1.6 million acres of permanently protected, contiguous federal and private lands.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates annual costs of \$3,800 annually from NWRS base funds to prevent trespass on and disturbance of cultural resources and for invasive weed control on the lands acquired in fee.

**UPPER RIO GRANDE  
Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area  
Colorado and New Mexico**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 16 of 40

**Location:** SE corner of Rio Grande River headwaters on western slope of Sangre de Cristo Mountains in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico

**Congressional Districts:** Colorado, District 3 **FWS Region 2 and 6**  
New Mexico, District 1

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$0

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,890,250

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	2	167,200	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>167,200</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	2,423	\$1,890,250	\$780
Remaining	88	80,377	\$62,694,060	\$780
<b>Totals</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>\$64,584,310</b>	<b>\$258</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** Conservation easements protect the high-elevation wildlife habitats of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the uplands of the southeastern San Luis Valley. The proposed acquisitions will promote the adaptive capacity and resilience of these ecosystems by ensuring connectivity between existing protected areas and by protecting wildlife movement corridors, particularly riparian areas.

**Project Cooperators:** Private landowners

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 2,423 easement acres. From soaring 14,000-foot peaks to spectacular river gorges, the Upper Rio Grande landscape captivates with unspoiled vistas and rich Hispanic and Native American heritage. Water is the lifeblood of this landscape, supporting wildlife resources and cultures today as it has for untold millennia. The Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area lies within a day’s drive of six metro areas and five million people. The Refuge is supported by an unparalleled community commitment to conservation and the motivation to protect the unique wildlife, ecological, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources.

**O&M:** The Service estimates \$2,500 annually from NWRS base funds for over-flight monitoring of the conservation easements.

**DAKOTA TALLGRASS PRAIRIE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA      MANDATORY**  
**North Dakota and South Dakota**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Rank:** No. 17 of 40

**Location:** Northeastern South Dakota and southeastern North Dakota

**Congressional Districts:** North Dakota, At Large      **FWS Region 6**  
 South Dakota, At Large

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$10,173,750

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	207	62,852	\$10,178,131	\$162
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	2	20	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	160	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>63,032</b>	<b>\$10,178,131</b>	<b>\$161</b>
Planned FY 2015	Multi	6,122	\$3,000,000	\$490
Proposed FY 2016 (easement)	13	3,333	\$2,000,000	\$600
Remaining	Multi	117,513	\$51,300,709	\$437
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>\$66,478,840</b>	<b>\$350</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect the northern tallgrass prairie ecosystem and associated wildlife.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy and the local community.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire perpetual conservation easements on 3,333 acres of tallgrass prairie. Tallgrass prairie once covered 90 percent of the Dakotas, but less than three percent remains. Habitat fragmentation and conversion to crop production are the primary threats to this ecosystem. The Service plans to use conservation easements to protect 190,000 acres of the remaining tallgrass prairie in the eastern Dakotas, including 25,000 acres in North Dakota and 165,000 acres in South Dakota. Conservation easements will maintain traditional ranching operations while fostering landscape-level conservation.

The project area has a rich variety of plant, animal, and insect species, including more than 147 species of breeding birds ranging from neotropical migrants to waterfowl. Several candidate endangered species use the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, including Baird’s sparrow, loggerhead shrike, ferruginous hawk, and rare butterflies such as the Dakota skipper. These large blocks of grasslands help buffer prairie ecosystems from agricultural chemicals and invasive species, and provide the natural habitat mosaic required by prairie-dependent species. Existing prairie is a well-documented store of terrestrial carbon. Preventing conversion of tallgrass prairie with grassland easements ensures continued sequestration of this carbon.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates spending less than \$1,500 per year from NWRS base funding for annual compliance over-flights.

**ANAHUAC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
Texas**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 18 of 40

**Location:** Approximately 55 miles east of Houston, Texas

**Congressional Districts:** Texas, District 14 **FWS Region 2**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$1,917,685

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres**</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	3	3,956	\$1,431,810	\$362
Acquired Easement through FY 2014*	2	63	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	4	1,742	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	12	30,506	\$13,058,864	\$428
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>36,267</b>	<b>\$14,490,674</b>	<b>\$400</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	700	\$1,000,000	\$1,429
Remaining	94	45,174	\$12,660,000	\$280
<b>Totals</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>82,141</b>	<b>\$28,150,674</b>	<b>\$343</b>

\* Road easements.

\*\*Includes three tracts acquired by Categorical Exclusion for a total of 52 acres.

**Purpose of Acquisition:** In the past 25 years, over 100,000 acres of coastal wetlands were lost in the upper Texas Gulf Coast region. Direct loss of native habitat to development and conversion to other land uses has been extensive. These changes impact the native prairie and coastal marshes, resulting in a continuing trend of habitat loss and degradation. The large-scale alterations to the project area, ongoing threats from sea level rise, and land subsidence require a proactive approach to ensure the long-term protection of natural resources in the region.

**Project Cooperators:** The Conservation Fund, Houston Audubon, and The Nature Conservancy.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 700 acres of high-priority habitat in fee title. Acquisition of this tract would provide continued protection of coastal waterfowl resources and wetland-dependent migratory birds. The wetlands portion of this tract supports high-value wintering waterfowl habitats, while the native coastal prairie portion has high habitat value for resident mottled ducks, many species of grassland-dependent migratory birds, and a wide variety of native wildlife species.

**O&M:** The Service estimates an initial cost of \$60,000 from NWRS base funding for fencing and posting of refuge boundaries. The acquisition tract is marshland, which is more costly to survey and mark.

**FLINT HILLS LEGACY CONSERVATION AREA**

**MANDATORY**

**Kansas**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 19 of 40

**Location:** The Flint Hills of eastern Kansas run north-south in a long, narrow band

**Congressional Districts:** Kansas, Districts 1, 2, and 4 **FWS Region 6**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$2,191,450

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,134,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	0	0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	4	5,923	\$2,191,450	\$370
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	5	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5,928</b>	<b>\$2,191,450</b>	<b>\$370</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	2	2,268	\$1,134,000	\$500
Remaining	306	1,091,804	\$436,674,550	\$400
<b>Totals</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>1,100,000</b>	<b>\$440,000,000</b>	<b>\$400</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie ecosystem and associated grassland-dependent wildlife species.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, Kansas Land Trust, The Ranchland Trust of Kansas, Tallgrass Legacy Alliance, and the local community.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire perpetual conservation easements on 2,000 acres of tallgrass prairie. With less than four percent of the original acreage remaining, tallgrass prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States. Residential, commercial, and industrial development and woody vegetation encroachment have all fragmented this important habitat. Acquisition of perpetual conservation easements from willing sellers provides permanent protection for tallgrass prairie and fosters landscape-level conservation, while helping maintain traditional ranching communities. Landowner interest is high, and the Service will focus on lands with high quality tallgrass habitat and minimal fragmentation and woody vegetation encroachment. Conservation easements also protect habitat important for the threatened Topeka shiner and a wide variety of grassland-dependent birds. The Service will use these easements to ultimately protect 1,100,000 acres of the remaining Flint Hills tallgrass prairie.

**O&M:** Within NWRS base funding, the Service would spend \$1,000 for annual maintenance of the new acquisitions, mainly for easement enforcement.

**LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
**Texas**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Refuge Recreation Act of 1962

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 20 of 40

**Location:** South Texas, Lower Rio Grande Valley, approximately 30 minutes southeast of McAllen, TX

**Congressional Districts:** Texas, Districts 15, 27, and 28 **FWS Region 2**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$32,777,516

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,500,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners*</b>	<b>Acres**</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	299	79,168	\$75,073,310	\$948
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	6	5,616	\$1,412,751	\$252
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	13	10,261	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other Means through FY 2014	4	953	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>95,998</b>	<b>\$76,486,061</b>	<b>\$797</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	853	\$1,500,000	\$1,758
Remaining	791	35,649	\$54,288,500	\$1,523
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>132,500</b>	<b>\$132,274,561</b>	<b>\$998</b>

\* Out of six conservation easements acquired, two were donated, raising the amount of easement ownerships from four to six.

\*\* Four of the six conservation easements were acquired with LWCF funds (2,566 acres), and two were donated (3,050 acres), for a total of 5,616 acres.

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect native subtropical brush lands within the diverse biotic communities of the area.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Friends of the Wildlife Corridor, National Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, North American Butterfly Association, and The Trust for Public Land.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 853 acres of the Refuge’s best remaining brush land habitat. The Lower Rio Grande Valley area has lost about 95 percent of its native Tamualipan Thornscrub habitat because of agriculture, urban expansion, and industrial development. The threat continues as the Valley’s population increases by four percent each year, threatening the Valley’s biodiversity and making land acquisition a top conservation priority.

The Valley is home to a diversity of plants and animals as its range includes tropical coastal bays and estuaries in the Rio Grande Delta to semi-arid rocky hillsides further west. Eighteen federally listed endangered or threatened species, including the ocelot and jaguarundi, nearly 400 birds, 300 butterflies, and over 1,100 plant species are all found on the Refuge. The Valley is also a focal point of the Central Flyway for tens of thousands of birds migrating between North and South America each year. Many

Mexican bird species reach their northern limit within the Refuge—species found nowhere else in the U.S. To help recover endangered species such as the ocelot, sustainably protect the Valley’s rich plant and animal life, and fulfill the Refuge’s purpose, remaining lands containing native vegetation must be acquired before the lands are gone.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates minimal expenses beyond an initial \$10,000 from NWRS base funding for signage and posting of boundaries.

**MONTANA REFUGES**

**MANDATORY**

**Montana**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956  
**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 21 of 40  
**Location:** 65 miles northwest of Great Falls, MT  
**Congressional District:** Montana, At Large **FWS Region 6**  
**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$56,420,922  
**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$3,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	34	80,155	\$36,101,018	\$450
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	10	14,276	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	1,916	\$795,500	\$415
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>96,347</b>	<b>36,896,518</b>	<b>\$383</b>
Planned FY 2015	11	23,776	\$12,100,390	\$509
Proposed FY 2016	3	6,200	\$3,000,000	\$484
Remaining	Multi	283,177	\$161,295,009	\$570
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>409,500</b>	<b>\$213,291,917</b>	<b>\$521</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To support long-term viability of fish and wildlife habitat on a large landscape-scale basis in the Crown of the Continent. Acquisition of perpetual conservation easements preserves habitat where existing plant and animal communities are functioning well and maintains the traditional rural economies for present and future generations of Americans.

**Project Cooperators:** The Conservation Fund/Mellon Foundation; The Nature Conservancy; Rocky Mountain Front Landowner Advisory Group; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Lewis & Clark, Powell and Missoula County Commissioners; Montana DNRC; Montana Wilderness Association; and Montana Audubon Society.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire perpetual conservation easements on three tracts totaling 6,200 acres within the Crown of the Continent (including the Rocky Mountain Front, Blackfoot Valley, and Swan Valley Conservation Areas) in Montana. These easement acquisitions would connect to other protected land (owned by the State of Montana, The Nature Conservancy, or other federal agencies) and include important habitat for grizzly bear, gray wolf, lynx, long billed curlew, grasshopper sparrow, burrowing owl, and chestnut-collared longspur. There is increasing pressure to subdivide and develop this landscape for second home development and commercial uses. Protecting these tracts would prevent fragmentation and preserve trust species habitat in one of the nation’s best remaining intact ecosystems, while maintaining the traditional ranching economy.

**O&M:** The Service estimates that annual monitoring and inspection of the 6,200 acres of easement would require approximately \$1,500 annually from NWRS base funds.

**RIVERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE**

**MANDATORY**

**Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge  
Virginia**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Endangered Species Act of 1973; Emergency Wetlands Resource Act of 1986; Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929

**FY 2016 Budget Priority:** No. 22 of 40

**Location:** From Skinkers Neck to Belle Isle State Park on the Rappahannock River

**Congressional Districts:** Virginia, District 1 **FWS Region 5**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$15,628,500

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$3,890,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	20	5,593	\$12,546,843	\$2,244
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	7	1,918	\$4,277,027	\$2,230
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	2	1,196	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8,707</b>	<b>\$16,823,870</b>	<b>\$1,932</b>
Planned FY 2015	1	148	\$2,000,000	\$13,514
Proposed FY 2016	2	390	\$3,890,000	\$9,974
Remaining	19	10,755	\$30,486,130	\$2,835
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>\$53,200,000</b>	<b>\$2,660</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To provide nesting and roosting habitat for bald eagles, waterfowl, and other migratory birds by protecting forested bluffs above the river shore.

**Project Cooperators:** Commonwealth of Virginia, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Chesapeake Conservancy, National Park Service, The Conservation Fund

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 390 acres in fee title in the Farnham Creek Focus Area of the refuge. The acquisition would add significantly to the existing block of protected forest lands in this area. Increasing the interior core area of forested blocks is critical to migratory bird species such as the scarlet tanager, wood thrush, and hooded warbler, which require isolated forest habitat to breed. Many other migratory bird species use the forests and wetlands along Farnham Creek, including several Service and State species of conservation concern. They include the Louisiana waterthrush, ovenbird, prothonotary warbler, Kentucky warbler, worm-eating warbler, yellow-throated vireo, chuck-will’s widow, and whip-poor-will, all of which are confirmed breeders on the Refuge.

**O&M:** The Service estimates \$3,000 annually from NWRS base funding for signage and boundary markings.

**RIVERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE**  
**James River National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Virginia**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 22 of 40

**Location:** Approximately 10 miles southeast of the City of Hopewell, along the James River

**Congressional Districts:** Virginia, District 4 **FWS Region 5**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$8,462,424

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$950,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee Through FY 2014	4	4,324	\$9,541,072	\$2,207
Acquired Easement Through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange Through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation Through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other Means Through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Acquired through 2014</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4,324</b>	<b>\$9,541,072</b>	<b>\$2,207</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	125	\$950,000	\$7,600
Remaining	1	99	\$752,400	\$7,600
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4,548</b>	<b>\$11,243,472</b>	<b>\$2,472</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect roosting and breeding habitat for bald eagles, protect and manage habitat for breeding forest birds of conservation concern, and provide compatible recreational opportunities, particularly deer hunting.

**Project Cooperators:** The Conservation Fund, The Trust for Public Land, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Richmond Audubon Society, American Bird Conservancy, Chickahominy Tribe, James River Association, Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail, Defenders of Wildlife, Virginia Commonwealth University, National Wildlife Refuge Association, and the National Audubon Society.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire a 125-acre property in fee title with direct frontage on the James River. This property is currently being marketed for residential development. As the land is next to the Refuge, it is one of two remaining properties targeted for protection on the River. The property has a tidal inlet off the James River with riparian and shallow-water marsh wetlands, home to mature bald cypress trees in which ospreys and bald eagles nest; the Refuge currently has four active bald eagle nests.

**O & M:** The Service anticipates \$5,000 from NWRS base funding for posting.

**RIVERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE  
Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge  
Maryland**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Budget Priority:** No. 22 of 40

**Location:** Sixty-five miles southeast of Baltimore, in the south central portion of Dorchester County on Maryland’s Eastern Shore

**Congressional Districts:** Maryland, District 1 **FWS Region 5**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$7,207,834

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,900,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Ownerships</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	31	26,087	\$20,454,331	\$784
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	50	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	10	1,392	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	1	856	\$1,080,000	\$1,262
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>28,385</b>	<b>\$21,534,331</b>	<b>\$759</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	2	498	\$1,900,000	\$3,815
Remaining	53	31,042	\$33,538,768	\$1,080
<b>Totals</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>59,925</b>	<b>\$56,973,099</b>	<b>\$951</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect high quality habitat for the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel and other endangered species, along with nesting and wintering habitat for the American bald eagle, migratory waterfowl, colonial waterbirds, shorebirds, and forest interior dwelling bird species.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 498 acres in fee title of upland and marsh along the Nanticoke River and Owens Creek and wooded uplands in White Oak Swamp. The property on the Nanticoke River has prime riverine wetlands, extensive open fields and maturing woodlands. These areas provide excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife, including migratory birds like osprey, black and wood ducks, Canada geese, marsh and water birds, and bald eagles, as well as grassland and immature woodland species. The White Oak Swamp tract includes freshwater marsh habitat and mature, low-lying woodlands. The woodlands provide excellent habitat for bald eagles and the Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel, which was formerly listed as endangered. Purchasing these lands would expand potential public opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates no additional operations or maintenance costs associated with this acquisition as the parcel is located within Refuge boundaries and would add no additional workload.

**SACRAMENTO RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
**California**
**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Endangered Species Act of 1973  
Emergency Wetlands Resource Act of 1986; and the Land and Water  
Conservation Fund Act, dated September 3, 1964

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 23 of 40

**Location:** 100-mile stretch of the Sacramento River from Colusa to Red Bluff, CA

**Congressional District:** California, Districts 1 and 3 **FWS Region 8**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$20,447,719

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	29	9,227	\$28,718,371	\$3,112
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	2	1,286	\$776,221	\$604
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	15	\$12,000	\$800
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	4	751	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	1	472	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11,751</b>	<b>\$29,506,592</b>	<b>\$2,511</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	200	\$2,000,000	\$10,000
Remaining	79	6,049	\$39,493,408	\$6,529
<b>Totals</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>\$71,000,000</b>	<b>\$3,944</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To preserve riparian habitat for four federally listed endangered or threatened species and six candidate species. These include transplanted colonies of palmate-bracted bird's-beak, several species of fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, giant garter snake, wintering peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and breeding tricolored blackbird.

**Project Cooperators:** State of California and The Nature Conservancy.

**Project Description:** Funding would acquire one 200-acre tract to protect extremely rare riparian forest habitat of beneficial woodlands and wetlands next to streams, sloughs, rivers, and lakes. The continued acquisition of lands within this project boundary will secure 60 sites along 100 miles of the riparian Sacramento River corridor. These lands would further preserve habitat for threatened and endangered species, waterfowl and other migratory birds, other wildlife, anadromous fish, and plants, as well as restore and enhance suitable habitat for these species.

**O&M:** The Service estimates annual costs and associated restoration would be \$6,000 for the proposed tract to be acquired. Restoration activities would be funded by grants.



Interpretive Association (LaCrosse District), Friends of Pool 9 (McGregor District), Friends of Pool 10 (McGregor District), and Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Savanna District).

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 300 acres in fee title in multiple counties in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa to protect floodplain and bluff land habitat for migrating waterfowl such as lesser and greater scaup, as well as green-winged teal and mallard, both Service-identified surrogate species. Habitat protected within the Refuge would also be important for shorebird use, in particular lesser yellowlegs, and use by inter-jurisdictional fish, including paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon. Habitat on the Refuge is recognized as continentally significant, a globally Important Bird Area, a Wetland of International Importance, and in some areas, critical habitat for federally endangered freshwater mussels.

**O&M:** The Service estimates an initial cost of \$10,000 from NWRS base funds for restoration and enhancement work (spraying, mowing, burning, fencing supplies, and signage).

**NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM**

**MANDATORY**

**Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge  
Virginia**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, Endangered Species Act of 1973, Emergency Wetlands Resource Act of 1986, Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929

**FY 2016 Budget Priority:** No. 25 of 40

**Location:** From Skinkers Neck to Belle Isle State Park on the Rappahannock River

**Congressional Districts:** Virginia, District 1 **FWS Region 5**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$15,628,500

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$3,530,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Ownerships</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	20	5,593	\$12,546,843	\$2,243
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	7	1,918	\$4,277,027	\$2,230
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	2	1,196	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8,707</b>	<b>\$16,823,870</b>	<b>\$1,932</b>
Planned FY 2015	1	148	\$2,000,000	\$13,514
Proposed FY 2016	1	350	\$3,530,000	\$10,086
Remaining	20	10,795	\$30,846,130	\$2,857
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>\$53,200,000</b>	<b>\$2,660</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** The National Trails System is physical and cultural corridors traversing 49 States and every ecological biome in the U.S. These long distance trails, stretching for hundreds or thousands of miles each, connect with 70 national wildlife refuges (NWRs), 80 national parks, 90 national forests, and 100 major metropolitan areas. As they pass through or alongside NWRs, they protect crucial conservation areas, provide wildlife migration corridors, and offer tremendous public recreational opportunities and view sheds. This request would be directed to Rappahannock River Valley NWR which is adjacent to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (NHT) for a 60-mile length of the river.

**Project Cooperators:** Commonwealth of Virginia, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Chesapeake Conservancy, National Park Service.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 350 acres in a phased fee title acquisition in the Fones Cliff area of the Rappahannock River Valley NWR, which will add to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT. The forested bluffs reach heights of nearly 100 feet above the river shore and support high concentrations of bald eagles throughout the year. Surveys conducted by boat during winter months show

the highest densities of eagles, ranging from 141 to 395 along a 30-mile stretch, with Fones Cliff consistently supporting dozens of birds.

Many other migratory birds use the forests, swamps, and steep ravines found on the property, including several Service and State species of conservation concern. They include the Louisiana waterthrush, ovenbird, prothonotary warbler, Kentucky warbler, worm-eating warbler, yellow-throated vireo, wood thrush, scarlet tanager, chuck-will's widow, and whip-poor-will, all of which are confirmed breeders on the Refuge.

Overlooking a key freshwater segment of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT, the 978-acre tract is one of three targeted properties comprising Fones Cliff. Their protection as part of the refuge provides an opportunity for a spectacular interpretive site overlooking the Rappahannock River Valley. Seventy-five million dollars have already been invested for conservation of the lower Rappahannock River Valley.

**O&M:** The Service estimates initial costs of \$10,000 from NWRS base funding for posting. Future costs to construct recreational and educational facilities would be secured in cooperation with project partners via grants and special project funding.

**GRASSLANDS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA  
California**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 26 of 40

**Location:** Between the Cities of Los Banos and Gustine

**Congressional District:** California, District 16 **FWS Region 8**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$15,276,332

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	8	14,970	\$18,066,228	\$1,207
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	173	78,924	\$45,023,982	\$570
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>93,894</b>	<b>\$63,090,210</b>	<b>\$672</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	269	\$2,000,000	\$7,435
Remaining	234	39,137	\$180,778,970	\$4,619
<b>Totals</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>133,300</b>	<b>\$245,869,180</b>	<b>\$1,844</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect important wintering area for migratory waterfowl.

**Project Cooperators:** State of California

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire perpetual conservation easements on 269 acres of predominantly native, irrigated pasture. The biggest threat is residential development and the conversion of grasslands, wetlands, and riparian habitat to croplands and orchards that provide little or no benefit for wildlife. The acquisition of this property would provide long-term viability to the grassland ecosystem and a safe haven for migratory birds and other wildlife species.

**O&M:** As a perpetual conservation easement, there will be little long-term management costs associated with this acquisition.

**CACHE RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
**Arkansas**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 27 of 40

**Location:** Next to the White and Cache Rivers, 75 miles northeast of Little Rock

**Congressional Districts:** Arkansas, District 1 **FWS Region 4**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$16,883,213

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	115	59,786	\$61,786,313	\$1,033
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	7	2,166	\$134,000	\$62
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	2	950	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	1	6,091	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>68,993</b>	<b>\$61,920,313</b>	<b>\$897</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	909	\$2,000,000	\$2,200
Remaining	Multi	216,782	\$433,746,000	\$2,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>286,684</b>	<b>\$497,666,313</b>	<b>\$1,736</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect fisheries and wildlife resources and provide public access to Refuge lands.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Ducks Unlimited, and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire the 909 fee title acres remaining in a phased acquisition from one willing seller. The tract contains row crop agriculture, bottomland hardwood forest, moist soils units, and bald cypress-tupelo swamps. Acquisition of these tracts would contribute greatly to the Service’s habitat conservation efforts in the Cache River project area, which encompasses some of the largest remaining expanses of forested wetlands on any tributary within the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. The Refuge project area is the most important wintering area for mallards in North America and one of the most important for pintail and teal ducks, Canada geese, and other migratory waterfowl. Forest and wetland restoration on these tracts would facilitate carbon sequestration, provide surrogate species habitat, and fulfill national and State conservation plan goals.

**O&M:** The Service estimates initial costs of \$5,000 for posting and fencing, funded from NWRS base funding. Annual costs would be less than \$500 for maintenance.

**NECHES RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
Texas**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 28 of 40

**Location:** Approximately 35 miles south-southeast of Tyler and 100 miles southeast of Dallas

**Congressional District:** Texas, District 5 **FWS Region 2**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$3,000,000

**FY 2015 Budget Request:** \$3,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	4	3,730	\$3,641,023	\$976
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	1	1	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	30	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3,761</b>	<b>\$3,641,023</b>	<b>\$968</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	2,214	\$3,000,000	\$1,355
Remaining	57	19,306	\$32,132,500	\$1,664
<b>Totals</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>25,281</b>	<b>\$38,773,523</b>	<b>\$1,534</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect important remnant bottomland habitat for nesting and wintering of migratory birds of the Central Flyway; protect the forest’s diverse biological values and wetland functions of water quality improvement and flood control; and provide compatible wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities. Our non-profit partner, The Conservation Fund, has held more than 6,000 acres for the Service and funds are needed to fulfill our contract to acquire the acres.

**Project Cooperators:** The Conservation Fund, The Trust for Public Land, and The Nature Conservancy.

**Project description:** Funds would acquire 2,214 acres in fee title to protect nesting, wintering, and migratory habitat for migratory birds of the Central Flyway and provide much needed resting habitat for neo-tropical birds migrating north in the spring after crossing the Gulf of Mexico. The Refuge is located along the Neches River, which runs for 420 miles and is one of Texas’s largest rivers. Bottomland habitats in East Texas are used by three million dabbling ducks. The acquisition area protects a large number of other wildlife and plant species and would be of potential benefit to the federally endangered bald eagle and red-cockaded woodpecker, the threatened American Alligator, and several State species of special concern. The diversity provided by the bottomlands is greater than the upland habitat because of the diversity of floral species and the abundance of food sources.

**O&M:** The Service estimates total initial costs of \$191,000 from NWRS base funds for office space, a vehicle, and equipment. Staff would be relocated from Caddo Lake NWR.

**FLORIDA-GEORGIA LONGLEAF INITIATIVE**  
**St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Florida**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 29 of 40

**Location:** In the Florida Panhandle, 24 miles south of Tallahassee

**Congressional Districts:** Florida, District 4 **FWS Region 4**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$10,287,288

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$12,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	114	66,028	\$10,437,213	\$158
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	11	283	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	17	4,897	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	12	749	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	2	134	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>72,091</b>	<b>\$10,437,213</b>	<b>\$145</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	4,800	\$12,000,000	\$2,500
Remaining	Multi	35,356	\$87,836,562	\$2,484
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>112,247</b>	<b>\$110,273,775</b>	<b>\$982</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To conserve populations of threatened, endangered, rare, and imperiled plants and animals, and their native longleaf pine habitats; restore former slash pine plantations to native longleaf pine; provide suitable black bear habitat, including corridors to link to critical habitat for major population centers; provide high-quality habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, waterbirds, and marshbirds; and provide public opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

**Project Cooperators:** Sam Shine Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Florida Chapter of Wildlife Society, The Florida Natural Areas Inventory, St. Marks Refuge Association, Florida Trail Association, Blue Goose Alliance, Apalachee Audubon Society, and Florida Wildlife Federation.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 4,800 fee acres at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in a designated Important Bird Area and a Land Management Research and Demonstration Site for Longleaf Pine Ecosystems Funds. As a key segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail, this acquisition would benefit federally-listed endangered species such as red-cockaded woodpecker, woodstork, and flatwood salamanders, as well as a variety of other resident and migratory species. This property would help preserve a tapestry of Federal, State, and private forest lands that provide more than one million acres of unfragmented habitat for a variety of federally-listed threatened and endangered species.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates annual costs of up to \$50,000 for habitat management and restoration, including prescribed burning, hunting, and public use management. Acquisition may produce efficiency improvements in Service law enforcement and boundary posting, and reduce these costs. Hunting fees or outside funding could offset costs associated with restoration work.

**FELSENTHAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE****MANDATORY**

Arkansas

**Acquisition Authority:** Refuge Recreation Act of 1962**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 30 of 40**Location:** South-central Arkansas in Ashley, Bradley and Union Counties, along the Saline and Ouachita Rivers, 8 miles west of Crossett, AR**Congressional Districts:** Arkansas, District 1 **FWS Region 4****Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$0**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$3,000,000**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	89	\$100,000	\$1,124
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	3	64,813	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>64,902</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$2</b>
Planned FY 2015 Exchange	2	229	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	2	1,208	\$3,000,000	\$2,483
Remaining	43	35,611	\$63,672,468	\$1,788
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>101,950</b>	<b>\$66,772,468</b>	<b>\$655</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect fisheries and wildlife resources and provide public access.**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Ducks Unlimited, and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire two parcels totaling 1,208 acres in fee title. This area is dissected by an intricate system of rivers, creeks, sloughs, buttonbush swamps, and lakes throughout a vast bottomland hardwood forest that rises to an upland forest community. Historically, periodic flooding of the “bottoms” during the winter and spring have provided excellent wintering waterfowl habitat, particularly for mallards and wood ducks. These wetlands, in combination with the pine and upland hardwood forest on the higher ridges, support a wide diversity of native plants and animals, providing habitat for migratory and resident waterfowl, marsh and water birds, and neotropical migratory birds. Felsenthal is the only national wildlife refuge in the state with a population of endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers, and it also provides habitat and protection for the threatened American alligator. The refuge also contains some of the region’s richest cultural resources with more than 200 known Native American archaeological sites.

**O&M:** The Service estimates initial costs of \$5,000 for posting and fencing, funded from NWRS base funding. Annual costs would be less than \$500 for maintenance.



**OKEFENOKEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
**Florida and Georgia**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Migratory Bird Conservation Act; Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 32 of 40

**Location:** 11 miles southwest of Folkston, GA

**Congressional Districts:** Florida, District 4  
 Georgia, District 1 **FWS Region 4**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$5,392,953

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	27	368,239	\$1,851,271	\$5
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	2	46	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	2	9,535	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	5	23,649	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	3	1,860	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>403,329</b>	<b>\$1,851,271</b>	<b>\$5</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	1,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000
Remaining	11	55,823	\$111,646,000	\$2,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>460,152</b>	<b>\$115,497,271</b>	<b>\$251</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To conserve populations of threatened, endangered, rare, and imperiled plants and animals and their native longleaf pine habitats; restore former slash pine plantations to native longleaf pine; provide suitable black bear habitat, including corridors to link to critical habitat for major population centers; provide high-quality habitat for migratory birds, waterbirds, and marshbirds; and provide public opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

**Project Cooperators:** The Conservation Fund, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 1,000 acres of fee title to support longleaf pine ecosystem conservation and restoration. This acquisition would help preserve a tapestry of federal, state, and private forest lands that provide more than one million acres of unbroken habitat for federally-listed endangered and threatened species, including the red-cockaded woodpecker, wood stork, flatwoods salamander, Eastern indigo snake, and whooping crane. This project would also significantly contribute to a multi-partner effort by the Greater Okefenokee Association of Landowners to establish a one-mile wildfire-resilient wildlife conservation zone around the Refuge.

**O&M:** The Service estimates annual costs of up to \$20,000 for habitat management and restoration, prescribed burning, and hunting and public use management. Acquisition may produce efficiency

improvements in Service law enforcement and boundary posting, and reduce these costs. Hunting fees or outside funding could offset costs associated with restoration work.

**PATHWAYS TO THE PACIFIC**  
**Willapa National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Washington**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authorities:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 33 of 40

**Location:** Pacific County, near the community of Long Beach

**Congressional Districts:** Washington, District 3 **FWS Region 1**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$12,018,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$4,203,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	36	9,766	\$7,344,928	\$752
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	3	3,123	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	3	596	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	3	892	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014*	1	2,059	\$8,518,000	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>16,436</b>	<b>\$15,862,928</b>	<b>\$965</b>
Planned FY 2015**	1	392	\$830,000	\$2,117
Proposed FY 2016	3	1,458	\$4,203,000	\$2,883
Remaining	23	5,048	\$14,760,000	\$2,924
<b>Totals</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>23,334</b>	<b>\$35,655,928</b>	<b>\$1,528</b>

\*2,059 acres withdrawn from Public Domain; \$8,518,000 for timber rights from one owner (no acreage).

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect, restore, and manage areas of forest, streams, and wetlands; provide refuge for breeding and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds; contribute to the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species; and provide for increased opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, education, and research.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, Columbia Land Trust, and Forterra.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire three properties next to the main unit. They would help protect and improve the overall health and function of the Willapa Bay watershed and the aquatic species within it. This acquisition would also create an opportunity to enhance and restore western red cedar forests to eventually re-establish late successional old-growth function.

These areas are important to Federal and State endangered/threatened species and most migratory bird species using the Pacific Flyway. The federally-listed marbled murrelet recovery plan identifies Southwest Washington as a significant gap in suitable nesting habitat along the Pacific Northwest coast. Increasing available habitat in this area is critical to expanding the geographic distribution of the murrelet within its threatened range.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates minimal additional costs associated with this acquisition because the parcels are located within the Refuge boundary and would add no additional workload. The Service would benefit from our cooperative relationship with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on the management of forest lands in the project area, as TNC and the Service are partnering to study and implement management practices to restore old growth forest habitat for the benefit of the marbled murrelet and other species.

**PATHWAYS TO THE PACIFIC  
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge  
Washington**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authorities:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 33 of 40

**Location:** Clark County, near Vancouver, WA

**Congressional Districts:** Washington, District 3 **FWS Region 1**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$12,018,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$259,750

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	12	5,201	\$5,351,600	\$1,029
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	2	2	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	2	25	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5,228</b>	<b>\$5,351,600</b>	<b>\$1,024</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	3	68	\$259,750	\$3,820
Remaining	7	874	\$3,059,003	\$3,500
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6,170</b>	<b>\$8,670,353</b>	<b>\$1,405</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect, restore, and manage forests, streams, and wetlands; provide refuge for breeding and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds; help conserve and recover threatened and endangered species; and increase opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, education, and research.

**Project Cooperators:** The Nature Conservancy, Columbia Land Trust, Friends of The Columbia Gorge, Friends of Ridgefield NWR, and Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire three properties along the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail and the Columbia River Water Trail, a 50-State America’s Great Outdoors project. Located just 25 miles from Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington, this iconic landscape is threatened by residential, agricultural, and commercial-industrial development. Once protected, these properties will safeguard wildlife habitat and lands similar to what the Corps of Discovery explorers encountered more than 200 years ago. This project would also protect trail resources and access, improve water quality, and protect vital winter habitat for dusky Canada geese and other species.

**O&M:** The Service estimates startup costs of less than \$20,000 from NWRS base funds for survey and signage since these properties are located within or next to refuge land.

**EVERGLADES HEADWATERS NWR AND CONSERVATION AREA  
Florida**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965; Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 34 of 40

**Location:** Approximately 50 miles south of Orlando and 75 miles east of Tampa, in the counties of Polk, Osceola, Okeechobee, and Highlands

**Congressional Districts:** Florida, Districts 12, 15, and 16 **FWS Region 4**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$12,500,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$3,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	10	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Planned FY 2015	6	6,291	\$12,500,000	\$1,987
Proposed FY 2016	1	1,200	\$3,000,000	\$2,500
Remaining (fee)	Multi	43,999	\$190,460,000	\$4,329
Remaining (easement)	Multi	98,500	\$270,875,000	\$2,750
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>\$476,835,000</b>	<b>\$3,179</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect, restore, and conserve habitat for 278 Federal and State listed species, including Florida panther, Florida black bear, Audubon’s crested caracara, Florida scrub jay, red-cockaded woodpecker, whooping crane, Everglades snail kite, and the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow.

**Project Cooperators:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, U. S. Air Force, Avon Park Air Force Range, The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Refuge Association, Florida Cattlemen’s Association, and Florida Farm Bureau.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire fee title to 1,200 acres, which is part of a multi-year acquisition of a 2,000-acre parcel. This land would help protect a large landscape of diverse and high-quality habitats, including habitat for the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow. Acquisitions would protect, restore, and conserve the headwaters, groundwater recharge, and watershed of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Kissimmee River, and Lake Okeechobee region. It would also improve water

quantity and quality in the Everglades watershed, complementing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan goals, and protect the water supply for millions of people.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates using NWRS base funds for the annual costs of up to \$40,000 for habitat management and restoration, including prescribed burning, hunting, and public use management.

**NORTHERN TALLGRASS PRAIRIE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
Minnesota and Iowa**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 35 of 40

**Location:** Located in portions of 48 counties in MN and 37 in IA, the Refuge is bounded by the US-Canada border to the north and Des Moines, IA to the south. The Refuge boundary weaves through the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands and Agassiz Beach Ridges of northwest MN and the Prairie Coteau regions of southwest MN and northwest IA.

**Congressional District:** Minnesota, Districts 1 and 7 **FWS Region 3**  
Iowa, Districts 2, 3, and 4

**Total Appropriations:** \$6,306,635

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	12	2,803	\$4,319,393	\$1,541
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	44	2,452	\$1,672,903	\$682
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	5	479	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other Means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>5,734</b>	<b>\$5,992,296</b>	<b>\$1,045</b>
Planned FY 2015	1	150	\$500,000	\$3,333
Proposed FY 2016	3	300	\$1,000,000	\$3,333
Remaining	791	71,295	\$17,507,704	\$246
<b>Totals</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>77,479</b>	<b>\$25,000,000</b>	<b>\$323</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect, restore, and enhance the remaining northern tallgrass prairie habitats and associated wildlife species.

**Project Cooperators:** Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, several county conservation boards, and several local Chambers of Commerce.

**Project Description:** Funds would be used to acquire approximately 300 fee title acres or easement acres in western Minnesota and/or northwestern Iowa to develop stewardship agreements, and provide management assistance in the interest of preserving the prairie landscape regardless of ownership. The project conserves and restores one of the rarest and most fragmented prairie/grassland ecosystems in America and one of the most important waterfowl production areas of North America.

The Service’s goal for the refuge is to preserve 77,000 acres, about 25 percent of the remaining native prairie, across portions of 85 counties in western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa.

Federally threatened and endangered species on the Refuge include four plant and seven animal species, including the western prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover, and the piping plover. The Refuge contains nationally significant habitat for migratory birds and waterfowl, such as the marbled godwit, mallards, northern pintail, lesser scaup, canvasback and blue-winged teal. Approximately 243 species of birds are known to regularly use the northern tallgrass prairie area during some time of the year, with 152 species breeding here. Grassland nesting birds present at the Refuge includes black-billed cuckoo, bobolinks, red-headed woodpecker and the Connecticut warbler, dickcissels, and upland plovers. Several globally rare species can also be found here, including the last remaining populations of the Dakota skipper and the regal fritillary butterflies, which are in steep decline.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates using \$10,000 from NWRS base funding for initial restoration and enhancement work (spraying, mowing, burning, and signage).

**CAPE MAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
New Jersey

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 36 of 40

**Location:** Sixty miles southeast of Philadelphia and 25 miles south of Atlantic City, New Jersey, in Cape May County, New Jersey

**Congressional District:** New Jersey, District 2 **FWS Region 5**

**Total Appropriations:** \$31,871,687

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee Through FY 2014	125	12,133	\$31,871,687	\$2,627
Acquired Easement Through FY 2014	0	0	0	\$0
Acquired Exchange Through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation Through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other Means Through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contribution through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through 2014</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>12,133</b>	<b>\$31,871,687</b>	<b>\$2,627</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	47	\$1,000,000	\$21,277
Remaining	883	12,617	\$15,016,992	\$1,190
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,009</b>	<b>24,797</b>	<b>\$47,888,679</b>	<b>\$1,931</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect, restore, and manage grassland, forest, and wetland habitat for migratory birds and waterfowl, including American black duck, black-crowned night-heron, glossy ibis, bobolink, American kestrel and northern harrier, as well as northern gray treefrog and northern diamondback terrapin.

**Project Cooperators:** The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the State of New Jersey, the County of Cape May.

**Project Description:** Funds would purchase three contiguous parcels from one owner that total 47 acres. Formerly a farm, this property has large open fields well suited for grassland bird habitat restoration and forested lands connected to woodlands next to the Refuge. It is the last significantly undeveloped property close to this section of the Refuge and is bounded to the north and south by high density residential development. The property is in the process of being permitted for conversion into a 133 unit mobile home development. Acquisition of this tract will protect critical ground-water recharge areas and protect refuge lands from the adverse impacts of high-density development.

The Cape May peninsula is recognized as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site of Hemispheric Importance, a Wetland of International Importance under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, and a globally significant Important Bird Area (National Audubon and

American Bird Conservancy).

**O&M:** The Service estimates \$5,000 from NWRS base funding will be used for annual maintenance.

**BALCONES CANYONLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
Texas

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 37 of 40

**Location:** Approximately one hour northwest of Austin

**Congressional District:** Texas, District 21 **FWS Region 2**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$32,281,620

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,200,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/Acre</u>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	59	19,843	\$28,505,861	\$1,437
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	15	4,599	\$2,535,000	\$551
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>24,442</b>	<b>\$31,040,861</b>	<b>\$1,270</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	540	\$1,200,000	\$2,222
Remaining	225	55,402	\$155,541,600	\$2,808
<b>Totals</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>80,384</b>	<b>\$187,782,461</b>	<b>\$2,336</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect essential breeding habitat for the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo; protect habitats for other wildlife species, including migratory Monarchs; and preserve the unique flora, fauna, and limestone caves, rivers, and sinkholes found here.

**Project Cooperators:** Friends of Balcones Canyonlands NWR, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce, and the Travis Audubon Society, Hill Country Land Trust, University of Texas-LBJ Wildflower Center, and the Damuth Foundation.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 540 acres in fee title. The Refuge provides essential habitat for two endangered neotropical migratory birds, endangered cave dwelling invertebrates living in the Refuge’s limestone caves, rivers, and sinkholes, and important riparian habitat in the unique and biologically diverse Edwards Plateau. The project area is in one of the fastest growing residential areas in the country, and these remnant habitats are imminently threatened by development. The remaining habitats must be protected, or the listed species will be lost. To date, there are four subdivisions within the acquisition boundary.

**O&M:** The Service anticipates \$2,400 from NWRS base funding for removal and installation of fencing.

**NORTHERN COASTAL CALIFORNIA  
Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge  
California**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Emergency Wetlands Resource Act of 1986; Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929; Endangered Species Act of 1973

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 38 of 40

**Location:** The northwest quadrant of Humboldt County in South Bay between the Cities of Arcata and Eureka, California, and the Lanphere Dunes Unit west of Arcata

**Congressional District:** California, District 2 **FWS Region 8**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$992,004

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$917,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	29	3,384	\$6,246,414	\$1,846
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	1	\$1,300	\$1,300
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	4	656	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>4,041</b>	<b>\$6,247,714</b>	<b>\$1,546</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	4	145	\$917,000	\$6,324
Remaining	11	5,537	\$16,282,496	\$2,941
<b>Totals</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>9,723</b>	<b>\$23,447,210</b>	<b>\$2,412</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To protect important wintering area for migratory waterfowl and endangered American peregrine falcon, California brown pelican and clapper rail.

**Project Cooperators:** State of California

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire four properties totaling 145 acres. These lands are predominantly sand dune, salt marsh, irrigated pasture, and scrub forest. The biggest threat is residential development or dairy operations that will provide little or no benefit to wildlife. The acquisition of these properties would provide long term viability to the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, as well as provide a safe haven for migratory birds and other wildlife species.

**O&M:** The Service would use NWRS base funding for the estimated annual expenses and associated restoration costs of \$50,000.

**NISQUALLY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

**MANDATORY**

Washington

**Acquisition Authority:** Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as amended

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 39 of 40

**Location:** About eight miles northeast of Olympia

**Congressional Districts:** Washington, Districts 3 and 9 **FWS Region 1**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$6,407,000

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$1,500,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	36	3,863	\$12,508,417	\$3,238
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	8	33	\$4,024	\$122
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	1	10	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	9	7	\$3,024	\$432
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	1	486	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>4,399</b>	<b>\$12,515,465</b>	<b>\$2,845</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	1	250	\$1,500,000	\$6,000
Remaining	292	3,147	\$33,715,000	\$10,713
<b>Totals</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>7,796</b>	<b>\$47,730,465</b>	<b>\$6,122</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To preserve and enhance habitat for migratory birds and anadromous fish, including federally-listed threatened Chinook salmon, within the Nisqually River Delta. This land is also vital wetland habitat for freshwater species, including the federally-listed threatened Oregon Spotted Frog, and a diversity of migratory birds and anadromous fish along the Black River.

**Project Cooperators:** Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Nisqually Land Trust, the Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Forterra, and the Capitol Land Trust.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire approximately 250 acres in fee title of riparian and upland habitat from one owner. Acquisition would promote habitat connectivity, river corridor protection, and rare and threatened species recovery, and would increase resiliency in the face of climate change. This project would also enhance habitat quality and ease the management of existing refuge lands to support migratory birds, anadromous fish, and freshwater wetland species, including the federally-listed Oregon Spotted Frog.

The Nisqually River and Delta are key Puget Sound habitats. The Black River, the most intact low-lying river system remaining in western Washington, supports important rearing and spawning habitat for anadromous fish in the second largest watershed in Washington State. In these rapidly urbanizing watersheds, fee title acquisition of desirable waterfront property will facilitate restoration and conservation along vital habitat corridors, protecting this landscape from incompatible development.

Development pressure on this landscape is intense, so time is critical to provide sufficient land protection to these relatively intact river systems.

**O&M:** The Service will initially use \$18,000 from NWRS base funding for fencing and posting refuge and tract boundaries.

**CYPRESS CREEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
**Illinois**

**MANDATORY**

**Acquisition Authority:** Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986

**FY 2016 Priority Rank:** No. 40 of 40

**Location:** Near the southern boundary of Illinois at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Carbondale is 30 miles north.

**Congressional Districts:** Illinois, Districts 12 and 19 **FWS Region 3**

**Total LWCF Appropriations:** \$14,903,300

**FY 2016 Budget Request:** \$2,000,000

**Acquisition Status:**

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$/Acre</b>
Acquired Fee through FY 2014	157	16,008	\$12,640,694	\$790
Acquired Easement through FY 2014	1	1	\$5,000	\$5,000
Acquired Exchange through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Acquired Donation through FY 2014	1	400	\$0	\$0
Acquired Other means through FY 2014	0	0	\$0	\$0
Partner Contributions through FY 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Acquired through FY 2014</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>16,409</b>	<b>\$12,645,694</b>	<b>\$771</b>
Planned FY 2015	0	0	\$0	\$0
Proposed FY 2016	5	800	\$2,000,000	\$2,500
Remaining	92	18,713	\$55,968,000	\$2,991
<b>Totals</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>35,922</b>	<b>\$70,613,694</b>	<b>\$1,966</b>

**Purpose of Acquisition:** To preserve, restore, and manage wetlands and bottomland forest habitat in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP).

**Project Cooperators:** The Cache River Wetlands is a joint venture with The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Service together planning to acquire 60,000 acres. The Service plans to acquire 35,922 acres in total for the project. Acquisition efforts on the Refuge and throughout the watershed have been supported with time and funding by local, state, and national organizations, including Friends of the Cache River Watershed, Shawnee Audubon Society, Southern Illinois Audubon Society, Shawnee Group of the Sierra Club, Illinois Audubon Society, Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, American Land Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and The Nature Conservancy.

**Project Description:** Funds would acquire 800 acres in fee title from five tracts. The Cache River-Cypress Creek Wetlands have been designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, an Important Bird Area, and includes three National Natural Landmarks. The Refuge is part of the Cache River-Cypress Creek Conservation Opportunity Area in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan and land acquisition is one of the four key actions listed in the plan. At least three separate maternity colonies of the federally endangered Indiana bat have been located on the Refuge and six bat hibernacula are located five to ten miles from the Refuge acquisition boundary. The Refuge provides habitat for populations of several bird species of conservation concern, such as breeding Black-billed Cuckoo, Prothonotary

Warbler, Wood Thrush, and migrating Lesser Yellowlegs. The Refuge also provides habitat for large numbers of migrating NAWMP species like the Mallard and Northern Pintail.

**O & M:** The Service anticipates annual costs of \$40,000 from NWRS base funding for initial restoration and enhancement work, including signage and boundary posting.

<b>Standard Form 300</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR</b> <b>FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE</b> <b>LAND ACQUISITION</b>			
<b>Program and Financing (in millions of dollars)</b> <b>Identification Code 010-18-14-5020</b>	<b>2014</b> <b>Actual</b>	<b>2015</b> <b>Estimate</b>	<b>2016</b> <b>Estimate</b>
<b><u>Obligations by program activity:</u></b>			
0001 Land Acquisition Management	11	12	23
0002 Emergencies and hardships	6	6	7
0003 Exchanges	2	2	3
0004 Inholdings	2	3	4
0005 Land Projects	22	28	60
0006 Sportsmen and Recreational Access	0	0	27
0007 Land Protection Planning	0	0	2
0799 Total direct obligations	43	51	126
0801 Reimbursable program activity	4	1	1
0900 Total new obligations	47	52	127
<b><u>Budgetary Resources:</u></b>			
Unobligated balance:			
1000 Unobligated balance brought forward, Oct 1	33	46	45
1021 Recoveries of prior year unpaid obligations	1	1	1
1050 Unobligated balance (total)	34	47	46
<b><u>Budget authority:</u></b>			
Appropriations, discretionary:			
1101 Appropriation LWCF [014-5005]	54	48	59
1121 Appropriations transferred from other accts [014-1125]	2	0	0
1160 Appropriation, discretionary (total)	56	48	59
Appropriations, mandatory:			
1221 Appropriations transferred from other acct [014-5005]	0	0	106
1260 Appropriations, mandatory (total)	0	0	106
Spending authority from offsetting collections, discretionary:			
1700 Collected	1	2	1
1701 Change in uncollected payments, Federal sources	2	0	0
1750 Spending auth from offsetting collections, disc (total)	3	2	1
1900 Budget authority (total)	59	50	60
1930 Total budgetary resources available	93	97	212
Memorandum (non-add) entries:			
1941 Unexpired unobligated balance, end of year	46	45	85
<b><u>Change in obligated balance:</u></b>			
Unpaid obligations:			
3000 Unpaid obligations, brought forward, Oct 1	31	22	16
3010 Obligations incurred, unexpired accounts	47	52	127
3020 Outlays (gross)	-55	-57	-106
3040 Recoveries of prior year unpaid obligations, unexpired	-1	-1	-1
3050 Unpaid obligations, end of year	22	16	36
Uncollected payments:			
3060 Uncollected pymts, Fed sources, brought forward, Oct 1	-1	-3	-3
3070 Change in uncollected pymts, Fed sources, unexpired	-2	0	0
3090 Uncollected pymts, Fed sources, end of year	-3	-3	-3

<b>Standard Form 300</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR</b> <b>FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE</b> <b>LAND ACQUISITION</b>			
<b>Program and Financing (in millions of dollars)</b> <b>Identification Code 010-18-14-5020</b>	<b>2014</b> <b>Actual</b>	<b>2015</b> <b>Estimate</b>	<b>2016</b> <b>Estimate</b>
Memorandum (non-add) entries:			
3100 Obligated balance, start of year	30	19	13
3200 Obligated balance, end of year	19	13	33
<b><u>Budget authority and outlays, net:</u></b>			
Discretionary:			
4000 Budget authority, gross	59	50	60
Outlays, gross:			
4010 Outlays from new discretionary authority	22	20	25
4011 Outlays from discretionary balances	33	37	39
4020 Outlays, gross (total)	55	57	64
Offsets against gross budget authority and outlays:			
Offsetting collections (collected) from:			
4030 Federal sources	-1	-2	-1
Additional offsets against gross budget authority only:			
4050 Change in uncollected pymts, Fed sources, unexpired	-2	0	0
4070 Budget authority, net (discretionary)	56	48	59
4080 Outlays, net (discretionary)	54	55	63
Mandatory:			
4090 Budget authority, gross	0	0	106
Outlays, gross:			
4100 Outlays from new mandatory authority	0	0	42
4160 Budget authority, net (mandatory)	0	0	106
4170 Outlays, net (mandatory)	0	0	42
4180 Budget authority, net (total)	56	48	165
4190 Outlays, net (total)	54	55	105
<b><u>Object Classification (O)</u></b>			
Direct obligations:			
11.1 Full-time permanent	7	9	12
12.1 Civilian personnel benefits	2	2	3
23.1 Rental payments to GSA	1	1	1
25.2 Other services from non-Federal sources	2	2	4
25.3 Other goods and services from Federal sources	2	2	7
32.0 Land and structures	29	35	99
99.0 Subtotal, Direct obligations	43	51	126
Reimbursable obligations:			
32.0 Land and structures	4	1	1
99.9 Total new obligations	47	52	127
<b><u>Employment Summary (Q)</u></b>			
1001 Direct civilian full-time equivalent employment	88	88	128

# National Wildlife Refuge Fund



## National Wildlife Refuge Fund

### Appropriations Language

[For expenses necessary to implement the Act of October 17, 1978 (16 U.S.C. 715s), \$13,228,000.]  
(*Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015.*)

### Justification of Language Changes

**Deletion** of all language since language is no longer needed if program is eliminated as requested.  
(Mandatory portion does not require appropriations language.)

### Authorizing Statutes

***Refuge Revenue Sharing Act*** (16 U.S.C. 715s), as amended. Authorizes payments to be made to offset tax losses to counties in which Service fee and withdrawn public domain lands are located.

***Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)***, Section 1002 and Section 1008, 16 U.S.C. 3142 and 3148. These sections address the procedures for permitting oil and gas leases on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain (Section 1002) and other non-North Slope Federal lands in Alaska (Section 1008).

**Appropriation: National Wildlife Refuge Fund**

		2014 Actual	2015 Enacted	2016			Budget Request	Change from 2015 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Appropriations	(\$000)	13,228	13,228	0	0	-13,228	0	-13,228
Receipts	(\$000)	6,970	7,924	0	0	+660	8,584	+660
<b>Total, National Wildlife Refuge Fund</b>	<b>(\$000)</b>	<b>20,198</b>	<b>21,152</b>			<b>-12,568</b>	<b>8,584</b>	<b>-12,568</b>
	<b>FTE</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>

The 2014 and 2015 amounts include sequestration in accordance with section 251A of the BBEDCA, 2 U.S.C.901a.

**Summary of 2016 Program Changes for National Wildlife Refuge Fund**

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Appropriations	-13,228	0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-13,228</b>	<b>0</b>

**Justification of 2016 Program Changes**

The 2016 budget request for National Wildlife Refuge Fund is \$0 and 0 FTE, a program change of -\$13,228,000 and +0 FTE from the 2015 Enacted.

**Appropriations (-\$13,228,000/+0 FTE)**

The Service proposes the elimination of the entire appropriated (discretionary) portion of this program. The mandatory receipts collected and allocated under the program would remain. Refuges often generate tax revenue for communities far in excess of that which was lost with Federal acquisition of the land. Refuge lands also provide many public services and place few demands on local infrastructure such as schools, fire, and police services when compared to more intensive development.

National Wildlife Refuges had nearly 47 million visitors in 2014. Recreation opportunities provided by national wildlife refuges support local tourism, which supports local economies. Visitors stay in local lodges, eat at local restaurants, and shop in local stores. Local employment increases, and additional funding goes to local, county, and State governments from the additional tax revenues.

*Banking on Nature: The Economic Benefits to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation* by Erin Carver and James Caudill, Ph.D., Division of Economics, US Fish and Wildlife Service, October 2013, presents estimated FY 2011 visitor findings for a sample of 92 Service-owned lands. The original *Banking on Nature* report by the Service focusing on data for FY 2006, provided astounding estimates of visitors to Service-owned lands, the economic value to surrounding communities, and increases to local businesses.

Current estimates<sup>1</sup> based on that report presents a clear picture of the value NWRs have on local communities. The nearly 47 million visitors:

- Generated \$2.6 billion of sales in regional economies;
- Supported 35,400 jobs; and

<sup>1</sup> Refuge System-wide estimated economic benefits are based upon a recent analysis conducted by the FWS' Division of Economics using the latest visitation numbers and analysis methods used in the Banking on Nature Report published in 2013.

- Generated \$370.5 million in tax revenue at the local, county, State and Federal level

Not only do Service lands contribute to local economies, they also improve local land values. According to the Executive Summary of *Amenity Values of Proximity to National Wildlife Refuges* prepared by the Center for Environmental and Resource Economic Policy at North Carolina State University in April 2012, property values surrounding refuges are higher than equivalent properties elsewhere. Most importantly, in an increasingly urban world, these sanctuaries of natural beauty offer Americans priceless opportunities to connect with nature.

Mandatory Receipts - The 2016 estimate for National Wildlife Refuge Fund revenue is \$8,584,000.

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### Program Overview

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The *Refuge Revenue Sharing Act*, as amended, authorizes revenues and direct appropriations to be deposited into a special fund, the National Wildlife Refuge Fund (NWRF), and used for payments to counties in which lands are acquired in fee (fee land) or reserved from the public domain (reserved land) and managed by the Service. These revenues are derived from the sale or disposition of products (e.g., timber and gravel); other privileges (e.g., right-of-way and grazing permits); and/or leases for public accommodations or facilities (e.g., oil and gas exploration and development) incidental to, and not in conflict with, refuge purposes.

### Fee Lands

The Act authorizes payments for Service-managed fee lands based on a formula contained in the Act that entitles counties to whatever is the highest of the following amounts:

- 1) 25 percent of the net receipts;
- 2) 3/4 of 1 percent of the fair market value of the land; or
- 3) 75 cents per acre.

Every five years, appraisals may be updated to determine the fair market value.

If the net revenues are insufficient to make full payments for fee lands according to this formula, direct appropriations up to an amount equal to the difference between net receipts and full authorized payment may be authorized.

### Reserved Lands

The refuge revenue sharing payments made on lands reserved from the public domain and administered by the Service for fish and wildlife purposes are always 25 percent of the net receipts collected from the reserved land in the county. If no receipts are collected, there is no revenue sharing payment. However, if authorized, the Department makes Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) (31 U.S.C. 6901-6907) on all public domain lands, including Service-reserved land. The Service annually reports to the Department all of our reserved land acres and the revenue sharing amount already paid on those acres. The Department then calculates the PILT amount, subtracts the amount the Service has already paid, and makes the PILT payment to the community.

### Other Payments

The *Refuge Revenue Sharing Act* also provides for the payment of certain expenses incurred in connection with revenue producing activities. Such expenses include:

- Salaries of foresters who cruise and mark timber for sale;
- Staff salaries and supplies associated with maintenance of fences in support of grazing;
- Costs associated with sale of surplus animals and collecting refuge share of furs and crops;

- Costs of conducting land appraisals, processing, and maintaining the records.

Sections 1008 and 1009 of the *Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)*, 16 U.S.C. 3148, address procedures for oil and gas leasing on non-North Slope Federal lands in Alaska. Title XI of the Act, 16 U.S.C. 3161, addresses the procedures for transportation and utility systems in and across the Alaska conservation system units. An applicant pays the cost to process an application or administer a permit relating to utility and transportation systems or seismic exploration. Payments are deposited in the NWRF for reimbursement to the Region.

**2016 Program Performance**

According to current projections, payments to counties in 2016 will equal \$5,484,000 or 7 percent of the estimated full entitlement, based on appropriations of \$0 and \$7,924,000 of estimated receipts less expenses. In addition to payments to counties, national wildlife refuges provide tangible and intangible benefits to communities that bring increased tax revenues that may offset the reductions.

<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>				
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	
<b>National Wildlife Refuge Fund</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Program Change (+/-)</b>
<b>Receipts / Expenses</b>				
Receipts Collected	6,909	7,824	8,000	0
Recoveries	61	100	100	0
Expenses for Sales	-2,284	-2,285	-2,000	0
ANILCA Expenses	-5	-5	-13	0
Estimated User-Pay Cost Share	-137	-150	-150	0
<b>Net Receipts –</b>				
Available during the following year	4,544	5,484	5,937	+149
<b>Payments to Counties</b>				
Receipts Available - collected previous year		4,544	5,484	-120
Appropriated		13,228	0	-13,228
<b>Total Available for Payments to Counties</b>		<b>17,753</b>	<b>5,484</b>	<b>-13,348</b>
Authorized Level		78,500	78,500	0
Percent Payment		23%	7%	-17%

<b>Standard Form 300</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR</b> <b>FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE</b> <b>NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE FUND</b>			
<b>Program and Financing (in millions of dollars)</b> <b>Identification Code    010-18-14-5091</b>	<b>2014</b> <b>Actual</b>	<b>2015</b> <b>Estimate</b>	<b>2016</b> <b>Estimate</b>
0100 Balance, start of year	0	0	0
Receipts:			
0220 National Wildlife Refuge Fund [010-00-509110-0-200403]	7	8	9
0400 Total: Balance and Collections	7	8	9
Appropriations:			
0500 National Wildlife Refuge Fund [010-00-5091-0-1201]	-7	-8	-8
0501 National Wildlife Refuge Fund [010-00-5091-0-1203]	-1	-1	-1
0502 National Wildlife Refuge Fund [010-00-5091-0-1232]	1	1	0
0599 Total appropriations	-7	-8	-9
0799 Balance, end of year	0	0	0
<b>Obligations by program activity:</b>			
0001 Expenses for sales	2	2	2
0003 Payments to counties	20	18	7
0900 Total new obligations	22	20	9
<b>Budgetary Resources:</b>			
Unobligated balance:			
1000 Unobligated balance brought forward, Oct 1	6	4	5
1001 Discretionary unobligated balance brought fwd, Oct 1	0	0	0
<b>Budget authority:</b>			
Appropriations, discretionary:			
1100 Appropriation	13	13	0
1160 Appropriation, discretionary (total)	13	13	0
Appropriations, mandatory:			
1201 Appropriation (special or trust fund)	7	8	8
1203 Appropriation (previously unavailable)	1	1	1
1232 Appropriations and/or unobligated balance of appropriations temporarily reduced	-1	-1	0
1260 Appropriations, mandatory (total)	7	8	9
1900 Budget authority (total)	20	21	9
1930 Total budgetary resources available	26	25	14
Memorandum (non-add) entries:			
1941 Unexpired unobligated balance, end of year	4	5	5
<b>Change in obligated balance:</b>			
Unpaid obligations:			
3000 Unpaid obligations, brought forward, Oct 1	1	1	2
3010 Obligations incurred, unexpired accounts	22	20	9
3020 Outlays (gross)	-22	-19	-9
3050 Unpaid obligations, end of year	1	2	2
Memorandum (non-add) entries:			
3100 Obligated balance, start of year	1	1	2
3200 Obligated balance, end of year	1	2	2
<b>Budget authority and outlays, net:</b>			
Discretionary:			
4000 Budget authority, gross	13	13	0

<b>Standard Form 300</b>			
<b>DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE FUND</b>			
<b>Program and Financing (in millions of dollars)</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Identification Code 010-18-14-5091</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
Outlays, gross:			
4010 Outlays from new discretionary authority	13	13	0
4070 Budget authority, net (discretionary)	13	13	0
4080 Outlays, net (discretionary)	13	13	0
Mandatory:			
4090 Budget authority, gross	7	8	9
Outlays, gross:			
4100 Outlays from new mandatory authority	1	2	3
4101 Outlays from mandatory balances	8	4	6
4110 Outlays, gross (total)	9	6	9
4160 Budget authority, net (mandatory)	7	8	9
4170 Outlays, net (mandatory)	9	6	9
4180 Budget authority, net (total)	20	21	9
4190 Outlays, net (total)	22	19	9

<b>Object Classification (O)</b>			
Direct obligations:			
11.1 Full-time permanent	1	1	1
41.0 Grants, subsidies, and contributions	20	18	7
99.0 Subtotal, Direct obligations	21	19	8
99.5 Below reporting threshold	1	1	1
99.9 Total new obligations	22	20	9

<b>Employment Summary (Q)</b>			
1001 Direct civilian full-time equivalent employment	8	8	8