



Guide to the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program

Coastal wetlands are vitally important - protecting us from floods, filtering our water, supporting recreation and local economies, and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. Despite their importance, there has been a steady loss of coastal wetlands, nationally.

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program supports long-term wetland conservation by awarding up to \$1 million for wetland conservation projects. Between \$18 million and \$23 million are available for projects annually. Since 1992, the grant program has provided more than \$400 million to restore and protect wetlands and associated habitats.

Established by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act of 1990 (Act), funding for the grant program is provided by the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund from taxes paid on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel.



The grant program is co-administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and Coastal Program.



The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program administers many grant programs that conserve habitats for fish and wildlife and enhance recreational opportunities for people.



The Coastal Program works with coastal communities to protect and restore habitats that are important to them by providing technical and financial assistance.

Find out more about the Coastal Program at <https://bit.ly/3Q0leLf> and the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program at <https://bit.ly/3NuA5MZ>.

Applying for Funding

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants include coastal and Great Lakes states* and the U.S. commonwealths and territories. Tribes, local governments, conservation organizations, and private landowners are encouraged to work with state agencies to develop a project and submit an application.

*With the exception of Louisiana because it has its own grant program under the Act.

How to apply?

Applications from eligible state agencies must be submitted by the deadline specified in the annual Notice of Funding

Opportunity (NOFO). Applications must specifically address the requirements in the NOFO* and the ranking criteria in Title 50 of the Code of Regulations, Part 84.32.

*The NOFO can be found at www.grants.gov under CFDA 15.614

How does cost-sharing work?

States provide 50% of the project cost or 25% if the state has a land conservation program. Match can be provided by the state or partners and may include the value of previously conserved land and in-kind contributions. For American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the first \$200,000 non-federal match is waived.

How are projects selected?

Priority is given to projects that: 1) support the goals of the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan, 2) provide long-term conservation, 3) conserve maritime forest on coastal barrier islands, 4) benefit threatened and endangered species, 5) encourage public-private partnerships, or 6) complement other conservation projects.

Find out more about applying to the grant program at <https://bit.ly/3wLfc9K>.



USFWS

In 2012, two private landowners worked with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Coastal Program to conserve habitat along the Chicamacomico River in Maryland for the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel (picutred). The fox squirrel's recovery was due in large part to conservation efforts by private landowners.

With nearly \$1 million of funding from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, the State of Maryland purchased conservation easements from the landowners that permanently protect more than 440 acres of salt marsh, wetlands, forests, and farmland. The Service removed the fox squirrel from the threatened and endangered species list in December 2015.

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants

Connecting Habitats



The project is also part of a local effort to conserve of Cabin Bluff in Georgia.

Mac Stone

In 2019, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources received \$1 million to conserve nearly 1,900 acres of salt marsh, maritime forest, and adjacent uplands - home to more than 100 rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals - along the lower Satilla River in Georgia.

This is part of a larger effort by the U.S. Department of Defense, Open Space Institute, and The Nature Conservancy to conserve the 120,000 acres of habitat that connects more than 1.7 million acres of conservation lands in Georgia, Florida, and other states, including Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the Altamaha River Corridor, and Osceola National Forest.

Working with Tribes

In 2017, the Washington Department of Ecology and Stillaguamish Tribe were awarded more than \$500,000 to restore tidal flow to 88 acres of marsh in the *zis a ba** estuary in Puget Sound, Washington.

Additional funding and technical assistance for the restoration was provided by a range of partners, including Ducks Unlimited, Skagit River System Cooperative, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and others.

The restoration creates rearing habitat for threatened Stillaguamish and Skagit Chinook salmon - fulfilling nearly 20% of the salmon recovery goal for Stillaguamish River in the *Action Agenda for the Puget Sound*.

The restored marsh provides important habitat for migratory birds, supports cultural traditions, improves water quality, and protects nearby communities, farms, and businesses from flooding.

*Stillaguamish name for the estuary

Supporting Recreation



Conserved habitats along Lake Superior in Michigan.

Neil Harri

In 2015, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and accredited Keweenaw Land Trust received \$1 million to conserve more than 1,370 acres of coastal wetlands and nearly a mile of shoreline along Lake Superior in Michigan.

In addition to protecting some of the most diverse, contiguous, and ecologically significant wetland and forest habitats in the Great Lakes region, this property preserves the rural landscape and quality of life for the local community. The property supports year-round recreation activities, including hiking, fishing, and hunting.



Restoring tidal flow to the *zis a ba* marsh in Washington.

The Nature Conservancy