



News Release

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Deputy Secretary Scarlett Announces Fish and Wildlife Service Grants to Conserve Coastal Wetlands in 14 States

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WASHINGTON - Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett today announced \$18.8 million in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grants to 14 states in a media teleconference. These grants under the National Coastal Wetlands Grant Program will help conserve, restore and protect coastal wetlands.

States receiving funds from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program include Alaska, California, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.. A complete state-by-state list of projects follows.

The grants provide funding for 25 projects and will be supplemented with more than \$54 million from partners including state and local governments, private landowners and conservation groups. The grants are used to acquire, restore or enhance coastal wetlands for long-term conservation benefits to wildlife and habitat.

"This grant program helps protect, restore and enhance estuaries, coastal wetlands, and other coastal habitat through partnerships that are the hallmark of cooperative conservation," Scarlett said. "They help us achieve the on-the-ground conservation along our coasts envisioned in the President's Ocean Action Plan."

FWS Director H. Dale Hall held a simultaneous press conference at the

Field Museum in Chicago with Lt. Governor Pat Quinn of Illinois to highlight a grant to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

"One of this program's many strengths is its support of the states' own coastal conservation priorities," Hall said. "The coastal areas supported by this program represent essential habitat for aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals. Not only will these funds be used to support recovery of imperiled species, they will also help prevent species from becoming threatened by restoring and protecting the coastal areas where they live."

The Fish and Wildlife Service awards the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants to states through a competitive process. The program is funded under provisions of the 1990 Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, with money generated from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels.

Including the 2007 grants, the Service has awarded more than \$182 million to states and insular areas since the program began in 1992; when the 2007 projects are complete, they will have protected, restored or enhanced more than 39,000 acres of coastal habitat. A total of more than 235,000 acres will have been protected or restored since the grant program's inception.

Examples of projects funded by the 2007 grant program include:

- **Guadalupe River Delta Conservation, Texas** - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will use grant funds to acquire approximately 689 acres of coastal habitat of which wetlands comprise 93 percent and which include 4.35 miles of riparian streams. The Guadalupe River Delta is a key breeding, stop-over and wintering habitat for migratory birds, including the last wild population of whooping cranes. Nearly \$400,000 in grant funds will be leveraged with nearly \$200,000 in partner funds.
- **Pee Dee River Conservation Initiative, South Carolina** - The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources will use the grant to purchase a 25,668-acre tract from International Paper Corporation. This acquisition will protect approximately 19,712 acres of wetlands at the confluence of the Great and Little Pee Dee Rivers, including 38 miles of river frontage. This acquisition would benefit four endangered species, 10 state species of concern, and numerous migratory birds and fish. One million in grant funds will be leveraged with an additional \$1 million in partner funds.
- **Afognak Coastal Protection-Portage Drainage, Alaska** - The Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources will acquire 960 acres of wetland, riparian and coastal upland habitat in the Portage Drainage on the north coast of Afognak Island in the Gulf of

Alaska. This acquisition will link with 4,019 acres of protected lands to the east and west and form a continuous corridor of over 100 miles of protected coastline. This area ranked the highest for breeding, nesting, feeding and rearing habitat for an array of wildlife species, including species injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Over \$900,000 in grant funds will be leveraged with more than \$400,000 in partner funds.

- **Mink River Estuary-Rowleys Bay, Wisconsin** - The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources working with The Nature Conservancy will purchase 139 acres of land, which includes 81 acres of wetlands and more than 3,500 feet of shoreline. The purchase will create more than 13 miles of contiguous protected shoreline on the Mink River. This area is considered one of the highest quality freshwater estuaries on the western Great Lakes. One million dollars in grant funds will be leveraged with more than \$1.5 million in partner funds.
- **Ormond Beach Land Acquisition, California** - The California Coastal Conservancy, partnering with groups including California Earth Corps and the California Water Control Board, will acquire a 340-acre agricultural property in Ventura County as the last of four phases of land preservation for wetlands restoration that totals nearly 1,000 acres. The wetland restoration project will significantly expand habitat for four bird species, one fish species, and two plant species that are listed as threatened or endangered. A visitor center and nature center also are planned to provide environmental education programs. One million dollars in grant funds will be leveraged with \$10 million in partner funds to secure the Ormond Beach property for restoration.

For more information, contact the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203, or Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203, or visit the program's home page at <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/CoastalGrants>.

[National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program FY 2007 Funded Projects by State](#)

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