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News Release



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Secretary Salazar Announces More Than \$53 Million in Grants to Support Land Acquisition and Conservation Planning for Endangered Species

Washington to Receive \$4.6 Million

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar today announced more than \$53 million in grants is going to 17 states to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered fish, wildlife and plants.

The grants, awarded through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF), will benefit numerous imperiled species ranging from the Peninsular bighorn sheep to the Karner blue butterfly.

In Washington, state partners will receive over \$4.6 million in grants benefiting dozens of species statewide through planning and conservation acquisitions. Funded projects include:

South Puget Sound Prairie HCP (Thurston County, WA) \$450,000. This project will initiate the development of an HCP to support some of the best remaining habitats and restoration sites in Thurston County. It will identify a set of tools needed to supplement more traditional conservation strategies and achieve the long-term preservation of a network of habitats needed by over 16 species of concern for survival such as the golden paintbrush, water howellia, Mardon skipper, mazama pocket gopher, and Taylor's checkerspot.

Methow Watershed, Phase 8 (Okanogan County, WA) \$3,500,000. The Methow, Phase 8 project will secure 2,700 acres and additional stream frontage protecting spawning and rearing habitat for listed salmonids, landscape corridors for listed carnivores and their mule deer prey, and habitat for at least 23 at-risk species covered by the Plum Creek Habitat Conservation Plan. The Methow River Watershed is perhaps the most intact and ecologically functional major drainage in eastern Washington, supporting a unique and diverse assemblage of fish and wildlife species. Nationally, it is one of the few places where endangered and threatened grizzly bears, gray wolves, lynx, bull trout, and salmon occur together, and it is the home of Washington's first documented wolf pack.

Northern Blue Mountains Bull Trout Recovery (Asotin & Columbia Counties, WA) \$712,650

This project will conserve bull trout habitat through a combination of fee acquisition and conservation easements on at least five key properties totaling 2,872 acres along the northern rim of the Umatilla National Forest in both the Touchet River and Asotin Creek watersheds. These efforts will also protect important winter range for populations of elk and deer in the Blue Mountains of southeast Washington, thereby providing the primary food source for natural re-colonization by gray wolves.

“Our solid partnership with states is clearly a major key to the Interior Department’s success in conserving and recovering threatened and endangered species throughout this country,” Salazar said. “These grant awards will support numerous state efforts aimed at building and strengthening vital conservation partnerships with local groups and private landowners to benefit threatened and endangered wildlife and plants.”

Authorized by Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the competitive grants enable states to work with private landowners, conservation groups and other agencies to initiate cost-effective conservation planning efforts and acquire and protect habitat to support the conservation of threatened and endangered species.

This year, the CESCFC will provide approximately \$10.7 million nationally through the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program, \$28.6 million nationally through the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants Program, and \$14 million nationally through the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program. The three programs were established to help advance creative partnerships for imperiled species conservation recovery.

A complete list of the National 2011 grant awards under these programs (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 15.615) is available online at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html>.

Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) are agreements between a landowner and the Service. These agreements allow a landowner to undertake otherwise lawful activities on their property, even if they may impact listed species, when that landowner agrees to conservation measures designed to minimize and mitigate the impact of those actions. HCPs may also be developed by a county or state to cover certain activities of all landowners within their jurisdiction and may address multiple species.

The HCP Planning Assistance Grants Program provides grants to states and territories to support the development of HCPs through the funding of baseline surveys and inventories, document preparation, outreach, and similar planning activities.

Under the HCP Land Acquisition Grants Program, the Service provides grants to states or territories for land acquisition that complement the conservation objectives of approved HCPs.

The Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program provides funds to states and territories to acquire habitat for endangered and threatened species having approved recovery plans. Habitat acquisition to secure long-term protection is often an essential element of a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species.

The ESA provides a critical safety net for America’s native fish, wildlife, and plants. The Service is working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. To learn more about the Endangered Species Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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