

2015 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program Project Summaries

Pacific Northwest Region

Pua ‘ahala Acquisition

The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources proposes to acquire and permanently protect a 66-acre freshwater pond on Moloka‘i, including the island’s largest freshwater pond. The pond provides habitat for the endangered Hawaiian coot and the Hawaiian stilt, but faces an imminent threat from sedimentation and invasive plants that degrade, fill and eliminate wetland habitat. Restoration will include the removal of invasive plants encroaching on the pond and removal of a large accumulation of sediment that has displaced a portion of the pond. This project is a crucial part of a larger plan to protect the Pua‘ahala watershed as a new state wildlife sanctuary extending from the mountains to the coral reefs.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Hawaii	\$1,000,000	\$474,000		\$1,474,000

Beltz Farm Acquisition Project

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) proposes to acquire and permanently protect 244 acres of coastal estuarine habitat within the Sand Lake estuary in Tillamook County, Oregon. The Beltz Farm parcels include 144 acres of coastal estuary and freshwater wetlands, 35 acres of coastal dune habitat, 1.25 miles of ocean shore, and 65 acres of forest and upland scrub habitats. Two creeks on the property provide 1.5 miles of spawning and rearing habitat and connect to an additional 1.8 miles of habitat upstream. The project site supports over 100 bird species, amphibians, and fish. Beltz Farm has long been a priority for conservation by the local community, conservationists, and state agencies due to the diversity of coastal habitats, the pristine condition of the estuary, and its importance to listed and sensitive species. The property will be managed by OPRD as a state natural area.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Oregon	\$970,500	\$796,000		\$1,766,500

China Camp Creek Project

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board proposes to replace and upgrade the tide gate infrastructure that influences 1,700 acres of Coquille River floodplain. While multiple stakeholder goals will be met by implementing this project, improving habitat for Oregon Coast coho salmon is its focus. The upgrade will significantly improve river-floodplain connectivity and enhance critical overwintering habitat for coho parr and smolts seeking off-channel refugia and migration and wintering habitat for numerous species of waterfowl and shorebirds. This project is the second phase of a larger initiative to conserve and restore estuarine wetlands along the lower Coquille River, which are some of the most productive wetland habitats on the Oregon Coast.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Oregon	\$1,000,000	\$510,000		\$1,510,000

Kilchis Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Project

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, partnering with The Nature Conservancy, proposes to acquire 61 acres of nationally decreasing wetlands adjacent to an existing wildlife preserve in the Kilchis River Basin in Tillamook County, Oregon. This project will permanently protect estuarine wetlands,

improve riverine and tidal channel connectivity, reduce invasive species cover, and plant native woody vegetation. The Kilchis River wetlands support a wide variety of plants and wildlife, including federally threatened coho, Chinook, chum, steelhead and cutthroat trout. This high-visibility project represents the best opportunity to protect and enhance tidal wetlands in the Kilchis Basin, while also providing public education and monitoring opportunities.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Oregon	\$1,000,000	\$470,500		\$1,470,500

Scholfield Creek Tidal Wetlands Conservation Project

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board proposes to acquire and enhance 172 acres of intact tidal wetlands and 69 upland acres in the Umpqua River Estuary. The sites are located in the Scholfield Creek watershed near Reedsport, Oregon. The goal of this project is to protect and enhance one of the most high-functioning reaches of tidally-influenced stream remaining in the Umpqua Estuary, with an emphasis on retaining and improving nursery habitat conditions for native salmonids and protection of habitat for avian species. Improvements will include the introduction of several hundred Sitka spruce logs to increase the complexity and biological productivity of the wetland sites. This project is the culmination of three years of project development work of a diverse group of partners, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Oregon	\$630,577	\$312,652		\$943,229

Fir Island Farm Estuary Project

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) proposes to restore 126 acres of estuarine intertidal emergent marsh and 5 acres of estuarine intertidal channel in the Skagit River Delta. The project is located in Skagit County, Washington, and is sited on WDFW’s 258-acre Fir Island, which is located in the Skagit River in Skagit County, Washington. In addition to restoring tidal influence, 17 acres of channel habitat will be created as a result of this project. The Skagit River Delta is a critical over-wintering and stopping area for shore birds and waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway and is considered a conservation priority in Puget Sound. The project will also provide major benefits for threatened Puget Sound Chinook salmon by providing juvenile rearing habitat. A major project design consideration is the protection of adjacent farmlands from the effects of restoring tidal influence on the WDFW preserve.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Washington	\$1,000,000	\$15,000,000		\$16,000,000

Kilisut Harbor Restoration Project

The Washington Department of Ecology, partnering with the North Olympic Salmon Coalition, proposes to restore the tidal connection between southern Kilisut Harbor and Oak Bay by removing an earthen causeway and constructing a bridge that will allow for tidal exchange. This project will restore tidal hydrology and sediment processes to 27 acres of marine intertidal wetlands and tidal fringe salt marsh, including creation of four acres of wetlands that were filled by the loss of the tidal exchange. This project will directly benefit five federally listed salmonids and numerous bird species. Kilisut Harbor is part of Puget Sound’s large, complex system of estuaries and salt marshes that support tremendous biological productivity and diversity. By restoring natural tidal flows at one end of the bay, the project

will improve water circulation throughout the 2,285 acre bay and provide significant benefits to fish, shellfish and migratory birds.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Washington	\$1,000,000	\$586,714		\$1,586,714

Long Beach Peninsula Wetlands Conservation Project

The Washington Department of Ecology, partnering with the Columbia Land Trust, proposes to acquire and protect 400 acres of declining coastal wetlands, riparian areas and conifer forest on the Long Beach Peninsula between the Pacific Ocean and Willapa Bay, in addition to wetlands in the Chinook River estuary in southwest Washington. The project will conserve seven different properties that are largely composed of inter-dunal freshwater wetlands, open water, emergent, scrub-shrub and sitka spruce forested wetlands, and a significant amount of frontage on the Pacific Ocean and the Chinook River. The properties lie adjacent to over 44,000 acres of federal, state and private conserved lands, including Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The conservation lands are highly interconnected and host numerous federal and state listed species, and other rare wildlife and plant species.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Washington	\$914,375	\$415,625		\$1,330,000

Tarboo-Dabob Bay Acquisition and Restoration – Phase 5

The Washington Department of Ecology, partnering with the Northwest Watershed Institute, proposes to acquire and restore three properties totaling 31 acres of estuarine intertidal wetlands, beach, and steep, forested feeder bluffs along Tarboo-Dabob Bay. The project would also restore high priority shoreline, streams and wetlands on two properties acquired by removing a 400-foot-long shoreline bulkhead, re-meandering a channelized stream, and re-contouring and re-vegetating six acres of adjacent wetland and stream valley. The project would protect the most threatened and biologically significant private land parcels within the boundaries of the 6,284-acre Dabob Bay Natural Area protect high-value habitat for five salmonids, forage fish species, numerous shorebird, waterfowl, and land bird species.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Washington	\$1,000,000	\$500,000		\$1,500,000

Waterman Coastal Wetlands

The Washington Department of Ecology , partnering with the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, proposes to acquire and protect 59 acres of estuarine intertidal and upland habitat on the southeast side of Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. The property includes 2,813 feet of feeder bluff along Possession Sound and coastal upland forest. Feeder bluffs are critical sources of sediment to the littoral system, and beaches and intertidal wetlands. They are also valuable ecosystems in their own right. The project will remove a 434-foot creosote timbered bulkhead at the base of the bluff that is cutting off the sediment supply from the bluff to the beach and leaching creosote into the environment. The intertidal wetlands have shellfish beds and an abundance of eelgrass beds, which provide spawning substrate for herring and sand lance and feeding areas for waterbirds.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Washington	\$1,000,000	\$550,000		\$1,550,000

Great Lakes Region

Point Abbaye and Huron Bay Coastal Wetlands Acquisition

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Keweenaw Land Trust propose to acquire four privately owned parcels of high quality, intact coastal wetlands and near shore aquatic habitats on the Abbaye Peninsula and Huron Bay of Lake Superior in Baraga County, Michigan. The parcels total 1,374 acres and include nearly a mile of Lake Superior shoreline. The Lake Superior basin in northern Michigan has some of the most diverse, intact and ecologically significant habitats remaining in the Great Lakes region. The Keweenaw and Abbaye Peninsulas are major migratory bird corridors, especially notable for raptors and waterfowl. The project area's large, contiguously forested wetland and riparian habitats support wide ranging mammals such as gray wolves, black bear, and bobcat, in addition to large diversity of bird species. Once the parcels are acquired, they will be managed by Keweenaw Land Trust.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Michigan	\$1,000,000	\$1,459,280		\$2,459,280

Southeast Region

Apalachicola Bay/StGeorge Sound Conservation

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Coastal Office partnering with Franklin County Board of Commissioners and the Trust for Public Land proposes to acquire, restore, conserve seven acres of impacted maritime hammock, and nationally-significant declining freshwater wetlands along with near shore high marsh and adjacent sea grass beds. This project will restore the rare maritime forest coastal high marsh and preserve existing near-shore sea grasses suitable for numerous federally endangered and threatened species and designated habitat. Successful completion of this project will prevent further loss and restore these critical habitats, while furthering efforts to establish a contiguous protected buffer along Apalachicola Bay.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Florida	\$778,110	\$273,390		\$1,051,500

Altama Plantation Acquisition - Phase 2

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) proposes to acquire and protect in perpetuity approximately 2,370 acres of the Altama Plantation. The area is made up of tidal wetlands, inland maritime forests and adjacent uplands in the Lower Altamaha River watershed. The lower Altamaha River watershed is designated as one of the "Last Great Places" by The Nature Conservancy and is a top State Wildlife Action Plan priority. It boasts the highest documented number of rare plants, animals and natural community occurrences in Georgia. This project is part of a larger initiative by GADNR, the Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Forest Service and others to conserve priority habitat in the lower Altamaha River system. All of the project partners are also members of the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Georgia	\$1,000,000	\$189,000	\$1,059,000	\$2,240,800

Musgrove Plantation Acquisition – Phase 1

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources proposes to help acquire and protect in perpetuity approximately 57 acres of diverse habitat known as the Musgrove Plantation. The parcel contains 20.9 acres of nationally declining wetlands, 1.7 acres of stable creek on a barrier island. The area is made up of saltmarsh, tidal creeks, forested wetlands, maritime forests and pine/oak woodlands on St. Simons Island in the Altamaha Estuary. The grant proposal is the first of four phases to acquire 480 acres. Conserving the Musgrove Plantation is a high priority of the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the State Wildlife Action Plan. The lower Altamaha River watershed is also designated as one of the 75 “Last Great Places” by The Nature Conservancy because of the biologically diverse ecosystems it supports.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Georgia	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000		\$3,000,000

Baxter Tract

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) proposes to acquire and protect in perpetuity 454.7 acres of forested wetland with a mile of shoreline located in the Black Swamp of coastal Jasper County. The site boasts a high diversity of priority animal and plant species in South Carolina’s Wildlife Action Plan, most notably the federally listed swallow-tailed kite, wood stork, Atlantic sturgeon, shortnose sturgeon, and Kirtland’s warbler. The Baxter Tract is part of a corridor of conservation lands that spans the length of the Savannah River and protects upstream waters that flow south through the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge along the coast. SCDNR will manage the site as a Wildlife Management Area and it will provide outdoor recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, bird watching and hiking.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
South Carolina	\$850,669	\$283,556		\$1,134,225

Northeast Region

Thousand Acre Marsh Wetland Protection Project – Bennett Farm

The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) propose to acquire the 140-acre Bennett Farm in New Castle County, Delaware. The acquisition, combined with the matching Faella Tract, will permanently protect 85.3 acres of nationally declining wetland habitat. It will result in water quality improvements on 150 acres of wetland-associated upland buffers, and reduce the threats from residential development and agricultural production. The project will also increase breeding, foraging, stopover, and wintering habitat for migratory birds. The project area will be managed by DFW as part of the 3,130-acre Augustine Wildlife Area. The Delaware Bay Estuary is designated as a Continentally Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and a Globally Important Bird Area by American Bird Conservancy.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Delaware	\$731,399	\$656,760		\$1,388,159

Little Yarmouth Island Project

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife proposes to acquire and permanently protect 13.2 acres on the southern half of Little Yarmouth Island in eastern Casco Bay. The project would also protect 7,022 feet of shorefront and 27.6 acres of associated coastal and freshwater wetlands. All of the

wetlands are designated Wetlands of Special Significance by the State of Maine and the project’s estuarine emergent wetlands and marine unconsolidated wetlands are mapped as Significant Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat. This project will benefit numerous waterbirds, shorebirds and wading birds, including 43 of 91 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service priority trust species and several threatened and endangered species. The Maine Department of Natural Resources has identified the project area’s intertidal mudflats as a high value shellfish growing area for clams and oysters.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Maine	\$220,000	\$100,000		\$320,000

Weskeag River Wetlands Conservation Project

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) proposes to acquire four properties, totaling 238 acres. Ninety-four of the acres are wetlands and approximately 34 acres are intertidal mudflats, which is Maine’s most important shorebird stopover habitat. The project will protect approximately 60 acres of nationally decreasing coastal wetland types, more than a mile of tributary streams, and two miles of undeveloped tidal shoreline. The Weskeag River currently supports some of the highest diversity of species of any marsh in mid-coast Maine and the Penobscot Bay region. In 2008, MDIFW has identified the Weskeag River as a Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance in Maine’s Wildlife Action Plan. The parcels will be added to MDIFW’s R Waldo Tyler Wildlife Management Area in South Thomaston and managed by MDIFW.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Maine	\$450,000	\$465,000		\$915,000

Tidmarsh Farms Restoration Project

The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game proposes to restore 250 acres of recently retired cranberry bogs and supporting lands in southeastern Massachusetts. The site consists of 202 acres of stable and declining wetland types and 48 acres of upland grassland and forest. The project will restore former commercial cranberry bogs to wetlands by removing dams, water control structures and 45,700 cubic yards of sediment, and installing a culvert to reconnect the hydrology in the Beaver Dam Brook watershed. The project will be the largest freshwater wetlands restoration effort to date in Massachusetts and includes a cutting edge, long-term monitoring component. Although the project site is privately owned, NRCS holds a conservation easement on 192 acres and Mass Audubon is in the process of acquiring the site. Once the site is acquired, it will be managed a wildlife sanctuary.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Massachusetts	\$790,290	\$372,950		\$1,163,240

Padgett’s Creek Project

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), with the assistance of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, proposes to acquire several individual parcels of land owned by one landowner in Cumberland County, New Jersey, totaling 695.8 acres. The wetlands in Padgett’s Creek are an important migratory stopover for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds, neotropical and other long distance passerines, American woodcock, red knot, bald eagle and other raptors. NJDEP has designated the entire Delaware Bay area as an exceptional resource value, and the Padgett Creek wetlands are identified in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, “Delaware Bayshores Focus Area.” Padgett’s Creek is within 20 miles of three national wildlife refuges. The properties will be incorporated

into the 1,298 acre Fortescue Wildlife Management Area and managed by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
New Jersey	\$900,000	\$500,000		\$1,400,000

Ware Creek Wildlife Management Area Creation

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries proposes to acquire and permanently protect the 1,062-acre Ware Creek Preserve, LLC property in New Kent County, Virginia. This project will protect substantial acreages and a vast wetland complex in an area of the Commonwealth that is experiencing rapid growth and development. Coupled with adjoining conserved lands, this project has the potential to create a matrix of 2,683 acres of contiguous protected land. The acquisition property has over five miles of creek frontage overlooking Ware Creek, and substantial wetland values. The project site has a large brackish water marsh system. These wetlands serve as important stopover, foraging and breeding habitat for fish and birds, threatened and endangered species and other wildlife.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Virginia	\$1,000,000	\$415,083		\$1,415,083

York River Preserve Wildlife Management Area Creation

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries proposes to permanently protect the 1,621-acre York River Preserve in New Kent County, Virginia. The acquisition property has over three miles of river and creek frontage overlooking the York River, Philbates Creek and Ware Creek, and substantial wetland values. Once protected, this parcel will be managed as a new state Wildlife Management Area, which will protect significant nesting, staging and wintering habitat for migratory birds, important nursery habitat for fish, and habitat for threatened and endangered species. Together with adjoining conserved lands, this project has the potential to create a 2,683-acre contiguous wildlife preserve. This acquisition will also remove habitat threats, including residential development, farming, and unsustainable forestry.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Virginia	\$1,000,000	\$415,083		\$1,415,083

Pacific Southwest Region

Cullinan Ranch Restoration Project – Phase 2

The California Wildlife Conservation Board, partnering with Ducks Unlimited, proposes to enhance 10 acres of upland transition habitat through a native revegetation program, implement an early detection rapid response protocol for invasive species, and improve the hydrology and overall habitat quality of 1,314 acres of tidal estuarine marsh. Cullinan Ranch is owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and managed as part of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. It was originally acquired as critical habitat for the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse and the California clapper rail, which are covered under a joint recovery plan. This project will complete the constructed phase of the project and deal with the invasive species that have colonized the wetland edge during the restoration process.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
California	\$399,000	\$301,086		\$700,086

Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, partnering with the Elkhorn Slough Foundation and Elkhorn Slough National Estuary Research Reserve, propose to restore 61 acres of tidal wetlands and to establish perennial grassland on five acres adjacent to the restored tidal wetlands. The proposed project is the second phase of a larger project to restore 100 acres of tidal marsh in Elkhorn Slough and the adjoining 35 acres of existing buffer areas to perennial grassland. Elkhorn Slough estuary in Monterey Bay supports the largest saltmarsh on the west coast south of San Francisco Bay. This project will increase the extent of the tidal marsh by 8-10 percent, reduce tidal scour, increase coastal resilience to climate change impacts, and protect and improve water quality. Wildlife habitats in Elkhorn Slough provide a rich ecosystem that supports over 340 bird, 550 marine invertebrate, and 102 fish species.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
California	\$1,000,000	\$4,283,759		\$5,283,759

Wood Creek Restoration Project

The California Coastal Conservancy, partnering with the North Country Land Trust, proposes to restore the coastal wetland ecosystems of the Freshwater Creek Slough, and particularly the important tributary stream known as Wood Creek. The project will involve excavating two acres of channels and removing a berm in order to provide better hydraulic connectivity between Wood Creek and its upper basin. The project would also create five acres of brackish wetland habitat for coho salmon. These wetlands will serve as protected resting places for shorebirds during high-tides at nearby Humboldt Bay. Small patches of reed canary grass will be eradicated and approximately 2.5 acres will be planted with a diversity of native species to provide food and cover for a variety of birds and other wildlife species. The project will also provide opportunities for conservation education and recreation.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
California	\$423,800	\$299,300	\$	\$723,100