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# News Release



July 14, 2003

03-XXX

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## **GRANTS IN PACIFIC REGION SUPPORT LAND ACQUISITION, CONSERVATION PLANNING FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Approximately \$40 million in grants will be distributed to six states in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Region to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered fish, wildlife, and plant species.

The grants were announced today by Interior Secretary Gale Norton, and were awarded in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada and Hawaii under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act. They include \$5 million for Recovery Land Acquisition, \$30 million for Habitat Conservation Planning (HCP) Land Acquisition, and \$4.5 million in HCP Planning Assistance. The grants will enable States, working in partnership with private landowners, conservation groups and other agencies and organizations, to initiate conservation planning efforts, and to acquire and protect habitat to support the conservation of threatened and endangered species.

"Today's grant awards recognize the important work that States and their partners are doing to conserve and recover threatened and endangered species," Secretary Norton said. "Grants are an important tool in our efforts to empower local governments and citizens as they seek to develop voluntary conservation partnerships that provide real benefits to listed species."

Nationally, the Section 6 grant program awarded a total of more than \$70 million to 29 states, including \$6.6 million in HCP Planning Assistance, \$51 million in HCP Land Acquisition, and \$12 million in Recovery Land Acquisition.

"As someone who has worked for decades at the State and local level on behalf of wildlife conservation, I know these grants really help," said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams. "They provide not only a financial boost to grantees but also provide encouragement by supporting on-the-ground efforts."

"The Pacific Region has the highest number of endangered species in the nation," said Dave Allen, Regional

Director of the Pacific Region. “These three grant programs will help reduce potential conflicts between the conservation of threatened and endangered species and land development and use.”

Under the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Program, the Service provides grants to States or Territories for land acquisitions associated with approved Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs). Grants do not fund any mitigation required of an HCP permittee, but are instead intended to support acquisitions by states or local governments that complement actions associated with the HCP.

A Habitat Conservation Plan is an agreement between a landowner and the Service that allows the landowner to incidentally take a threatened or endangered species in the course of otherwise lawful activities when the landowner agrees to conservation measures that will minimize and mitigate the impact of the taking. A Habitat Conservation Plan may also be developed by a county or state to cover certain activities of all landowners within their jurisdiction and may address multiple species. There are more than 330 Habitat Conservation Plans currently in effect covering approximately 30 million acres, and some 320 more are being developed.

The Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Program provides grants to States and Territories to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans, through funding of baseline surveys and inventories, document preparation, outreach, and similar planning activities.

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

For more information on the 2003 grant awards for these programs nationwide see the Service’s Endangered Species home page at <http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/index.html>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

### **Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants by State:**

#### **California**

- Assessment District AD 161 HCP (Riverside County, CA)** - A \$6,250,000 grant award will enable the acquisition of properties in North Warm Springs Creek, the Santa Margarita Watershed, and Ramsgate area of Riverside County. The acquisition will benefit wildlife populations by conserving habitat in large, interconnected blocks. In addition to providing core habitat areas for the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), both of these areas support more than 100 Federal and State listed species proposed to be covered under the Plan. These species include the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, endangered least Bell's vireo and Stephen's kangaroo rat. The plant communities found in the area, including sage scrub and riparian habitat, are representative of the original, native habitats of the region. The public benefits of maintaining these areas as open space, include the use for various recreational purposes such as hiking and mountain biking.
- Colton Substation HCP (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, CA)** - A \$2,156,675 grant will enable the acquisition and protection of portions of the Colton Dune ecosystem, unique to this region of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Approximately two percent of the Colton Dune ecosystem still exists. The acquisition will permanently conserve habitat occupied by a suite of federally and State listed species endemic to the area, including the federally endangered Delhi Sands flower-loving fly, threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, Los Angeles pocket mouse, and western burrowing owl. These lands are critical for the survival and recovery of the Delhi Sands flower-loving fly and the many other species that occur within this ecosystem.
- Echilet Ranch, San Joaquin MSCP (San Joaquin County, CA)** - A \$3 million grant award will be used to acquire this property in order to protect one of the two last remaining natural habitats of the federally listed large flowered fiddleneck in partnership with the San Joaquin County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan. This property acquisition will significantly reduce the possibility that this species will become extinct, while also supporting the recovery of State and federally listed species such as the San Joaquin kit fox and California red-legged frog.
- San Mateo, Ohlone Shell Mound Site, San Bruno Mountain HCP (San Mateo County, CA)** - An \$860,000 grant award will be used for the acquisition of the Preservation Parcel on San Bruno Mountain to protect 26 acres of high-value endangered species habitat and an ancient cultural site in perpetuity. The Preservation Parcel contains habitat for the federally endangered Callippe silverspot butterfly, a butterfly restricted in range to San Bruno Mountain. The site also offers the potential to be a recovery site for two additional butterfly species. The acquisition of the Preservation Parcel will compliment the San Bruno Mountain HCP and assist in the conservation of the endangered butterflies and native ecosystems.
- Sloan Canyon - San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (San Diego County, CA)** - A \$4,875,000 grant will enable project partners to acquire important habitat along the Sweetwater River in Sloan Canyon downstream from Loveland Reservoir. The San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) identifies this property, which includes 17 parcels totaling approximately 876 acres, as linking habitat for numerous threatened and endangered species covered by the plan, while

simultaneously providing core areas for several sensitive biological resources. The parcels are known to support several pairs of threatened California gnatcatchers and a significant population of endangered arroyo toads. While located within the County of San Diego's MSCP sub-area plan, the property has an approved permit for a sand mine that predates development of the MSCP. Acquisition of this property will greatly enhance the County's preserve, while preventing development of the sand mine and eliminating the threat it poses to an area that supports approximately 30 of the 85 species covered by the

## **Washington**

- **Cedar River Watershed HCP (King County, WA)** - A \$1.5 million grant will ensure the protection of 300 acres of riparian habitat along a corridor on the Cedar River, near the city of Seattle. Acquisition of numerous parcels from willing sellers will extend conservation benefits from the protected upper watershed, which supplies Seattle's drinking water, down through the lower third of the watershed, where development pressure intensifies. Salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout and bald eagles, as well as other resident wildlife will benefit from the acquisition of these habitats, which represent the best of what remains in the rapidly-urbanizing lower Cedar River watershed. Partners include King County, Seattle Public Utilities, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- **Washington Department of Natural Resources HCP (Washington State)** - A \$9,959,400 grant will help the Washington Department of Natural Resources and other partners acquire more than 3,400 acres of mature conifer forest on the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas, providing benefits to many fish and wildlife species. Northern spotted owls, marbled murrelets, bald eagles, bull trout, and salmon all use the lands to be acquired. Protection of these lands for conservation will provide linkages between high quality habitats, protect nesting murrelets and owls, and expand protection from already-conserved areas.
- **Yakima River Wildlife Corridor - Phase II (Kittitas County, WA)** - A \$1,849,720 grant will be used by a partnership including the Cascades Conservation Partnership, the Trust for Public Lands, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to acquire and protect more than 1140 acres of mature riparian and conifer forests in the Cascade Mountain Range, along Snoqualmie Pass. Habitat acquisition achieved by this project will help ensure the protection of habitats necessary for wildlife movement across Interstate 90.

## **Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants by State:**

### **California**

- **East Contra Costa HCP (Contra Costa County, CA)** - A \$100,000 grant will enable project partners to develop an HCP to benefit the endangered San Joaquin kit fox, threatened California red-legged frog, and many other declining species found in the area. Their survival in this rapidly developing area depends upon the protection of large blocks of contiguous habitat. This HCP provides the opportunity to plan urban development in such a manner as to provide habitat for sensitive species and open space for residents.
- **Kern County Valley Floor HCP (Kern County, CA)** - A \$90,000 grant will be used by this partnership to develop the Kern Valley Floor HCP, which proposes to include approximately 1.9 million acres on the San Joaquin Valley floor. Among the 28 covered species are several protected by the Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act, including the San Joaquin kit fox, two kangaroo rat species, Bakersfield cactus, and Kern mallow. As planned, the HCP should allow most urban development activities, normal oil and gas exploration and development activities to occur. Using weighted habitat values will encourage potential development within low value habitat while mitigating impacts on high value habitat. Habitat credits based on habitat value are created by willing participants, who may then sell those credits to project proponents seeking mitigation credits.
- **Placer County HCP / NCCP (Placer County, CA)** - A \$100,000 grant will support a large regional planning effort to conserve habitat for 35 listed and unlisted animals and plants and their ecosystems within one of the fastest growing Counties in California. Species likely to benefit from this project include the Lahontan cutthroat trout, foothill yellow-legged frog, and Pacific fisher. The area is currently experiencing intense development pressure and this grant will enable the County to gather the land cover and habitat inventory information, an essential and fundamental step in the next phase of the HCP/NCCP planning process. Entire interrelated natural communities will be protected, which will ensure the viability of populations for a wide range of plants and animals.
- **Sandhills Regional HCP (Santa Cruz County, CA)** - A \$100,000 grant will provide funding to the County of Santa Cruz and City of Scotts Valley to complete Phase 2 of the development of the Sandhills Regional HCP in Santa Cruz County, California. The project will result in the development of a conservation strategy for the Sandhills ecosystem to benefit numerous Federal and State-listed species, including the Mount Hermon June beetle, Zayante band-winged grasshopper, Ben Lomond spineflower and Ben Lomond wallflower. The HCP will identify ways to conserve Sandhills habitat for listed species in perpetuity as well as sites for mitigating impacts from development. In addition, the HCP will outline the development of a program for monitoring and managing listed species in the area, and institute a streamlined and more cost-effective permitting process for development projects proposed by landowners.
- **Santa Clara County HCP/NCCP (Santa Clara County, CA)** - A \$300,000 grant will enable Santa Clara County to initiate a countywide HCP/NCCP. The first phase of the project is being undertaken in partnership with the City of San Jose, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, with potential involvement from other cities in the southern portion of the county.

Santa Clara County has experienced enormous population growth over the past 50 years and is continuing to experience growth pressures which pose a threat to more than 100 endangered, threatened, and other rare species. The HCP/NCCP will provide a comprehensive approach to conservation and management of multiple species across the 841,000-acre county, including preservation of much of the remaining habitat for several federally listed species, establishment of habitat preserves, habitat restoration, and streamlined regulatory permitting processes.

- **Shasta Plains HCP/NCCP (Shasta County, CA)** - A \$200,000 grant award will support the development of an HCP to cover approximately 250 square miles in southern-central Shasta County. Vernal pools in the Shasta plains region provide valuable habitat for a host of rare and sensitive vernal pool species, including several federally listed species. Many of the remaining vernal pools occur on privately owned lands and are vulnerable to loss and degradation. This HCP will protect the vernal pools, riparian habitat and stream corridors, and oak woodlands, while providing the development community with a streamlined permitting process.
- **Solano HCP/NCCP (Solano and Yolo Counties, CA)** - A \$100,000 grant, will help in the development of the Solano HCP/NCCP, which proposes to cover approximately 900 square miles, including all of Solano County and a small portion of Yolo County. The HCP/NCCP proposes to cover a minimum of 36 species, 17 of which are federally threatened or endangered. Vernal pool, grassland, riparian, and marsh habitats comprise a large portion of the planning area which is under intense development pressure. This HCP/NCCP will protect existing habitat, restore degraded habitats, and contribute to responsible planning for the expected and mandated growth of four major cities within Solano County.
- **South Sacramento HCP (Sacramento County, CA)** - A \$200,000 grant will benefit up to 51 species, including seven federally threatened and endangered species, within an area of approximately 490 square miles. The development community and environmental groups are actively involved in this planning effort that will streamline the regulatory process and provide benefits to a wide variety of biological resources including two species of orcutt grass that are restricted to Sacramento County.
- **West Mojave Plan HCP (San Bernardino, Kern, Los Angeles, and Inyo Counties, CA)** - A \$300,000 grant will provide funding to assist the development of an HCP associated with the 9.4 million-acre West Mojave Plan, in San Bernardino, Kern, Los Angeles and Inyo Counties. The Service is consulting with the Bureau of Land Management to minimize impacts to listed species on Bureau of Land Management lands in the western Mojave Desert of California, while developing an HCP to cover non-Federal lands in that area.. Funding will help project partners finalize conservation strategies for protecting listed species, enabling them to delineate boundaries for desert wildlife management areas, develop protection strategies for species in these areas, and implement the final management plan. Development of the West Mojave Plan and its associated HCP will benefit numerous local agencies and private landowners in the western Mojave Desert by promoting a streamlined permitting process. The funding would also benefit the State and federally threatened desert tortoise, the State threatened Mojave ground squirrel, and approximately 50 additional covered species, as well as the ecosystem upon which many other non-listed species

depend.

- **Yuba-Sutter HCP (Yuba and Sutter Counties, CA)** - A \$200,000 grant will help project partners develop an HCP to protect vernal pool plants and animals currently listed as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act, as well as other sensitive species in this area. Yuba and Sutter counties are currently undergoing development pressure as Sacramento County becomes more populated. The primarily agricultural landscape of Yuba and Sutter Counties is attractive to both developers and home buyers, and development of an HCP will also help maintain agricultural activities such as grazing that are beneficial to several sensitive species.

## Hawaii

- **Coordination and Planning of a Programmatic Habitat Conservation Plan for Endangered and Threatened Seabirds on Kauai. (Kauai County)** - A \$148,989 grant will fund a 2-year coordinator position in the Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife to facilitate development of a programmatic HCP to minimize, mitigate, and monitor the effects of urbanization on two listed seabird species on the island of Kauai, Hawaii. HCP mitigation measures will call for protection of seabird nesting colonies by controlling non-native mammalian predators, and will also benefit one candidate species, several non-listed bird species and up to 18 species of endangered plants. The programmatic HCP will provide regulatory certainty for diverse economic interests, contribute to the recovery of two imperiled seabird species, and increase public awareness of the community's responsibility to preserve native Hawaiian species and ecosystems.

## Idaho

- **Greater Priest Lake Multi Species HCP (Bonner and Boundary counties, ID)** - A \$563,000 grant will assist the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as they work with other stakeholders to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan to minimize the impact of any IDL activity in northern Idaho on listed species. The HCP will provide conservation benefits to listed threatened and endangered species, including grizzly bear, bull trout, lynx, and the critically endangered woodland caribou, while providing the State of Idaho with assurances of immunity for any "take" of these species that might occur incidentally to its lawful activities. Both Idaho and the species will benefit from this HCP. The IDL will be able to fulfill its mandate to maximize the long term return from these endowment lands to the beneficiaries without fear of violating the Endangered Species Act, and the conservation of listed species will be enhanced.

## Oregon

- **Agate Desert Multi-species Vernal Pool HCP/WCP (Jackson County, OR)** - A \$143,000 grant will

be used to develop an HCP, coordinated with a State Wetland Conservation Plan, for the vernal pool wetlands in the urban core of the Agate Desert north of Medford, Oregon, in and around the unincorporated town of White City. These plans would provide the framework for the coordinated conservation of three federally listed species (threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp and two endangered plants associated with vernal pools) and a host of other rare species associated with the unique vernal pools. Coordinated planning will reduce degradation and loss of this unique habitat.

- **HCP/EIS for Western Snowy Plover in Oregon (Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, Lane, Douglas, Coos, and Curry counties, OR)** - A \$200,000 grant will help the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department develop an HCP/EIS that not only provides for the conservation of the western snowy plover, but also takes into account the importance of some 230 miles of sandy ocean beaches for human recreation. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has jurisdiction over most coastal beaches, including much of the critical habitat essential for the conservation and recovery of the species.

## Washington

- **Broughton Land Company Native Fish HCP (Columbia County, WA)** - A \$24,200 grant will be used to help finalize the development of an HCP covering more than 38,000 acres of farm, forest, and range lands in eastern Washington state. These privately owned lands contain several miles of streams supporting bull trout, steelhead, and chinook salmon. HCP conservation measures will improve stream and riparian conditions.
- **Dungeness CIDMP/HCP (Clallam and Jefferson counties, WA)** - A \$70,000 grant will help project partners develop an HCP associated with a pilot Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan (CIDMP). Together, the CIDMP and the HCP will provide conservation benefits for federally listed fish while meeting the long-term water needs of irrigation districts. Significant aquatic habitat improvements would be realized through improvements to irrigation infrastructure, operations, and maintenance, which would result in increased stream flows.
- **Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan for Lewis County (Lewis County, WA)** - A \$389,259 grant will fund development of an HCP providing a programmatic, multi-landowner approach for small family forests seeking management flexibility and an alternative from state forest practices rules. The HCP is expected to provide equal or better conservation than current state forest practice rules, and cover private lands in Lewis County.
- **Washington Forests and Fish HCP (Statewide)** - A \$1,127,047 grant will be used to complete the HCP planning process. This HCP would result in obtaining federal assurances for Washington State's forest practices rules. Conservation benefits are expected for aquatic and riparian species on 10.3 million acres of non-federal forest lands.

- **Washington State Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance (Statewide)** - A \$121,304 grant, will support an HCP planning effort, funded in part by activities undertaken in both fresh and saltwater areas regulated and leased by Washington State's Department of Natural Resources, covering more than 2.4 million acres in 39 counties. The HCP has the potential to complement riparian and aquatic protection provided by state forest practices rules, and to ensure environmental protection while encouraging direct public use and access of aquatic lands.

### Recovery Land Acquisition Grants by State:

#### California

- **Buena Vista Property (Santa Cruz County)** - A \$540,215 grant will help project partners, including the Service, California Department of Fish and Game and the Trust for Public Lands, acquire and protect 187 acres in Santa Cruz County. The acquisition will protect one of only eleven breeding ponds of the long-toed salamander and help connect habitat that supports another population at the nearby Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge and Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander State Ecological Reserve. It also provides habitat for one of the larger of only seven populations of the robust spineflower, and for the California tiger salamander, a candidate species.
- **Colton Dune Ecosystem (San Bernardino County)** - A \$500,000 grant will help fund the acquisition of between five and 15 acres intended to protect portions of the Colton Dune ecosystem and prevent extinction of the Delhi Sand flower-loving fly, which is declining due to widespread habitat loss and degradation. Acquisition will also protect several other federally and State listed species native to this area, including coastal California gnatcatcher, Los Angeles pocket mouse and western burrowing owl. Partners include California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Transportation, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, local jurisdictions, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Federal Highway Administration.
- **Kanaka III/Gabbro Soil Plant Habitat (El Dorado County)** - A \$465,000 grant will enable project partners acquire 247 acres in the central Sierra Nevada foothills of California. The acquisition falls within the approximately 5,000-acre conceptual boundary of the Pine Hill Preserve and will help prevent many endangered and threatened plant species from declining irreversibly due to the conversion of habitat to urban uses. The remaining natural communities are highly fragmented and depend on marginal habitat. Partners include the Service, California Department of Fish and Game, American Rivers Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management and El Dorado County.
- **La Sierra Canyon, Santa Monica Mountains (Los Angeles County)**- A \$450,000 grant will enable the Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the Mountains Restoration Trust to acquire 91 acres in the Santa Monica Mountains. This biologically diverse, prime land provides habitat for important plants including the endangered Lyon's pentachaeta and threatened marcescent dudleya, as

well as four State listed birds. The acquisition will connect major park holdings from Topanga State Park, Point Mugu State Park and Malibu Creek State Park and is part of an ongoing multi-agency effort to protect critically important habitats in the Santa Monica Mountains.

- **Yreka Phlox at China Hills (Siskiyou County)** - A \$122,000 grant will help acquire and protect 35 acres that provide important habitat for federally endangered Yreka phlox. The objective of the acquisition of these three parcels is to conserve the China Hill population of the Yreka phlox, a plant that is also protected by the State of California. The China Hill population is one of only four known occurrences of this species. Partners include the Service, California Department of Fish and Game, the City of Yreka, and private landowners.

## Nevada

- **Lockes Ranch(Nye County)** - A \$900,000 grant will help secure key habitats essential for recovery of the threatened Railroad Valley springfish. The acquisition of 460 acres in Nye County will protect source pools and/or outflows for three major spring systems containing identified recovery populations and critical habitat for the springfish. Project partners include the Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Bureau of Land Management.

## Washington

- **Asotin Creek (Asotin County)** - A \$600,000 grant will help the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation acquire and protect 8,500 acres of quality steppe grassland and 5.5 miles of riparian habitat in southeastern Washington. This strategic acquisition, surrounded by federal and State lands, will contribute to the implementation of recovery plans for threatened bull trout, bald eagle, and other species. It will also benefit chinook salmon, Columbia spotted frog and the State-listed sharp-tailed grouse.
- **Ebey's Landing (Island County)** - A \$1.5 million grant will help fund a land acquisition that will result in the permanent protection of one of the last eleven golden paintbrush populations in the world. The 33-acre site is one of the three largest extant habitats for this species, with the greatest potential for meeting recovery goals for the species. Threats to the species are imminent. Project partners include the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, National Park Service, Washington Natural Heritage Program, and Department of Natural Resources.