

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



News Release

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Secretary Kempthorne Announces \$67 Million in Grants to Support Land Acquisition and Conservation Planning for Endangered Species

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Washington Grants Total More Than \$20 Million

Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne today announced more than \$67 million in grants to 27 states to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered fish, wildlife and plants. The grants, awarded through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, will benefit species ranging from orchids to bull trout that are found across the United States.

"These grants are incredibly important tools to conserve threatened and endangered species," said Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne. "Our ability to successfully conserve habitat for imperiled species depends on long-term partnerships and voluntary landowner participation. These grants provide the means for States to work with

landowners and communities to conserve habitat and foster conservation stewardship efforts for future generations."

Authorized by Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act, the grants enable States to work with private landowners, conservation groups and other agencies to initiate conservation planning efforts and acquire and protect habitat to support the conservation of threatened and endangered species.

The cooperative endangered species fund this year provides \$7.5 million through the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program, \$46 million through the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants Program and \$13.9 million through the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program. The three programs were established to help reduce potential conflicts between the conservation of threatened and endangered species and land development and use.

The HCP Planning Assistance Program provides grants to States and Territories to support the development of HCPs through funding of baseline surveys and inventories, document preparation, outreach, and similar planning activities. HCPs are agreements between a landowner and the Service, allowing a landowner to undertake otherwise lawful activities on their property that may result in the death, injury or harassment of a 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 own jurisdiction and may address multiple species. There are more than 650 HCPs currently in effect covering 600 separate species on approximately 41 million acres in the nation, including 10 HCPs in Washington State, covering over 11.5 million acres.

Under the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Land Acquisition Program, the Service provides grants to States or Territories for land acquisition associated with approved HCPs. The Recovery Land acquisition Grants Program provides funds to states and territories to acquire habitat for endangered and threatened species with 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 following grants have been awarded in Washington:

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance

- Walla Walla Basin Bi-State HCP (Walla Walla and Columbia Counties, WA and Umatilla County, OR): \$509,670. This grant will fund the fifth year of an ongoing planning process, covering over 1 million acres in the Walla Walla Basin. The HCP development process will result in benefits to bull trout and steelhead by addressing municipal and agricultural water issues in a forum with

numerous State and local entities in Oregon and Washington.

- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Area HCP (Statewide, all 39 counties, WA): \$ 590,000. This grant funds the second year of an HCP process for the State's wildlife areas covering a total of approximately 830,000 acres. The HCP will offer benefits to protected species and land users by providing certainty that land management activities meet Federal species protection requirements. Federally listed species expected to benefit include, but are not limited to: pygmy rabbit, woodland caribou, snowy plover, spotted owl, marbled murrelet, bull trout, Chinook salmon, steelhead, Oregon silverspot, golden paintbrush, and Kincaid's lupine. Additional species expected to benefit include greater sage-grouse, northern goshawk, burrowing owl, Oregon spotted frog, Larch Mountain salamander, coho salmon, Mardon skipper, Taylor's checkerspot, and giant Columbia River limpet.
- Washington Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Resources HCP (Statewide, all 39 Counties, WA): \$598,200. This grant will fund the fourth year of a five-year planning process for the Washington DNR to develop a multi-species, programmatic HCP to ensure that authorized activities on State-owned aquatic lands promote sustainable ecosystems; minimize cumulative impacts; and increase protection, conservation, and recovery for approximately 20 species. Federally listed species expected to benefit include, but are not limited to: the bald eagle; marbled murrelet; western snowy plover; bull trout; Chinook, coho, and chum salmon; sockeye salmon; and steelhead. Other species that are expected to benefit include Columbia spotted frog, western pond turtle, western toad, northern leopard frog, common loon, coastal cutthroat, and pinto abalone.
- Washington State Hydraulic Project Approval HCP (Statewide, all 39 counties, WA): \$694,800. Funding is for the second year of the HCP process for the State's primary fish-protection regulatory program, the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) program. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife seeks an HCP as a means of continuing conservation of fish and shellfish species and habitat, while achieving long-term certainty that the HPA program meets Federal species protection requirements. Federally listed species that are expected to benefit include bull trout; steelhead; and Chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon. Additional species expected to benefit include but are not limited to coastal cutthroat trout; green sturgeon; Pacific, river, and western brook lamprey; California floater, and giant Columbia River limpet.

HCP Land Acquisition

The following three grants will complement conservation currently provided under the Plum Creek Central Cascades HCP.

- Methow Watershed, Phase 4 (Okanogan County, WA): \$4,380,120. This project will secure up to 2,360 acres and 3 miles of stream frontage. Protection of these

low elevation mature conifer and riparian forest habitats will contribute to the State's most successful acquisition effort with almost 15,000 acres already protected. The Methow River Watershed supports a unique and diverse assemblage of fish and wildlife species and is one of the few places where northern spotted owls, bald eagles, grizzly bears, gray wolves, lynx, bull trout, and salmon can be protected together. Partner: Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

- Swamp Lake/Amabilis Mountain II (Kittitas County, WA): \$2,350,470. The objective of this project is to purchase and permanently protect 71 acres of forested hillside on Amabilis Mountain and adjacent areas with waters that flow into Swamp Lake within the Yakima River Watershed. Protection of the property will support the HCP by providing conservation for grizzly bears, gray wolves, northern spotted owls, and numerous other species. Partners: Washington Dept. of Natural Resources, The Trust for Public Land
- Hyak-Gold Creek Corridor, Phase II (Kittitas County, WA): \$3,940,000. This acquisition will secure 76 acres along Gold Creek to protect species covered under the Plum Creek HCP including bull trout, northern spotted owl, bald eagle, marbled murrelet, gray wolf, and Canada lynx. In addition, the acquisition will significantly contribute to habitat protection and improved ecological connectivity for 60 species of terrestrial vertebrates, including wolverine, marten, and Pacific giant salamander. Partners: Washington Dept. of Natural Resources, Cascade Land Conservancy.

The following two grants will complement conservation currently provided under the DNR Forest Lands HCP.

- Hoh River Conservation Corridor, Phase IV (Jefferson County, WA): \$6,371,250. This project will acquire and protect 2,320 acres of riparian and upland forest habitat in the lower Hoh River Valley. This acquisition adds to the 4,481 acres already acquired and protected. The marbled murrelet, bull trout, northern spotted owl, and bald eagle will benefit as a result of the acquisition. Partners: Washington Dept. of Natural Resources, Western Rivers Conservancy, Hoh River Trust.
- Barr Creek Forest Protection (Skagit County, WA): \$447,600. This project will acquire 46 acres of low elevation mature forest and 1,000 feet of high quality stream habitat. The property supports roosting bald eagles and is within The Nature Conservancy's Skagit River Bald Eagle Natural Area. Barr Creek contains suitable habitat for bull trout and will also benefit northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets on adjacent State and Federal lands. Acquisition of this property will close a gap in landscape level habitat protection and reduce habitat fragmentation. Partners: Washington Dept. of Natural Resources, Skagit Land Trust

Recovery Land Acquisition

Boistfort Valley Acquisition (Lewis County, WA): \$256,157. The objective of this acquisition is to permanently protect a remnant prairie that includes a portion of the northernmost known occurrence of the federally listed threatened Kincaid's lupine. This plant occurs only in isolated prairie remnants in the Puget Trough and the Willamette Valley, including two areas in Washington State. The acquisition will also provide an opportunity to reintroduce Nelson's checker-mallow, another rare plant threatened with extinction.

For a complete list of the 2006 grant awards for these programs (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 15.615), see the Service's Endangered Species Grants home page at <http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/section6/index.html>.

General grant information about these programs in Washington State can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/grants/section6/>

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 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 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 and Native American tribal 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.

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