



BUDGET The United States Department of the Interior **JUSTIFICATIONS**

and Performance Information
Fiscal Year 2023

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

NOTICE: These budget justifications are prepared for the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees. Approval for release of the justifications prior to their printing in the public record of the Subcommittee hearings may be obtained through the Office of Budget of the Department of the Interior.



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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Fiscal Year 2023 President's Budget

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Executive Summary

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the oldest Federal conservation agency, tracing its lineage back to 1871, and the only agency in the Federal government whose primary responsibility is management of biological resources for the American public. The Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.



2021 Annual Kids Fishing Day at Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery in GA

The Service is responsible for implementing some of our Nation's most important and foundational environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Marine Mammal Protection Act, Lacey Act, and international agreements like the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages an unparalleled network of public lands and waters called the National Wildlife Refuge System. With more than 560 refuges spanning the country, this system protects iconic species and provides some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities on Earth.

The Service is a key player in the Administration's goals for its ambitious America the Beautiful initiative, which focuses on climate change, environmental justice, and species and habitat conservation. The Administration has set ambitious goals that will ensure America and the world can meet the urgent demands of the climate crisis, while empowering American workers and businesses to lead a clean energy revolution and puts the United States on a path to a net-zero emission economy.

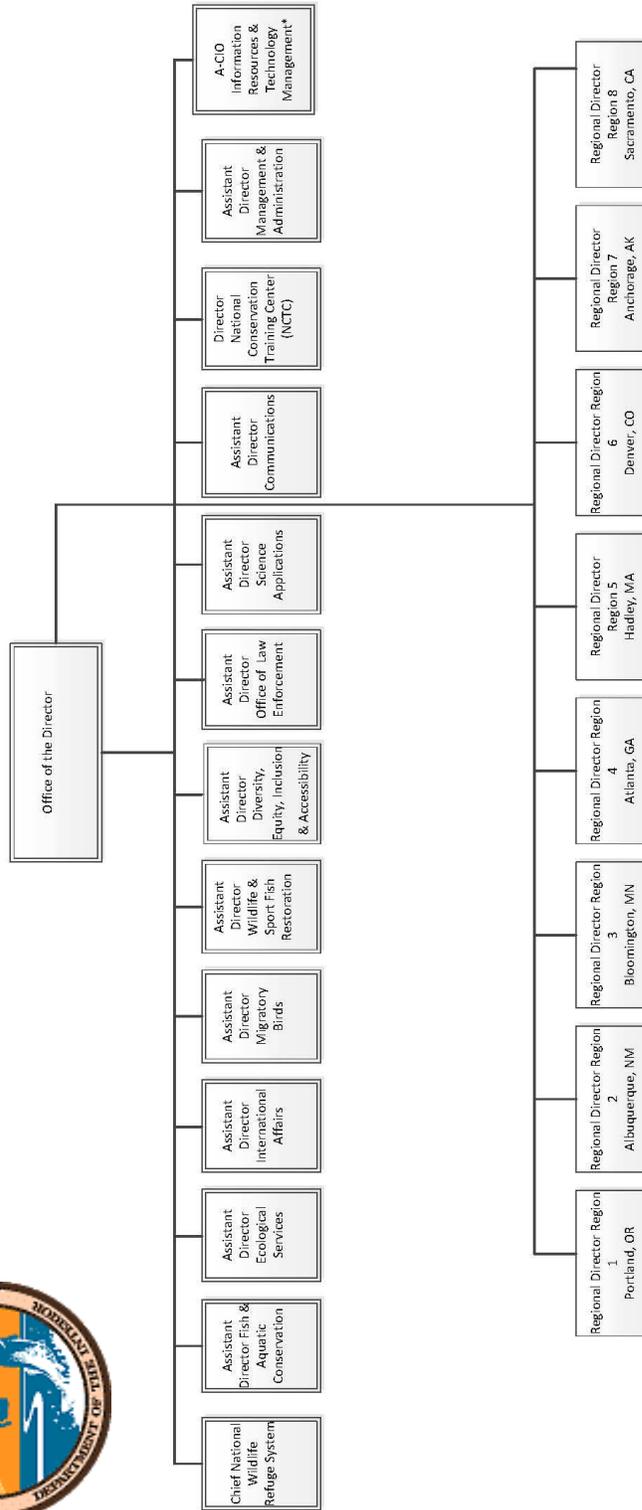
The Service's Organization

The Service has headquarters in Washington, D.C. and Falls Church, Virginia, with eight regional offices and almost 800 field stations. These stations include 567 National Wildlife Refuges, 71 National Fish Hatcheries, 51 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices, 79 Ecological Services Field Stations, nine Fish Health Centers, and seven Fish Technology Centers and three Law Enforcement support facilities. In addition the Service staffs 17 designated ports of entry and 13 embassies overseas. The Service manages more than 830 million acres of lands and waters, including the national wildlife refuges, 38 wetland management districts, 49 coordination areas, seven National Monuments, and 760 million acres in Marine National Monuments.

The Service works with diverse partners to accomplish its conservation mission, including other Federal agencies, State and local governments, Tribes, international organizations, and private organizations and individuals.

The Director reports to the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and has direct line authority over headquarters and eight Regional Directors. Headquarters-based Assistant Directors provide policy, program management, and administrative support to the Director. The Regional Directors guide policy and program implementation, supervising the field structures, and coordinating activities with partners.

(See organizational chart, next page)



Overview of FY 2023 Budget Request

Budget Authority (\$000)	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Current Authority*	1,583,861	1,732,633	2,062,559	+329,926
<i>Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**</i>		-90,545	-90,545	
<i>Supplemental - Construction</i>		-58,227		-58,227
Current Authority ex Supplementals	1,583,861	1,583,861	1,972,054	388,153
Permanent Authority***	1,681,321	1,980,961	1,769,109	-211,743
Total – w/ supplementals	3,265,182	3,713,594	3,831,668	118,074
Discretionary	6,490	6,602	7,529	+927
Mandatory	279	310	337	+27
Transfers/Alloc.	1,441	1,431	1,554	+123
TOTAL FTEs	8,210	8,343	9,420	+1,077

*includes supplementals

** net of transfers

***net of sequestration

Overview

The 2023 President's budget for FWS totals \$3.8 billion, including current appropriations of \$2.0 billion, an increase of \$388.2 million above a 2022 full-year continuing resolution (CR). The budget includes \$1.8 billion available under permanent appropriations, most of which is provided directly to States for fish and wildlife restoration and conservation. FWS estimates that staffing will equal 9,423 full-time equivalents (FTEs), an increase of 1,032 FTEs from the 2022 full-year CR level. The 2023 budget promotes strategic investments to implement the America the Beautiful initiative, including funds to address climate change effects on FWS trust resources, conserve species and habitats, reconnect Americans with the outdoors, enable economic development, and create good-paying job opportunities.

The America the Beautiful Initiative

A major focus of the Service’s request this year is implementing the Administration’s America the Beautiful initiative. The initiative is rooted in the desire to better support and honor the people and communities who serve as stewards of our lands, waters, and wildlife—from Tribes and Indigenous peoples, to fishermen, farmers and ranchers, to local and State governments—and to ensure that all people of this Nation benefit from America’s rich and vibrant lands and waters.

The Administration has formulated eight principles by which the Nation should pursue this ambitious conservation effort. These principles commit the Administration to:

- Pursuing a Collaborative and Inclusive Approach to Conservation
- Conserving America’s Lands and Waters for the Benefit of All People
- Supporting Locally Led and Locally Designed Conservation Efforts
- Honoring Tribal Sovereignty and Support the Priorities of Tribal Nations
- Pursuing Conservation and Restoration Approaches that Create Jobs and Support Healthy Communities
- Honoring Private Property Rights and Support the Voluntary Stewardship Efforts of Private Landowners and Fishers
- Using Science as a Guide
- Building on Existing Tools and Strategies with an Emphasis on Flexibility and Adaptive Approaches



Secretary Haaland planting vegetation with youth at the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge. (Photo by DOI)

The Service’s budget supports the Administration’s call to action to support locally-led conservation and restoration efforts across public, private, State, and Tribal lands and waters.

Conservation – A key part of the America the Beautiful effort is Conservation. Since Conservation is the primary mission of the Service, many of our programs are reflected in this initiative. For example, the budget supports President Biden’s call to action to collaboratively conserve, connect, and restore 30 percent of U.S. land and water by 2030 through investments in partner programs, climate science, and habitat adaptation and resilience. Additional funding supports FWS land management and restoration, in collaboration with States, Tribes, and private landowners to conserve habitat while supporting working lands and engaging urban communities in conservation. Those investments will create job opportunities outdoors and through increased project consultation capacity to simultaneously support conservation and economic development. The budget will enhance FWS conservation programs aimed at stemming the effects of climate change, with increased support for permitting needed for responsible economic growth.

Conservation, adaptation, and resiliency actions are most effective when they involve partners. This budget directs resources to programs that engage State, local, and Tribal governments, along with private organizations. This collaboration is critical to improve habitat, provide clean water, and limit the effects of climate change. The budget enables FWS to work alongside private landowners by investing \$83.4 million, in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Coastal programs. The budget also includes \$82.4 million for State

and Tribal Wildlife Grants to support State and Tribal efforts to protect wildlife habitat. These investments will create job opportunities for Americans in the outdoors and through increased project consultation capacity to simultaneously support conservation and economic development.

A critical component of the Administration's climate adaptation, conservation, and job creation objectives is the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Refuge System's 830 million acres of lands and waters, includes 567 national wildlife refuges, waterfowl production areas in 209 counties managed within 38 Wetland Management Districts and 49 Coordination Areas, seven National Monuments, and 760 million acres in Marine National Monuments. The Refuge System delivers conservation on a landscape level, providing important ecosystem services such as improved water quality, flood mitigation, and habitat for the survival and protection of hundreds of threatened and endangered species. Wildlife Refuges also offer recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, and watching wildlife. Through the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program initiative, the Service is welcoming city dwellers to enjoy the outdoors by engaging new audiences in outdoor experiences, both on wildlife refuges and partner lands. The Budget includes \$12.5 million to expand opportunities for Americans in urban communities to connect with the outdoors and contribute to conservation. At least one wildlife refuge is within an hour's drive of most major cities and more than 260 wildlife refuges are near smaller cities. More than a dozen Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships are within 25 miles of cities like Baltimore, Maryland and Seattle, Washington, and offer access to outdoor experiences ranging from bird watching to fishing. The Refuge System and other Service programs will play a strong role in the Administration's Civilian Climate Corps (CCC) by providing opportunities to put young people to work improving America's lands, waters, and infrastructure. The 2023 budget includes \$10.0 million to put the CCC to work to advance habitat restoration and adaptation while creating good-paying conservation jobs.

To further the conservation of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and to work to prevent at-risk species from becoming further imperiled, the Service is requesting \$356.2 million for the Ecological Services program. The Service is instrumental in supporting economic recovery and job creation in the United States as timely evaluations of proposed infrastructure, and other development projects, assisting permitting agencies, and issuing permits for these contributes to job creation and economic growth. To facilitate consultation under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act (BIL) as well as address increasing needs for consultation in a growing economy the Service is requesting \$152.8 million for Planning and Consultation.

The budget proposes \$54.3 million for Conservation and Restoration. These funds will contribute to conservation of marine mammals and at-risk species, often involving private partners, and support systems such as the National Wetlands Inventory to inform adaptive management and resilience projects.

The Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program carries out aquatic resource conservation work through a nationwide network of more than 150 facilities that includes national fish hatcheries, fish and wildlife conservation offices, fish health centers, and fish technology centers. These facilities are neighbors to communities across the Nation, providing the American public a variety of long-standing outdoor opportunities to see and learn about fish and aquatic resources and enjoy nature. Through biological inventories, assessments, resource modeling, and conservation strategies, the Fisheries Program and its partners strive to understand and alleviate threats to aquatic resources by propagating fish, mussels, and other aquatic species to enhance wild populations, strategically improving habitat, restoring the connectivity of the Nation's waterways, and preventing new infestations of aquatic invasive species. The Budget includes \$260.4 million for the Fisheries Program.

This budget builds on support in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law with \$2.6 million to establish an aquatic invasive species rapid response initiative within existing authorities of FWS. This initiative, coordinated

through the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, and other rapid response efforts are the most cost-effective and successful ways to address invasive species once they are detected in the environment.

Investment in control of invasive species must also be met with the statutory tools necessary to protect natural resources, human and animal health, infrastructure, and the economy. The budget supports efforts to amend Title 18 of the Lacey Act to return the longstanding authority of FWS to prohibit interstate transport of injurious species. Recent examples of injurious species contaminating commercial products demonstrate the need to restore this authority.

The budget includes \$70.2 million for the Migratory Bird Management Program. The budget includes robust support to modernize the permitting process and supporting systems to enable the use of the latest scientific information and energy production technologies when evaluating development proposals. This request will advance migratory bird management in an era of a changing climate, enable new habitat and species analyses, develop management techniques, and remove uncertainties faced by industry.

Climate Change - The Service is focusing on Climate Change throughout all of its programs, including its Science program, which is funded at \$57.5 million. The Science program works with partners to develop plans for conserving landscapes across the country, to address climate changes as well as other conservation needs. The Science Applications program works with partners with the goal of creating a network of connected lands and waters. Each of these partnerships are tailored to the needs of their geographies.

Implementing an aggressive agenda to tackle climate change requires investments in support facilities and real property. The Service is responsible for more than \$50 billion in constructed real property assets that include over 25,000 structures (e.g., buildings and water management structures) as well as nearly 14,000 roads, bridges, and dams. These facilities allow manipulation of water levels in wetlands to support migrating wildlife, research to propagate at-risk species, and maintenance of land management equipment and vehicles – all which support conservation and counter the effects of climate change. The Great American Outdoors Act of 2020 (GAOA) provides up to \$95 million annually for five years for deferred maintenance projects within the Refuge System and the Service is using these funds for projects that will improve land management capabilities. The Budget includes \$275 million for asset maintenance and construction. The Service will use these funds to address high-priority health and safety needs for Service-owned assets to begin a transition to a life-cycle maintenance strategy that will increase utilization rates while reducing long-term maintenance costs. Maintenance funding will support major energy and efficiency upgrades at fish hatcheries, coordination offices, and other facilities that are ineligible for deferred maintenance funding provided by GAOA.

Electric Vehicles and Charging Infrastructure - In support of the President's goal of transitioning to a fully Zero Emission Vehicle Federal fleet, the Service's request includes \$16.8 million for zero emission vehicle (ZEV - battery electric, plug-in electric hybrid, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles) acquisitions and deploying necessary vehicle charging and refueling infrastructure. These acquisitions are a significant step towards eliminating tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) from the Service fleet and aligning the Service's fleet operations with the goal of achieving a fully ZEV Federal fleet. This action is important because tailpipe emissions are currently the leading source of GHG emissions that threaten the planet and harm U.S. communities.

Deploying Clean Energy – The Service recognizes the need to support the development of clean energy sources in order to create new industries to support American workers while reducing emissions that contribute to climate change. The budget proposes \$22.6 million, a program increase of \$11.5 million, for activities associated with energy development, including a program increase of \$8.0 million for the Ecological Services Planning and Consultation program to support reviews and permitting of clean energy

projects. Within the Migratory Bird Management program, the Budget includes a program increase of \$3.5 million for clean energy project permitting to ensure we can utilize renewable resources while protecting migratory birds, notably iconic Bald and Golden eagles.

Promoting Diversity - The FWS budget includes \$7.2 million to support diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility, including \$560,000 as part of a Departmentwide initiative to address identified high-priority needs in support of Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, and Executive Order 13988, Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation. As part of this initiative, the Department, bureaus, and offices will jointly conduct a review of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility program across Interior to identify gaps, challenges, and best practices and to examine Department and bureau roles, responsibilities, and governance.

Resource Management

The budget request for the principal FWS operating account, Resource Management, is \$1.7 billion—an increase of \$366 million above the 2022 CR level to address climate change, improve habitat, and recover and conserve species while supporting the American workforce.

Ecological Services

The budget includes \$356.2 million to conserve, protect, recover and enhance listed and at-risk fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. The budget enables economic progress with increases that will support conservation and development. The request supports clean energy development, and data management system improvements and expanded capabilities to work with developers to minimize natural resource impacts from projects. The request for Conservation and Restoration advances proactive, cooperative conservation with investments in programs aimed at preventing the listing of species under the Endangered Species Act. The request provides \$54.3 million to support conservation of at-risk species and their habitats. The request for species recovery includes \$125.1 million. In 2023, FWS will catalyze the recovery of endangered species by making recovery funds available to implement final recovery actions that could lead to species recovery.

Habitat Conservation

The 2023 budget for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is \$67.4 million and the Coastal Program request is \$16.0 million in recognition of the importance of cooperative conservation of private lands to habitat adaptation and resilience as well as a healthy economy. These programs work collaboratively with partners to restore, enhance, and protect habitat for priority Federal trust species.

National Wildlife Refuge System

The National Wildlife Refuge System is a model for conservation around the world. More than 160 coastal refuges buffer communities from the increasing frequency and intensity of storms, and even more provide habitat for millions of migrating birds each year. The 2023 budget for the Refuge System is \$597.9 million. Funding for operations—including wildlife and habitat management, visitor services, Refuge law enforcement, and planning—is \$426.6 million, climate resilience, and the use of climate-related science. The request supports the Refuge System's Inventory and Monitoring program to identify the prevalence of chronic wasting disease among ungulates in and around wildlife refuges to support State disease control efforts and scientific studies of successful pollinator conservation strategies. The 2023 budget will enable FWS to build its conservation and management capacity and attract biologists, land managers, visitor services professionals, conservation planners, and refuge wildlife officers to ensure the safety of visitors and the protection of Federal property.

The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) provides up to \$95 million, net of sequestration, in 2023 for deferred maintenance projects within the Refuge System. With nearly \$50 billion in constructed real

property assets—including hundreds of miles of levees and dikes that support habitat management, trails and wildlife drives for visitors, administrative offices, and maintenance facilities—additional investments will support a transition to a more cost-effective lifecycle maintenance strategy. The request for Refuge Maintenance is \$171.3 million.

Migratory Bird Management

The budget includes \$70.2 million for the Migratory Bird Management Program. The budget continues work to modernize the permitting process and supporting systems to enable the use of the latest scientific information and energy production technologies when evaluating development proposals. It advances migratory bird management in an era of a changing climate, enable new habitat and species analyses, develop management techniques, and remove uncertainties faced by industry. The budget also supports Joint Venture program grants to improve the resilience of important habitats—and nearby communities—across the Nation’s four migratory bird flyways, Urban Bird Treaties grants that support partnerships to conserve birds in urban environments by creating parks and restoring nearby wetlands—all while engaging local communities, and expands participation in the Duck Stamp and Junior Duck Stamp programs. Since 1934, the Federal Duck Stamp Program has provided more than \$1.1 billion for migratory bird habitat conservation.

Law Enforcement

The 2023 budget provides \$99.3 million for law enforcement program that investigate wildlife crimes and enforce the laws that govern the Nation’s wildlife trade. FWS continues to work with the State Department, other Federal agencies, and foreign governments to address the serious and urgent threat to conservation and global security posed by illegal wildlife trade and trafficking. FWS will also continue to strengthen its smuggling interdiction efforts at the Nation’s ports of entry by using trained wildlife detector dogs in its frontline force and working with the State Department to support attachés in key wildlife trafficking countries in Asia, Africa, and South America.

International Affairs

The budget includes \$31.8 million for International Affairs. FWS provides international conservation grants and technical support to assist other countries’ conservation efforts and will target assistance to climate change adaptation and resilience. The budget will expand permitting capacity to allow for enhanced electronic permit processing. The program will also investigate the human drivers of wildlife disease transmission, including risk tolerance, motivations of behaviors, and economic impacts. Understanding wildlife disease transmission will allow FWS to cooperate internationally to implement best practices to prevent disease transmission through the wildlife trade.

Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation

This budget activity supports 70 National Fish Hatcheries, aquatic habitat conservation and restoration, and the prevention and control of aquatic invasive species, such as invasive carp in the Mississippi River watershed. The budget includes \$260.4 million for Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation including \$83.5 million for operation of the National Fish Hatchery System. The request will support recovery of federally listed threatened or endangered aquatic species, restoration of at-risk species, and fulfillment of Tribal partnerships and trust responsibilities. The Hatchery System is an international leader in the propagation of imperiled aquatic species, and the budget expands capabilities to ensure the health of aquatic species. Advancing aquatic conservation requires modernizing and maintaining hatchery pumps, raceways, and effluent control systems, among other infrastructure. The request for National Fish Hatchery Maintenance is \$49.8 million. Hatchery maintenance projects are not eligible for funding under GAOA, and the proposed increase will support critical maintenance projects necessary to propagate endangered aquatic and sportfish species.

The budget includes \$127.1 million for Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation. The request expands aquatic invasive species prevention efforts, fully funds the National Fish Habitat Action Plan at the authorized level, and provides for aquatic species population assessments and cooperative management to enhance habitat adaptation and resilience.

Science

The Science program is the Service's lead on America the Beautiful and Climate Change, investing in partnerships to develop landscape conservation designs to benefit the Administration's goal of conserving 30% of land and water by 2030, and providing resources to partners and Service programs to support their science needs. The Service is requesting \$57.5 million for the Science program in 2023. The budget invests in landscape conservation objectives that promote biodiversity, climate adaptation and resiliency, and design of management actions for habitat conservation to achieve the Administration's conservation objectives. Weaving together proven landscape conservation designs and leveraging locally based conservation blueprints, the program will invest in technical capacity, such as geospatial mapping and social science expertise, to proactively engage with States, Tribes, industry, conservation groups, and other stakeholders to identify and pursue high-priority conservation opportunities. Collaboration will focus on addressing climate stressors, with goals that include increasing coastal resilience, mitigating desertification, controlling invasive species, and reducing the prevalence and magnitude of wildfires.

General Operations

The General Operations budget totals \$188.4 million. The request expands capacity for Tribal consultations and improves workforce diversity. The budget includes funding for the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) to lead FWS efforts to create a CCC to support conservation and habitat restoration. The request also expands conservation programs managed in cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The budget includes appropriations language that will provide the FWS with the authority—such as that of the National Park Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—to seek and retain compensation from responsible parties who injure or destroy resources managed by the FWS. Under that authority, damages recovered will be used to reimburse assessment costs; prevent or minimize the risk of loss; monitor ongoing effects; and restore, replace, or acquire resources equivalent to those injured or destroyed. The FWS proposal ensures that natural resources will be available for future generations and requires that the persons responsible for harm—not taxpayers—pay for any injury caused.

Construction

The 2023 Construction budget totals \$46.4 million. The budget includes \$37.9 million for line-item construction projects. The budget also includes \$5.4 million to modernize critical field communication tools for users in the Great Lakes (Region 3), the Mississippi Basin (Region 4), the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, as part of a multi-year investment to upgrade these systems nationally and \$10.9 million to support infrastructure related to the transition to zero emission vehicles.

National Wildlife Refuge Fund

FWS does not request a current funding appropriation to the National Wildlife Refuge Fund, resulting in a reduction of \$13.2 million below the 2022 CR level. The permanent receipts available under the program remain as a source of revenue for counties.

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund

The budget requests \$23.7 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund to support State and local efforts to recover listed species. The budget requests \$13.0 million for conservation grants to States, \$8.0 million for Habitat Conservation Planning (HCP) Assistance grants, and \$2.7 million for

administrative costs. HCP Land Acquisition Grants to States are proposed for funding through permanent LWCF authority.

North American Wetlands Conservation Fund

The 2023 budget is \$46.5 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund. Conservation grants from the fund are leveraged more than one-to-one with partners for wetlands and waterfowl conservation, supporting climate adaptation and resiliency and important outdoor activities for sportsmen and sportswomen.

Multinational Species Conservation Fund

The 2023 budget includes \$19.0 million for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. These grants support the conservation and protection of African and Asian elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes, and marine turtles and leverage funds from partners to nearly triple the available funding for those species, which will foster improved management of elephants, rhinoceroses, and tigers, including reducing human–animal conflicts.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund

The 2023 request includes \$7.9 million for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. Populations of neotropical birds, such as the goldfinch, have declined due to climate change and habitat loss. These grants for the conservation of migratory birds are matched at least three-to-one by partners throughout the western hemisphere.

State and Tribal Wildlife Grants

The request for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants is \$82.4 million. These grants support and leverage State management of non-game species and improve the resiliency of State and Tribal natural resources in the face of stressors, such as rising temperatures and changing weather patterns. This investment recognizes the important partnership between State and Tribal fish and wildlife managers and FWS.

Fixed Costs

Fixed cost increases of \$39.5 million are fully funded.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Directly supporting the Administration’s conservation objectives is funding from the mandatory LWCF, which was permanently and fully funded starting in 2021 in GAOA. A detailed project list for the Federal land acquisition program is provided in Appendix F.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law on November 15, 2021, making a once-in-a-generation investment in the Nation’s infrastructure and economic competitiveness. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was directly appropriated \$455 million, including transfers to the DOI Office of Inspector General, over 5 years to help restore the Klamath Basin, restore Lake Tahoe, conserve the sagebrush ecosystem, restore the Delaware River basin, and provide fish passage improvements:

- The Klamath Basin Restoration Program projects will enhance captive rearing of listed sucker species, address water quality/quantity issues throughout the Basin, and support projects to improve conditions for migratory birds, waterfowl, salmon, suckers, and other native fish species throughout the Basin.

- Lake Tahoe Restoration Activities will deploy strategies to prevent the introduction or spread of aquatic invasive species in the Lake Tahoe region and reestablish a food chain for the benefit of native species, such as the imperiled Lahontan cutthroat trout.
- Working across 13 Western States and multiple jurisdictions, the FWS will build on an existing partnership to address the most pressing threats to a sustainable sagebrush ecosystem, such as invasive species and wildfire, and invest in tangible, measurable actions to address those threats in the face of a changing climate.
- The Delaware River Basin program provides grants for habitat conservation actions that support the priorities of fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flow management, and equitable access to nature for all communities.
- The National Fish Passage Program provides technical expertise, financial assistance, and coordination support to complete aquatic ecosystem restoration projects to restore fish passage and aquatic connectivity by removing or bypassing barriers.

Baseline Capacity

The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the Service's mission. The budget includes \$27.9 million, which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE MAJOR ACCOUNT SUMMARY OF FISCAL YEAR 2023							
Account	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)	
<u>Current Appropriations</u>							
Resource Management	\$000	1,379,828	1,379,828	+39,218	+327,076	1,746,122	+366,294
	FTE	6,396	6,516		+923	7,439	+923
Construction	\$000	18,193	18,193	+284	+27,941	46,418	+28,225
	FTE	46	48		+3	51	+3
Land Acquisition LA	\$000	0	0	+0	+0	0	+0
	FTE	15	0	+0	+0	0	+0
National Wildlife Refuge Fund	\$000	13,228	13,228	+0	-13,228	0	-13,228
	FTE	0	0	+0	+0	0	+0
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund	\$000	43,340	43,340	+0	-19,638	23,702	-19,638
	FTE	9	9		+0	9	+0
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	\$000	46,500	46,500	+0	+0	46,500	+0
	FTE	6	6		+0	6	+0
Multinational Species Conservation Fund	\$000	18,000	18,000	+0	+1,000	19,000	+1,000
	FTE	2	4		+1	5	+1
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation	\$000	4,910	4,910	+0	+3,000	7,910	+3,000
	FTE	1	1		+0	1	+0
State and Tribal Wildlife Grants	\$000	72,362	72,362	+0	+10,000	82,362	+10,000
	FTE	15	18		+0	18	+0
Total, Current Appropriations	\$000	1,596,361	1,596,361	+39,502	+336,151	1,972,014	+375,653
	FTE	6,490	6,602		+927	7,529	+927
Supplemental Funding							
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*			90,545	+0	+0	90,545	+0
Disaster Supplemental Funding			58,227	+0	-58,227	0	-58,227
Rescissions/Cancellations							
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund		-12,500	-12,500	+0	+12,500	0	+12,500
TOTAL, Current Appropriations with Supplemental/ Rescissions/ Cancellations.		1,583,861	1,732,633	+39,502	+290,424	2,062,559	+329,926
	FTE	6,490	6,602	+0	+927	7,529	+927
*Net of Transfer to DOI Office of Inspector General							

U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
MAJOR ACCOUNT SUMMARY OF FISCAL YEAR 2023 REQUEST

Account		2021 Actual	2022 Enacted CR/PB	2023			Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	
<u>Permanent and Trust Accounts*</u>							
Resource Management - American Rescue Plan	\$000	105,000	0	0	0	0	0
	FTE	0	0		+15	15	+15
National Wildlife Refuge Fund	\$000	6,747	7,927	0	+73	8,000	+73
	FTE	4	4		0	4	0
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund - Payment to Special Fund (TF)	\$000	85,965	106,651	0	+5,709	112,360	+5,709
	FTE	0	0		0	0	0
Land Acquisition MG ML	\$000	111,840	105,465		+9,310	114,775	+9,310
	FTE	47	70		0	70	0
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund MR	\$000	243	243	0	-102	141	-102
	FTE	1	1			1	0
Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration	\$000	512,752	494,656	0	-1,662	492,994	-1,662
	FTE	51	50		+5	55	+5
Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration	\$000	726,623	1,160,851	0	-222,862	937,989	-222,862
	FTE	54	53		+7	60	+7
Migratory Bird Conservation Account	\$000	117,168	88,818	0	-1,818	87,000	-1,818
	FTE	79	79		0	79	0
Federal Lands Recreational Enhancement Act	\$000	7,222	6,500	0	0	6,500	0
	FTE	23	30		0	30	0
Contributed Funds	\$000	3,036	5,000	0		5,000	0
	FTE	18	18		0	18	0
Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations	\$000	4,725	4,850	0	-500	4,350	-500
	FTE	2	4		0	4	0
Other	\$000	0	0	0	0	0	0
	FTE	0	1		0	1	0
Subtotal, Permanent Appropriations	\$000	1,681,321	1,980,961	0	-211,852	1,769,109	-211,852
	FTE	279	310	0	27	337	27
Reimbursements, Offsetting Collections, Allocations From Others							
Reimbursements, Offsetting Collections, Allocations From Others	FTE	1,441	1,431	0	+123	1,554	+123
TOTAL, FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE with Rescissions/ Cancellation							
	\$000	3,265,182	3,713,594	+39,502	+78,572	3,831,668	+118,074
	FTE	8,210	8,343	0	+1,077	9,420	+1,077

* All amounts are net of sequestration

Budget at a Glance

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Budget At A Glance						
Dollars in Thousands (\$000)						
	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request
Appropriation: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT						
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES						
LISTING	20,767	20,767	+667	0	+2,512	23,946
General Program Activities					+2,000	
Baseline Capacity					+512	
PLANNING AND CONSULTATION	109,251	109,251	+4,015	0	+39,541	152,807
General Program Activities					+27,700	
Baseline Capacity					+2,841	
Energy - Renewable Permitting					+8,000	
NEPA Permitting/Coordination with CEQ					+500	
Pesticide Consultations					+500	
CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION	34,617	34,617	+1,058	0	+18,599	54,274
Environmental Response and Restoration					+6,000	
Baseline Capacity					+799	
Candidate Conservation					+4,800	
National Wetlands Inventory					+4,000	
Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA)					+2,000	
Marine Mammals					+1,500	
Sea Otter Assessment					-500	
RECOVERY	105,031	105,031	+2,783	0	+17,321	125,135
General Program Activities					+15,508	
Baseline Capacity					+1,991	
Zero Emission Vehicles					+922	
Florida Grasshopper Sparrow					-100	
Wolf Livestock Loss Demonstration Program					-1,000	
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES TOTAL	269,666	269,666	+8,523	0	+77,973	356,162
HABITAT CONSERVATION						
PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE	56,859	56,859	+1,182	0	+9,356	67,397
General Program Activities					+8,500	
Baseline Capacity					+856	
COASTAL PROGRAM	13,360	13,360	+360	0	+2,256	15,976
General Program Activities					+2,000	
Baseline Capacity					+256	
HABITAT CONSERVATION TOTAL	70,219	70,219	+1,542	0	+11,612	83,373
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM						
WILDLIFE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT						
Refuge Wildlife & Habitat Management	239,568	239,568	+6,732	0	+27,349	273,649
General Program Activities					+16,900	
Baseline Capacity					+4,949	
Inventory & Monitoring					+5,000	
Marine National Monuments					+1,000	
Refuge Water Efficiency/ Quivira					-500	
Refuge Visitor Services	75,033	75,033	+2,290	0	+19,704	97,027
General Program Activities					+8,000	
Baseline Capacity					+1,704	
Urban Wildlife Conservation Program					+7,000	
General Program Activities					+3,000	
Refuge Law Enforcement	40,907	40,907	+1,357	0	+8,008	50,272
General Program Activities					+7,000	
Baseline Capacity					+1,008	
Refuge Conservation Planning	2,523	2,523	+90	0	+3,071	5,684
Refuge Planning					+3,000	
Baseline Capacity					+71	
Refuge Maintenance	145,822	145,822	+2,367	0	+23,064	171,253
Annual Maintenance					+8,895	
Maintenance Support					+6,500	
Baseline Capacity					+1,676	
Equipment and Vehicle Management					+3,993	
Deferred Maintenance					+2,000	
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM TOTAL	503,853	503,853	+12,836	0	+81,196	597,885

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Budget At A Glance						
Dollars in Thousands (\$000)						
	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request
CONSERVATION AND ENFORCEMENT						
MIGRATORY BIRD MANAGEMENT						
Conservation and Monitoring	28,784	28,784	+872		+12,762	42,418
General Program Activities					+7,500	
Baseline Capacity					+637	
Energy					+3,500	
Urban Bird Treaties					+1,000	
Zero Emission Vehicles					+125	
Permits	3,411	3,411	+112	0	+4,602	8,125
General Program Activities					+4,500	
Baseline Capacity					+102	
Duck Stamp Office	556	556	+19	0	+1,016	1,591
General Program Activities					+1,000	
Baseline Capacity					+16	
North American Waterfowl Management Plan	15,122	15,122	+278	0	+2,690	18,090
General Program Activities					+2,500	
Baseline Capacity					+190	
Migratory Bird Management Total	47,873	47,873	+1,281	0	+21,070	70,224
LAW ENFORCEMENT						
Law Enforcement Operations	85,950	85,950	+2,495	-144	+10,122	98,423
General Program Activities				-144	+8,194	
Baseline Capacity					+1,928	
Equipment Replacement	910	910	0	0	0	910
Law Enforcement Total	86,860	86,860	+2,495	-144	+10,122	99,333
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS						
International Conservation	10,294	10,294	+213	0	+480	10,987
General Program Activities					+1,875	
Baseline Capacity					+155	
Arctic Council Support					-550	
Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize					-1,000	
International Wildlife Trade	12,738	12,738	+337	0	+7,753	20,828
Permitting Modernization					+5,472	
Baseline Capacity					+228	
General Program Activities					+2,053	
International Affairs Total	23,032	23,032	+550	0	+8,233	31,815
CONSERVATION AND ENFORCEMENT TOTAL	157,765	157,765	+4,326	-144	+39,425	201,372
FISH AND AQUATIC CONSERVATION						
National Fish Hatchery Operations	65,551	65,551	+1,696	0	+16,223	83,470
General Program Activities					+17,898	
Baseline Capacity					+1,225	
Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Program					-400	
Pacific Salmon Treaty					-2,500	
Maintenance and Equipment	25,822	25,822	+289	0	+23,724	49,835
Deferred Maintenance					+15,000	
Annual Maintenance					+7,885	
Baseline Capacity					+224	
Equipment Replacement					+615	
Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation						
Habitat Assessment and Restoration	42,289	42,289	+494	0	+1,537	44,320
National Fish Habitat Action Plan					+1,000	
Baseline Capacity					+337	
Truckee River Operating Agreement					+200	

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Budget At A Glance						
Dollars in Thousands (\$000)						
	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request
Population Assessment and Cooperative Mgmt.	31,792	31,792	+956	0	+1,673	34,421
General Program Activities					+1,000	
Baseline Capacity					+673	
Aquatic Invasive Species	41,159	41,159	+457	0	+6,752	48,368
Prevention					+6,648	
Baseline Capacity					+304	
Hydrilla, Eel and Milfoil Invasive Grasses					-200	
Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation Subtotal	115,240	115,240	+1,907	0	+9,962	127,109
FISH AND AQUATIC CONSERVATION TOTAL	206,613	206,613	+3,892	0	+49,909	260,414
COOPERATIVE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION	12,500	12,500	+411	0	+6,102	19,013
Landscape Conservation Cooperatives						
General Program Activities					+5,800	
Baseline Capacity					+302	
SCIENCE SUPPORT						
Adaptive Science	10,517	10,517	+35	0	+12,333	22,885
General Program Activities					+12,300	
Baseline Capacity					+33	
Service Science	6,750	6,750	+139	0	+8,708	15,597
General Program Activities					+8,471	
Baseline Capacity					+83	
Zero Emission Vehicles					+154	
SCIENCE SUPPORT TOTAL	17,267	17,267	+174	0	+21,041	38,482
GENERAL OPERATIONS						
Central Office Operations	25,758	25,758	+1,380	0	+7,233	34,371
External Affairs					+2,000	
Baseline Capacity					+608	
Native American Coordination Office					+2,000	
Diversity Office					+1,000	
DOI Diversity Initiative					+400	
Diversity Office					+225	
Regional Directors					+1,000	
Management and Administration	44,166	44,166	+3,973	+144	+16,151	64,434
JAO					+6,857	
Baseline Capacity					+3,144	
Information Resources and Technology Mgmt				+144	+6,000	
Electric Vehicle Management					+150	
Servicewide Bill Paying	35,748	35,748	+1,501	0	+8,975	46,224
Communication, Information Technology and Security					+4,939	
Baseline Capacity					+416	
Unemployment Compensation					+471	
Working Capital Fund					+2,303	
Misc. Support - RSA's					+566	
Worker's Compensation					+280	
Aviation Management	3,237	3,237	+45	0	+18	3,300
Baseline Capacity					+18	
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation	7,022	7,022	+10	0	+2,000	9,032
NFWF					+2,000	
National Conservation Training Center	26,014	26,014	+605	0	+4,441	31,060
Annual Maintenance					+2,000	
Youth and Careers in Nature					+2,000	
Baseline Capacity					+441	
GENERAL OPERATIONS TOTAL	141,945	141,945	+7,514	+144	+38,818	188,421
Damage Recovery Provision					+1,000	1,000
TOTAL - RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	1,379,828	1,379,828	+39,218	0	+327,076	1,746,122

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Budget At A Glance						
Dollars in Thousands (\$000)						
	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request
Appropriation: CONSTRUCTION						
Nationwide Engineering Services	5,368	5,368	+284	0	+404	6,056
Core Engineering Services					+235	
Baseline Capacity					+169	
Dam, Bridge and Seismic Safety	2,427	2,427	0	0	0	2,427
Construction Projects	10,398	10,398	0	0	+27,537	37,935
Line Item Construction					+11,258	
Zero Emission Vehicle Charging Stations					+10,867	
DIFCOM-Radio Modernization and DM					+5,412	
TOTAL - CONSTRUCTION	18,193	18,193	+284	0	+27,941	46,418
Appropriation: NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE FUND						
National Wildlife Refuge Fund	13,228	13,228	0	0	-13,228	0
Appropriation: COOPERATIVE ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND						
HCP Land Acquisition	43,340	43,340	0	0	-19,638	23,702
Appropriation: NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION FUND						
	46,500	46,500	0	0	0	46,500
Appropriation: MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND						
African Elephant Conservation Fund	18,000	18,000	0	0	+1,000	19,000
Asian Elephant Conservation					+200	
Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund					+200	
Great Ape Conservation Fund					+200	
Marine Turtle Conservation Fund					+200	
Appropriation: NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION FUND						
	4,910	4,910	0	0	+3,000	7,910
Appropriation: STATE & TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS						
State Wildlife Formula Grants	72,362	72,362	0	0	+10,000	82,362
Competitive Grant Program (States)					+5,000	
Competitive Grant Program (Tribes)					+3,000	
					+2,000	
TOTAL, FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (Current Disc.)	1,596,361	1,596,361	+39,502	0	+336,151	1,972,014
RESCISSION / CANCELLATION OF BALANCES						
Account: COOPERATIVE END. SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND	-12,500	-12,500	0	0	+12,500	0
TOTAL, FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (Discretionary)	1,583,861	1,583,861	+39,502	0	+348,651	1,972,014

FY 2023 Summary of Fixed Cost Changes by Appropriation

Dollars in Thousands (\$000)

Fixed Cost Component	Resource		TOTAL
	Management	Construction	
Change in Pay Days	-3,664	-30	-3,694
CY 2021 Pay Raise - One Quarter	6,198	51	6,249
CY 2022 Pay Raise - Three Quarters	31,893	263	32,156
FERS Employer Contribution Increase	0	0	0
Departmental Working Capital Fund	1,915	0	1,915
Workers' Compensation Payments	-414	0	-414
Unemployment Compensation Payments	0	0	0
GSA and non-GSA Space Rental Payments	3,218	0	3,218
Net O&M Baseline Adjustment	72	0	72
TOTAL, Fixed Costs	39,218	284	39,502

Resource Management

Resource Management

Appropriations Language

For necessary expenses of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, as authorized by law, and for scientific and economic studies, general administration, and for the performance of other authorized functions related to such resources, [\$1,678,113,000]\$1,745,122,000, to remain available until September 30, [2023]2024: Provided, That not to exceed [\$22,279,000]\$23,946,000 shall be used for implementing subsections (a), (b), (c), and (e) of section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533) (except for processing petitions, developing and issuing proposed and final regulations, and taking any other steps to implement actions described in subsection (c)(2)(A), (c)(2)(B)(i), or (c)(2)(B)(ii)).

Note.—A full year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Authorizing Statutes

African Elephant Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 4201-4245, 1538). Authorizes funding for approved projects for research, conservation, management or protection of African elephants. Authorizes prohibitions against the sale, importation, and exportation of ivory derived from African elephants.

Agricultural Credit Act, (P. L. 100-233). Section 616 authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer lands, interest therein, to Federal or State agencies for conservation purposes. The Fish and Wildlife Service assesses inventory lands to determine when such lands would be of benefit to the National Wildlife Refuge System and makes transfer recommendations.

Airborne Hunting Act, (16 U.S.C. 742 j-1). Section 13 of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 prohibits taking or harassing wildlife from aircraft, except when protecting wildlife, livestock, and human health or safety as authorized by a Federal or State issued license or permit.

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 410hh-3233, 43 U.S.C 1602-1784). Provides for the designation and conservation of certain public lands in Alaska, including units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for the continuing subsistence needs of the Alaska Natives. Sec. 42(g) of this Act makes use of such Native lands subject to refuge regulations.

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, (43 U.S.C. 1601-1624). Provides various measures for settling the claims of Alaska Native peoples to land in Alaska, including authorization of selection and ownership of land within National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska by Native Corporations.

Anadromous Fish Conservation Act, (P. L. 89-304). Authorizes the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce to enter into cooperative agreements with the States and other non-Federal interests for the conservation, development, and enhancement of anadromous fish, including those in the Great Lakes, and to contribute up to 50 percent of the costs of carrying out such agreements.

Antarctic Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 2401). Provides for the conservation and protection of the fauna and flora of Antarctica, and their ecosystems.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act, (16 U.S.C. 470aa-47011). Provides for protection of archaeological resources and sites on public and Tribal lands and for increased cooperation between

government authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private collectors with collections obtained before October 31, 1979.

Arctic Tundra Habitat Emergency Conservation Act, (P.L.106-108). Requires the Secretary of the Interior to prepare, and as appropriate implement, a comprehensive, long-term plan for the management of mid-continent light geese and conservation of their habitat.

Asian Elephant Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 4261-4266, 1538). Provides for cooperative projects for the conservation and protection of Asian elephants.

Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, (16 U. S.C. 5151-5158). The purpose of this Act is to support and encourage development, implementation, and enforcement of effective interstate action regarding the conservation and management of Atlantic striped bass. The Act recognizes the commercial and recreational importance of Atlantic striped bass and establishes a consistent management scheme for its conservation. The three partners which share management responsibility for Atlantic striped bass are the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Every two years, the Services are required to produce an Atlantic Striped Bass Biennial Report to Congress on the status and health of Atlantic Coast Striped Bass Stocks.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, (16 U.S.C. 668-668d). This Act provides for the protection of Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles by prohibiting take, possession, sale, purchase, transport, export or import of such eagles or their parts or nests. Take, possession, and transport are permitted for certain authorized purposes.

Brown Tree Snake Eradication and Control Act, (P.L. 108-384). Through this Act, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture support a multi-agency and partner effort to eradicate brown tree snakes in Guam and to prevent introduction or establishment of this invasive species on other Pacific islands or the U.S. mainland.

Billy Frank Jr. Tell Your Story Act, (P.L. 114-101). Establishes the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial within the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. The Department of the Interior must: (1) establish the boundaries of the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial and to provide for its administration and interpretation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and (2) coordinate with representatives of the Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Puyallup, and Squaxin Island Indian Tribes in providing for that interpretation.

Chehalis River Basin Fishery Resources Study and Restoration Act, (P. L. 101-452). Authorizes a joint Federal, State, and Tribal study for the restoration of the fishery resources of the Chehalis River Basin, Washington.

Coastal Barrier Resources Act, as amended by the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990, (16 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Requires the Secretary (delegated to the Service) to maintain the maps of the Coastal Barrier Resources System, to review the system at least every five years for changes which have occurred as a result of natural forces, and to make minor and technical changes to the maps of the System reflecting those natural changes. It also requires the Secretary to submit a study to Congress on the need to include the west coast in the system, and to lead an interagency task force to provide recommendations to Congress for legislative action and Federal policies on developed and undeveloped coastal barriers.

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act, (16 U.S.C. 3951-3156). Provides a Federal grant program for the acquisition, restoration, management, and enhancement of coastal wetlands of States

adjacent to the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes, and the Pacific, including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Pacific U.S. insular areas. Provides that the Service update and digitize wetlands maps in Texas and conduct an assessment of the status, condition, and trends of wetlands in that State. Provides permanent authorization to appropriate receipts, coastal wetlands conservation grants and North American Wetlands Conservation projects.

Coastal Zone Management Act, (16 U.S.C. 1451-1464). Establishes a voluntary national program within the Department of Commerce to encourage coastal States to develop and implement coastal zone management plans. Activities that affect coastal zones must be consistent with approved State programs. The Act also establishes a National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS).

Colorado River Floodway Protection Act, (43 U.S.C 1600; 42 U.S.C. 4029). Establishes a Task Force to advise the Secretary of the Interior on the specific boundaries for and management for the area.

Colorado River Storage Project Act, (43 U.S.C. 620). Provides that facilities will be built and operated to mitigate losses of, and improve conditions for, fish and wildlife in connection with the Colorado River Storage.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, (42 U.S.C. 9601, et seq.). Provides that responsible parties, including Federal landowners, investigate and clean up releases of hazardous substances. Trustees for natural resources, which includes the Secretary of the Interior, may assess and recover damages for injury to natural resources from releases of hazardous substances and use the damages for restoration, replacement or acquisition of equivalent natural resources. Provides permanent authorization to appropriate receipts from responsible parties.

Coral Reef Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.). Promotes wise management and sustainable use of coral reef ecosystems and develop sound scientific information on the condition of coral reef ecosystems and threats to them. Provides financial resources to local communities and nongovernmental organizations to assist in the preservation of coral reefs. It establishes a formal mechanism for collecting and allocating monetary donations from the private sector to be used for coral reef conservation projects.

Delaware River Basin Restoration Act, (P.L. 114-322). Establishes a Delaware River Basin restoration program and directs the Secretary to produce a basin-wide strategy that draws on existing conservation efforts, involves partners, and provides for the implementation of a shared set of science-based restoration and protection activities, including cost-effective projects with measurable results that maximize conservation outcomes with no net gain of Federal employees. Establishes a voluntary grant and technical assistance program. Sunsets on September 30, 2023. Enacted as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016.

Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act of 2016, (P.L. 114-231). Sets forth a national policy on wildlife trafficking and several directions for the U.S. Secretary of State. Creates a Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, the co-chairs of which include the Secretary of the Interior. Authorizes anti-poaching and anti-trafficking programs. Amends the Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman's Protection Act to require that Pelly certifications made to the President by the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior be reported to Congress.

Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, (16 U.S.C. 3901). Provides for the collection of entrance fees, thirty percent of which may be used for refuge operations and maintenance, and for the Secretary of the Interior to establish and periodically review a national wetlands priority conservation plan for Federal and State wetlands acquisition, complete National Wetlands Inventory maps for the contiguous United States by

September 30, 1998, to update the report on wetlands status and trends by September 30, 1990, and at 10-year intervals thereafter.

Endangered Species Act, (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544). Prohibits the import, export, or taking of fish and wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species; provides for adding species to and removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species, and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery; provides for interagency cooperation to avoid take of listed species and for issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities; provides for cooperation with States, including authorization of financial assistance; and implements the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

Fallon-Paiute Shoshone Indian Water Settlement Act, (P.L. 101-618). Establishes the Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund. Funds are administered by the Service for use in restoring Lahontan Valley wetlands and recovering the endangered and threatened fish of Pyramid Lake. Section 206(a) authorizes the acquisition of water rights for restoring wetlands in Lahontan Valley. The Act stipulates that sufficient water rights be acquired to restore and sustain, on a long-term average, approximately 25,000 acres of primary wetland habitat within Nevada's Lahontan Valley.

Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Control Act, (7 U.S.C. 136-136y). Provides for the registration of pesticides to avoid unreasonable adverse effects to humans or the environment. Such registrations are considered Federal actions and are subject to consultations with the Service under the Endangered Species Act.

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), (16 U.S.C. 6801-6814). Through this Act, Congress authorized Federal collection of fees for recreational use of public lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service.

Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), (43 U.S.C. 2301-2306). Allows the sale of BLM lands identified for disposal, with sales proceeds used for land acquisition by the various land management agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Federal Power Act, (16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.). Provides that each license for hydropower projects issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission includes fish ways prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, and that conditions for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of fish and wildlife based on recommendations of the Service and other agencies.

Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), (33 U.S.C. 1251-1387). Section 404 (m) authorizes the Service to comment on permit applications submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters of the United States. Section 208(i) authorizes the Service to provide technical assistance to States in developing management practices as part of its water pollution control programs and to continue with the National Wetlands Inventory. Section 320 authorizes the establishment of a State/Federal cooperative program to nominate estuaries of national significance and to develop and implement management plans to restore and maintain the biological and chemical integrity of estuarine waters.

Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, (16 U.S.C. 742(a)-754). Establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 2901-2911). Directs the Secretary of the Interior to undertake research and conservation activities, in coordination with other Federal, State, international and private organizations, to fulfill responsibilities to conserve migratory nongame birds under existing authorities. The Secretary is required, for all species, subspecies, and migratory nongame birds, to monitor and assess population trends and status; to identify environmental change and human activities; and to identify species in need of additional conservation and identify conservation actions to ensure perpetuation of these species.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, (16 U.S.C. 661-666(e)). Directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.

Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act, (16 U.S.C. 777 note; P.L. 106-502). Congress reauthorized the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) as part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, P.L. 111-11. FRIMA was established in 2000 and has been an important tool for addressing fish screening and fish passage needs in the Pacific Northwest States.

Fishery Conservation and Management Act, (Magnuson-Stevens Act), (16 U.S.C. 1801-1882, 90 Stat. 331). Authorizes the conservation and management of the fishery resources found within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States, including anadromous species, through eight Regional Fishery Management Councils. Establishes the Service as a nonvoting member of the Councils.

Food Security Act, (16 U.S.C. 801-3945). Provides that the Secretary of Agriculture consult with the Secretary of the Interior on the identification of wetlands, determinations of exemptions, and issuance of regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act. Requires the Service to concur in wetland mitigation plans in association with minimal effect exemptions and to concur in conservation plans for lands proposed for inclusion in the Wetlands Reserve program. Establishes a program to protect and restore wetlands on Farmers Home Administration inventory property and provides for the Service to identify such wetlands.

Great Ape Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.). Authorizes grants to foreign governments, the CITES secretariat, and non-governmental organizations for the conservation of great apes. The funds are to be a sub-account of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund.

Great Lakes Critical Programs Act, (P.L. 101-596). Authorization for Service activities is contained in title III, the "Lake Champlain Special Designation Act of 1990".

Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, (P.L. 109-326). The 2006 reauthorization places new emphasis on terrestrial wildlife projects, whereas the previous Acts were primarily devoted to fisheries. The bill also reauthorizes the existing State and Tribal grant program and provides new authority for the Service to undertake regional restoration projects. In addition, it directs the Service to create and maintain a website to document actions taken as a result of the Act. Under authority of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2006, the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act Grant Program provides Federal grants on a competitive basis to States, Tribes and other interested entities to encourage cooperative conservation, restoration and management of fish and wildlife resources and their habitat in the Great Lakes basin.

Great Lakes Fishery Act, (16 U.S.C. 931-939). Implements the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries between the United States and Canada, and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and the Service to undertake lamprey control and other measures related to the Convention.

Highlands Conservation Act, (P.L. 108-421). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to the States of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania (Highland States) to preserve and protect high priority conservation land in the Highlands region, an area depicted on a National Forest Service map entitled "The Highlands Region" dated June 2004.

Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act, (16 U.S.C. 719 et seq.). Authorizes an annual Junior Duck Stamp competition and environmental education program for school children; provides for the licensing and marketing of winning designs, with proceeds used for awards and scholarships to participants. Public Law 109-166 reauthorizes the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act of 1994.

Klamath River Basin Fishery Resources Restoration Act, (16 U.S.C.460ss et seq.). Requires the Secretary to develop and implement a restoration plan for the Klamath River Basin.

Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378). Provides that the Secretary of the Interior designate injurious wildlife and ensure the humane treatment of wildlife shipped to the United States. Prohibits importation, exportation, transportation, sale, or purchase of fish and wildlife taken or possessed in violation of State, Federal, Indian Tribal, and foreign laws. Provides for enforcement of Federal wildlife laws, and Federal assistance to the States and foreign governments in the enforcement of non-Federal wildlife laws.

Marine Mammal Protection Act, (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407). Establishes a moratorium on taking and importing marine mammals, including parts and products. Defines the Federal responsibility for conservation of marine mammals, with management authority vested in the Department for the sea otter, walrus, polar bear, dugong, and manatee.

Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grants, (16 U.S.C. 1421f; 114 Stat. 2765. Title II of P.L. 106-555). Amends the Marine Mammal Protection Act to authorize grants to non-governmental organizations which participate in the rescue and rehabilitation of stranded marine mammals.

Marine Turtle Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 6601-6607). Establishes a Marine Turtle Conservation Fund in the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. The fund is a separate account to assist in the conservation of marine turtles, and the nesting habitats of marine turtles in foreign countries.

Migratory Bird Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 715-715d). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct investigations and publish documents related to North American birds and establishes a Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) to approve areas recommended by the Secretary for acquisition. The MBCC also approves wetlands conservation projects recommended by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act, (16 U.S.C. 718). This Act, commonly referred to as the Duck Stamp Act, requires waterfowl hunters, 16 years of age or older, to purchase and possess a valid Federal waterfowl hunting stamp prior to taking migratory waterfowl. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to use \$1 million from sales of migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps to promote additional sales of stamps.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, (16 U.S.C. 703-712). Implements four international treaties that affect migratory birds common to the United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and the former Soviet Union. Establishes Federal responsibility for protection and management of migratory and non-game birds, including the establishment of season length, bag limits, and other hunting regulations, and the issuance of permits to band, possess or otherwise make use of migratory birds.

National Aquaculture Development Act, (16 U.S.C. 2801-2810). Establishes a coordinating group, the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture (JSA). The JSA has been responsible for developing the National Aquaculture Development Plan. The plan establishes a strategy for the development of an aquaculture industry in the United States.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, (NEPA), (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). Provides that the Service examine the environmental impacts, incorporate environmental information, and use public participation in the planning and implementation of all actions; integrate NEPA with other planning requirements; prepare NEPA documents to facilitate better environmental decision making; and review Federal agency environmental plans and documents when the Service has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impacts involved.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act, (16 U.S.C. 3701-3709). Establishes a federally-chartered, nonprofit corporation to encourage and administer donations to benefit Service programs and other activities to conserve fish, wildlife, and plant resources.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, (16 U.S.C. 470-470b, 470c-470n). Directs Federal agencies to preserve, restore, and maintain historic cultural environments.

National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.). Provides authority, guidelines and directives for the Service to improve the National Wildlife Refuge System; administers a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and restoration of fish, wildlife and plant resources and habitat; ensures the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of refuges is maintained; defines compatible wildlife-dependent recreation as appropriate general public use of refuges; establishes hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education as priority uses; establishes a formal process for determining compatible uses of refuges; and provides for public involvement in developing comprehensive conservation plans for refuges.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, (P.L. 105-57). Spells out wildlife conservation as the fundamental mission of the refuge system; requires comprehensive conservation planning to guide management of the refuge system; directs the involvement of private citizens in land management decisions; and provides that compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate use that should receive priority in refuge planning and management.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act, (P.L. 106-408). Reinforces *National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act* provisions to raise public understanding and appreciation for the refuge system; calls on the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Centennial Commission to oversee special public outreach activities leading up to and during the Centennial year, leverage resources with public and private partners for outreach efforts, and plan and host a major conference in 2003; calls on the Service to develop a long-term plan to address the highest priority operations, maintenance, and construction needs of the National Wildlife Refuge System; and requires an annual report assessing the operations and maintenance backlogs and transition costs associated with newly acquired refuges lands.

National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act (P.L. 105-242) Amended the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to promote volunteer programs and community partnerships for the benefit of National Wildlife Refuges.

National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Improvement Act, (P.L. 111-357). Authorizes cooperative agreements with nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and to promote volunteer, outreach, and education programs.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601). addresses the rights of lineal descendants, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations (parties with standing) to Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony (cultural items). It requires Federal agencies and museums to provide information about Native American cultural items to parties with standing and, upon presentation of a valid claim, ensure the item(s) undergo disposition or repatriation.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 6101 et. seq.). Authorizes grants for the conservation of neotropical migratory birds in the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean, with 75 percent of the amounts made available to be expended on projects outside the United States. The funds are to be a sub-account of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. Title III of P.L. 109-363, reauthorized appropriations for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

New England Fishery Resources Restoration Act, (P.L. 101-593). Authorizes the Service to formulate, establish, and implement cooperative programs to restore and maintain nationally significant interjurisdictional fishery resources in New England river systems.

Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention and Control Act, as amended by the National Invasive Species Act, (NISA, 16 U.S.C. 4701 et seq.). Authorizes the Service to develop and implement a program to prevent and control infestations of zebra mussels and other nonindigenous aquatic invasive species in waters of the United States.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 4401). Authorizes grants to public-private partnerships in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to protect, enhance, restore, and manage waterfowl, other migratory birds and other fish and wildlife, and the wetland ecosystems and other habitats upon which they depend, consistent with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. There is a Standard and a Small Grants Program. Both are competitive grants programs which require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute towards a project but are not eligible as match. Public Law 109-322 reauthorized the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Nutria Eradication and Control Act, (P.L. 108-16). Provides for the States of Maryland and Louisiana to implement nutria eradication or control measures and restore marshland damaged by nutria.

Oil Pollution Act, (P.L. 101-380). Provides that the Service consult with others on the development of a fish and wildlife response plan for the protection, rescue, and rehabilitation of, and the minimization of risk of damage to fish and wildlife resources and their habitat harmed or jeopardized by an oil discharge.

Partnerships for Wildlife Act, (16 U.S.C. 3741-3744). This Act establishes a Wildlife Conservation and Appreciation Fund to receive appropriated funds and donations from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and other private sources to assist the State fish and game agencies in carrying out their responsibilities for conservation of nongame species and authorizes grants to the States for programs and projects to conserve nongame species.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act, (16 U.S.C. 3771-3774). Provides for the restoration, enhancement, and management of fish and wildlife habitats on private land through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, a program that works with private landowners to conduct cost-effective habitat projects for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources in the United States.

Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen's Protective Act, (22 U.S.C. 1978). Authorizes the President to embargo wildlife products, including fish, and limit other imports from nations whose nationals are determined by the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce to be engaging in trade or take that undermines the effectiveness of any international treaty or convention for the protection of endangered or threatened species to which the United States is a party.

Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act, (P.L. 113-239). Authorizes the Service to permanently allow any State to provide hunting and conservation stamps for migratory birds (referred to as Federal Duck Stamps) electronically. The electronic stamps would remain valid for 45 days to allow for the physical stamps to arrive in the mail.

Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (P.L. 91-378, amended through P.L. 116-9). Establishes a pilot program in the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture designated as the Youth Conservation Corps.

Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, (16 U.S.C. 2602-2645) and ***Energy Security Act of 1980***, (16 U.S.C. 792-828(c)). Authorizes the Service to investigate and report on effects of hydropower development on fish and wildlife during the licensing process of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Recreational Use of Fish and Wildlife Areas, (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4). Commonly known as the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use when such use does not interfere with the primary purpose for which these areas were established.

Refuge Recreation Act, (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4). Public Law 87-714, approved September 28, 1962 (76 Stat.653) as amended by Public Law 89-669, approved October 14, 1966, (80 Stat.930) and P.L. 92-534, approved October 23, 1972, (86 Stat. 1063). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries and other conservation areas for recreational use, when such uses do not interfere with the areas' primary purposes.

Resource Conservation Recovery Act, (42 U.S.C. 6901). Establishes standards for Federal agencies on the treatment, transportation, storage, and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes on Federal lands and facilities.

Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, (16. U.S.C. 5306(a), 1538). Authorizes grants to other nations and to the CITES Secretariat for programs directly or indirectly assisting in the conservation of rhinoceros and tigers. Prohibits the sale, importation, and exportation of products derived from any species of rhinoceros and tiger.

Salmon and Steelhead and Conservation and Enhancement Act of 1980, (16 U.S.C. 3301, 11-15, 21-25, 31-36, 41-45). Provides for management and enhancement planning to help prevent a further decline of salmon and steelhead stocks, and to assist in increasing the supply of these stocks within the Columbia River conservation area and the Washington conservation area.

Sikes Act, (16 U.S.C. 670a-670o). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to cooperate with the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Bureau of Land Management, and State agencies in planning, developing, maintaining and rehabilitating Federal lands for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources and their habitat.

Strategic Response to Asian Carp Invasion Act, (P.L. 113-121). Requires the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey, to lead a multiagency effort to slow the spread of Asian Carp in the Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basins and tributaries by providing high-level technical assistance,

coordination, best practices, and support to State and local government strategies, to slow, and eventually eliminate, the threat posed by such Carp. Enacted in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014.

Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, (30 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to regulate surface mining and reclamation at existing and future mining areas. The Service provides technical assistance for fish and wildlife aspects of the Department of the Interior's programs on active and abandoned mine lands.

Water Resources Development Act, (90 Stat. 2921). Authorizes the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan to mitigate fish and wildlife losses caused by power generation at four Corps of Engineers dams on the Lower Snake River in Washington.

Wild Bird Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 4901-4916). Requires that all trade in wild birds involving the United States is biologically sustainable and to the benefit of the species, and by limiting or prohibiting imports of exotic birds when not beneficial to the species.

Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136) Established the National Wilderness Preservation System, a national network of more than 800 federally-designated wilderness areas. These wilderness areas are managed by the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Forest Service.

Youth Conservation Corps Act, (16 USC 1701-1706) as amended by P.L. 93-408, September 3, 1974. Expands and makes permanent the Youth Conservation Corps, and for other purposes. The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program, started in 1971, is a summer employment program for young men and women (ages 15–18) from all segments of society who work, learn, and earn together by doing projects for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System lands and National Fish Hatcheries. The objectives of this program (as reflected in Public Law 93-408) authorize the Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service to operate the YCC Program.

Executive Orders

The Executive Orders listed are not an exhaustive list and are those most frequently referenced and used by the Service.

Floodplain Management, (Executive Order 11988). Requires that federally-owned floodplains be protected through restricting future activities that would harm the floodplain resource or withhold such properties from lease or disposal to non-Federal public or private partners.

Migratory Birds, (Executive Order 13186). Directs Federal agencies taking actions that may have measurable negative impacts on migratory bird populations to enter into memoranda of understanding (MOU) with the Service to promote conservation of migratory bird populations and directs the Secretary of the Interior to establish a multi-agency Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds.

Protection of Wetlands, (Executive Order 11990). Requires that federally-owned wetlands proposed for lease or conveyance to non-Federal public or private parties be protected through restricting any future uses that would degrade or harm the wetland resource in the conveyance or withhold such properties from lease or disposal.

Recreational Fisheries, (Executive Order 12962). Directs Federal agencies to improve the quantity, function, and sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased resources for recreational fishing opportunities. The Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service are ordered

to promote compatibility and to reduce conflicts between the administration of the *Endangered Species Act* and recreational fisheries. The Secretary of the Interior is directed to expand the role of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership council to monitor specific Federal activities affecting aquatic systems and the recreational fisheries they support.

Combating Wildlife Trafficking, (Executive Order 13648). Directs agencies to combat the illegal poaching and wildlife trade of protected species, both domestically and internationally. Wildlife trafficking not only endangers the survival of wildlife species, but also contributes to global instability and undermines security. The Secretary of the Interior will co-chair a Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking with the Secretary of State and Attorney General, or their designees.

Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects, (Executive Order 13604). Directs agencies to make the Federal permitting and review process of infrastructure projects efficient and effective to support economic growth while ensuring the health, safety, and security of the environment and communities. Agencies are to provide transparency, consistency, and predictability in the process for both project sponsors and affected communities.

Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis, (Executive Order 13990). Directs all executive departments and agencies to immediately review and, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law, take action to address the promulgation of Federal regulations and other actions during the last 4 years that conflict with national objectives, and to immediately commence work to confront the climate crisis.

Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, (Executive Order 14008). Directs climate considerations be an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security. The United States will work with other countries and partner to put the world on a sustainable climate pathway and build resistance against the impacts of climate change.

Major Treaties and Conventions

The Service is party to numerous International Treaties and Conventions, all of which cannot be listed here due to space constraints. However, those listed below are more pertinent to the daily activities of Service programs.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Flora and Fauna, (TIAS 8249). Parties who signed the Convention in March of 1973 agreed to restrict international trade in all species threatened with extinction (Appendix I species), all species which may be threatened with extinction unless trade is halted or restricted (Appendix II species), and all species which the parties identify as being subject to regulation for the purpose of preventing or restricting exploitation (Appendix III species). Many species listed under CITES are also listed under the *Endangered Species Act*. The Service is responsible for issuing all CITES permits in the United States.

Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation in the Western Hemisphere, (56 Stat. 1354). Signed in October of 1940, this Convention authorizes the contracting parties to establish national parks, national reserves, nature monuments, and strict wilderness reserves for the preservation of flora and fauna, especially migratory birds.

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar), (TIAS 11084). The Ramsar Convention, ratified by over 90 nations, promotes the sustainable management of important wetlands around the world, especially as habitat for waterfowl. The Service's objective with this initiative is to strengthen worldwide collaboration regarding conservation and management of wetlands habitats which sustain resources shared by or of importance to all countries of the globe.

Summary of Requirements
Appropriation: Resource Management
(Dollars in Thousands)

	2021 Actual/Enacted		2022 Annualized CR		Fixed Costs	Internal Transfers		Program Changes (+/-)		2023 Request		Change from 2022 CR (+/-)	
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	(+/-)	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
Ecological Services													
Listing	108	20,767	108	20,767	+667	0	0	+14	+2,512	122	23,946	+14	+3,179
Planning and Consultation	612	109,251	612	109,251	+4,015	0	0	+194	+39,541	806	152,807	+194	+43,556
Conservation and Restoration	166	34,617	166	34,617	+1,058	0	0	+93	+18,599	259	54,274	+93	+19,657
Recovery	454	105,031	454	105,031	+2,783	0	0	+38	+17,321	492	125,135	+38	+20,104
Subtotal, Ecological Services	1,340	269,666	1,340	269,666	+8,523	0	0	+339	+77,973	1,679	356,162	+339	+86,496
Habitat Conservation													
Partners for Fish and Wildlife	206	56,859	206	56,859	+1,182	0	0	+15	+9,356	221	67,397	+15	+10,538
Coastal Program	43	13,360	43	13,360	+360	0	0	+6	+2,256	49	15,976	+6	+2,616
Subtotal, Habitat Conservation	249	70,219	249	70,219	+1,542	0	0	+21	+11,612	270	83,373	+21	+13,154
National Wildlife Refuge System													
Wildlife and Habitat Management	1,201	239,568	1,201	239,568	+6,732	0	0	+58	+27,349	1,259	273,649	+58	+34,081
Visitor Services	480	75,033	480	75,033	+2,290	0	0	+60	+19,704	540	97,027	+60	+21,994
Refuge Law Enforcement	214	40,907	214	40,907	+1,357	0	0	+56	+8,008	270	50,272	+56	+9,365
Conservation Planning	16	2,523	16	2,523	+90	0	0	+10	+3,071	26	5,684	+10	+3,161
Refuge Maintenance	523	145,822	523	145,822	+2,367	0	0	+70	+23,064	593	171,253	+70	+25,431
Subtotal, National Wildlife Refuge System	2,434	503,853	2,434	503,853	+12,836	0	0	+254	+81,196	2,688	597,885	+254	+94,032
Conservation and Enforcement													
Migratory Bird Management	189	47,873	189	47,873	+1,281	0	0	+35	+21,070	224	70,224	+35	+22,351
Law Enforcement	309	86,860	376	86,860	+2,495	-1	-144	+41	+10,122	416	99,333	+40	+12,473
International Affairs	72	23,032	85	23,032	+550	0	0	+9	+8,233	94	31,815	+9	+8,783
Subtotal, Conservation and Enforcement	570	157,765	650	157,765	+4,326	-1	-144	+85	+39,425	734	201,372	+84	+43,607
Fish and Aquatic Conservation													
National Fish Hatchery System Operations	332	65,551	332	65,551	+1,696	0	0	+48	+16,223	380	83,470	+48	+17,919
Maintenance and Equipment	64	25,822	64	25,822	+289	0	0	+20	+23,724	84	49,835	+20	+24,013
Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation	293	115,240	293	115,240	+1,907	0	0	+22	+9,962	315	127,109	+22	+11,869
Subtotal, Fish and Aquatic Conservation	689	206,613	689	206,613	+3,892	0	0	+90	+49,909	779	260,414	+90	+53,801
Cooperative Landscape Conservation	58	12,500	60	12,500	+411	0	0	+25	+6,102	85	19,013	+25	+6,513
Science Support													
Adaptive Science	5	10,517	6	10,517	+35	0	0	+9	+12,333	15	22,885	+9	+12,368
Service Science	16	6,750	17	6,750	+139	0	0	+17	+8,708	34	15,597	+17	+8,847
Subtotal, Science Support	21	17,267	23	17,267	+174	0	0	26	+21,041	49	38,482	+26	+21,215
General Operations													
Central Office Operations	195	25,758	195	25,758	+1,380	0	0	+25	+7,233	220	34,371	+25	+8,613
Management and Administration	612	44,166	612	44,166	+3,973	+1	144	+52	+16,151	665	64,434	+53	+20,268
Servicewide Bill Paying	0	35,748	0	35,748	+1,501	0	0	0	+8,975	0	46,224	0	+10,476
Aviation Management	8	3,237	8	3,237	+45	0	0	0	+18	8	3,300	0	+63
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	1	7,022	1	7,022	+10	0	0	0	+2,000	1	9,032	0	+2,010
National Conservation Training Center	100	26,014	100	26,014	+605	0	0	+6	+4,441	106	31,060	+6	+5,046
Subtotal, General Operations	916	141,945	916	141,945	+7,514	+1	+144	+83	+38,818	1,000	188,421	+84	+46,476
Damage Recovery Provision													
			0	0	0	0	0	0	+1,000	0	1,000	0	+1,000
Total, Resource Management	6,277	1,379,828	6,361	1,379,828	+39,218	0	0	+923	+327,076	7,284	1,746,122	+923	+366,294

*Does not include supplemental funding

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Resource Management
Justification of Fixed Costs and Internal Realignments**
(Dollars In Thousands)

Fixed Cost Changes and Projections	2022 Total or Change	2022 to 2023 Change
Change in Number of Pay Days <small>This reflects changes in pay associated with the change in the number of paid days between FY 2022 and FY 2023. The number of paid days in FY 2023 is one day less than FY 2022.</small>	+0	-3,664
Pay Raise <small>The President's Budget for FY2023 includes one quarter of a planned 2.7% pay raise for FY 2022 and three quarters of a planned 4.6% pay raise for FY 2023.</small>	+38,091	+18,438
Departmental Working Capital Fund <small>The change reflects the final FY 2023 Central Bill approved by the Working Capital Fund Consortium.</small>	+761	+1,915
Worker's Compensation Payments <small>The amounts reflects final chargeback costs of compensating injured employees and dependents of employees who suffer accidental deaths while on duty. Costs for the BY will reimburse the Department of Labor, Federal Employees Compensation Fund, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 8147(b) as amended by Public Law 94-273.</small>	-471	-414
Unemployment Compensation Payments <small>The amounts reflect projected changes in the costs of unemployment compensation claims to be paid to the Department of Labor, Federal Employees Compensation Account, in the Unemployment Trust Fund, pursuant to Public Law 96-499.</small>	+55	+0
Rental Payments <small>The amounts reflect changes in the costs payable to General Services Administration (GSA) and others for office and non-office space as estimated by GSA, as well as the rental costs of other currently occupied space. These costs include building security. Costs of mandatory office relocations, i.e. relocations in cases where due to external events there is no alternative but to vacate the currently occupied space, are also included.</small>	+2,141	+3,218
Baseline Adjustments for O&M Increases <small>In accordance with space maximization efforts across the Federal Government, this adjustment captures the associated increase to baseline operations and maintenance requirements resulting from movement out of GSA or direct-leased (commercial) space and into Bureau-owned space. While the GSA portion of fixed costs will go down as a result of these moves, Bureaus often encounter an increase to baseline O&M costs not otherwise captured in fixed costs. This category of funding properly adjusts the baseline fixed cost amount to maintain steady-state funding for these requirements.</small>	+18	+72
Internal Realignments and Non-Policy/Program Changes (Net-Zero)		2023 (+/-)
Management & Administration: Information Resources and Technology Mgmt. <small>This moves funds from Office of Law Enforcement to Management & Administration. This will cover one FTE to handle Law Enforcement related FOIA work in Information Resources and Technology Management.</small>		+144
LAW ENFORCEMENT: Law Enforcement Operations: General Program Activities <small>This moves funds from Office of Law Enforcement to Management & Administration. This will cover one FTE to handle Law Enforcement related FOIA work in Information Resources and Technology Management.</small>		-144
Fish and Aquatic Conservation: Population Assessment and Cooperative Management: Great Lakes Consent Decree <small>This moves funds from Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration to Great Lakes Consent Decree. While new staff has not been added to this Program since 2000, budgets have not kept pace with increasing costs over time, so this shift is necessary to continue to fully fund their work. FY22 projected salary and benefit costs of staff that conduct work in support of the Great Lakes Consent Decree across three Regional FWCO's totals approximately \$1.04 million. The Region will continue to cover costs of vessels, gear, and other equipment needed to conduct this work.</small>		+110
Fish and Aquatic Conservation: Population Assessment and Cooperative Management: Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration <small>This moves funds from Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration to Great Lakes Consent Decree. While new staff has not been added to this Program since 2000, budgets have not kept pace with increasing costs over time, so this shift is necessary to continue to fully fund their work. FY22 projected salary and benefit costs of staff that conduct work in support of the Great Lakes Consent Decree across three Regional FWCO's totals approximately \$1.04 million. The Region will continue to cover costs of vessels, gear, and other equipment needed to conduct this work.</small>		-110

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Ecological Services

ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

ACTIVITY: ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

Item		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change from 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Listing	(\$000) FTE	20,767 108	20,767 108	+667		+2,512 +14	23,946 122	+3,179 +14
Planning and Consultation	(\$000) FTE	109,251 612	109,251 612	+4,015		+39,541 +194	152,807 806	+43,556 +194
Conservation and Restoration	(\$000) FTE	34,617 166	34,617 166	+1,058		+18,599 +93	54,274 259	+19,657 +93
Recovery	(\$000) FTE	105,031 454	105,031 454	+2,783		+17,321 +38	125,135 492	+20,104 +38
Total, Ecological Services	(\$000) FTE	269,666 1,340	269,666 1,340	+8,523		+77,973 +339	356,162 1,679	+86,496 +339

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Ecological Services

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Listing	+2,000	+14
• Planning and Consultation Activities: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	+17,000	+93
• Planning and Consultation Activities	+10,700	+51
• Energy	+8,000	+47
• Pesticide Consultations	+500	+3
• NEPA Coordination with CEQ	+500	+0
• Environmental Response and Restoration	+6,000	+40
• Candidate Conservation	+4,800	+27
• National Wetlands Inventory	+4,000	+3
• Coastal Barrier Resources Act	+2,000	+13
• Marine Mammals	+1,500	+10
• Sea Otter Assessment	-500	+0
• Recovery Activities	+15,508	+38
• Electric Vehicles	+922	+0
• Baseline Capacity	+6,143	+0
• Florida Grasshopper Sparrow	-100	+0
• Wolf-Livestock Demonstration Program	-1,000	+0
Program Changes	+77,973	+339

Overview

Program Mission

The Ecological Services Program serves the American people by working closely with Federal, State, Tribal and private partners to protect trust natural resources, focusing on imperiled species and habitats. Through leadership in environmental response and restoration; environmental reviews of Federal projects; listing and recovery of candidate, threatened, and endangered species; management of decision support and mapping tools; and financial assistance to States and others under the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund and other grant authorities; the Program works closely with our partners to meet the conservation challenges of today and tomorrow. As a result, the Ecological Services Program is well situated to advance the Administration's agenda to "Build Back Better" and address the predominant conservation challenges of our time: economic recovery and climate change.

Ecological Services will support the implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and economic recovery by:

- Assisting Federal, State, Tribal and private entities in siting and developing environmentally sound infrastructure and energy projects that minimize and mitigate impacts to trust resources, preserve habitat connectivity, improve our energy infrastructure, and reduce our Nation's emission of greenhouse gases;
- Engaging in early environmental reviews of infrastructure projects so that project proponents proceed with well-designed and justified projects that achieve their goal and minimize impacts to natural resources;
- Improving our analytical tools and data to inform and facilitate decision making during project reviews;
- Continuing to invest in new tools and technologies to assist other Federal agencies, industry, States, Tribes and other partners in their decision-making to advance conservation of listed and at-risk species while balancing the needs of the communities; and
- Pursuing shovel-ready projects that advance recovery of listed species while also creating jobs.

We will integrate **Climate Change** into our processes. Examples include:

- Considering climate risk assessments as part of species status assessments, listing determinations, critical habitat designations, project reviews and permitting, and recovery planning and implementation;
- Prioritizing environmental reviews for clean, green energy and projects that will lead the Nation toward carbon pollution free electricity by 2035 and a net-zero emission economy by 2050;
- Encouraging mitigation and adaptation efforts for riverine or coastal projects and providing information and tools to support community planning to prevent repeated damage from natural disasters;
- Reducing the potential of harm to the environment through planning and preparedness for wildfires, and oil and hazardous materials spill response and restoration;
- Supporting the Administration's America the Beautiful initiative to protect biodiversity and create a natural environment more resilient to the effects of climate change by conserving at least 30% of our lands and waters by 2030; and
- Supporting the Civilian Climate Corps initiative by identifying work opportunities where climate change adaptation studies and projects can be completed.

Ecological Services will advance **Racial Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** within our agency and in our work with all the public we serve by:

- Connecting with local communities to get their input on our decisions, and translating our outreach into other languages as appropriate;

- Considering the needs of underserved communities when providing technical assistance for infrastructure and energy projects;
- Supporting land acquisition and restoration projects that connect underserved communities with their local natural resources and wildlife;
- Addressing environmental concerns in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by pollution, including inclusive assessment and restoration planning and rectifying impacts through restoration;
- Providing foundational scientific information that enables conservation to underserved communities;
- Pursuing hiring practices that recruit from all segments of our communities so that our workforce reflects our Nation; and
- Providing a safe, inclusive culture so all employees feel welcome and heard and have equal opportunity to advance the mission of the Ecological Services Program.

The Ecological Services Program is actively engaged in the Administration's America the Beautiful initiative. This inclusive and collaborative conservation vision calls for a decade-long, locally led and voluntary campaign to conserve, connect and restore 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030. The following are some examples of the role the Ecological Services Program is undertaken to advance the early focus areas of this initiative:

- Focus Areas 1, 4, and 6: Create more parks and safe outdoor opportunities in nature-deprived communities, increase access for outdoor recreation, and create jobs by investing in restoration and resilience.
 - E.S. actions: In areas injured by spills of hazardous materials or oil, the Service uses its technical expertise to restore natural resources through on-the-ground activities. Consideration is given to creating more outdoor opportunities while planning for restoration with local communities and trustees. In FY 2021, 25 restoration projects with direct benefits to threatened and endangered species were completed with Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) funds, and more than 4,200 acres and 100 miles of waterways were made available for public recreational activities. The economic impact of NRDAR restoration generates millions of dollars for the local economy and hundreds of year-long jobs.
- Focus Areas 2 and 3: Support tribally led conservation and restoration priorities and expand collaborative conservation of fish and wildlife habitats and corridors.
 - E.S. actions: All components of the Ecological Services Program work closely with tribes to support conservation and restoration priorities. Tribes often submit traditional ecological knowledge to inform listing decisions, consultations, and recovery actions. Recovery planning and implementation for species of interest to tribes are closely coordinated in order to expand collaborative conservation of fish and wildlife habitats across all affected landowners, and to build wildlife corridors across the range of the species.
 - The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund provides grants to states and territories to restore and manage at risk species on their lands. Priority is given to projects with higher non-Federal match requirements, demonstrating the collaborative conservation of many partners in the project.
- Focus Area 5: Incentivize and reward the voluntary conservation efforts of fishers, ranchers, farmers, and forest owners (working lands).
 - ES actions: For many listed species, conservation happens through voluntary efforts on private working lands. These voluntary conservation actions are key to helping to prevent species from needing the protection of the Endangered Species Act while contributing to restoring habitat, providing carbon-sequestering opportunities and other benefits while providing regulatory certainty to participating landowners and potentially eliminating the need to list a species. By providing technical assistance to landowners in development of Candidate Conservation

Agreements and Safe Harbor Agreements, the Ecological Services Program helps these communities achieve a balance between species conservation and economic and local priorities.

Program Elements

To achieve our mission and the Administration's priorities, the Ecological Services Program is comprised of the following program elements:

- **Listing** – Uses the best scientific and commercial information available to identify plant and animal species that are in danger of extinction or are likely to become in danger of extinction within the foreseeable future, and thus need protection under the ESA.
- **Planning and Consultation** – Provides integrated advanced project planning, environmental review, and permitting assistance to resolve environmental concerns in support of economic growth, renewable energy production, landscape planning, and resilient community development.
- **Conservation and Restoration** – Delivers species conservation in partnership with States, Tribes, local governments, and private landowners to prevent the need to list a species when possible; protect and restore habitat important to Federal trust species; and provide databases and mapping products that are essential tools for conservation and restoration of species and habitats by landowners, other Federal and State agencies, and the public.
- **Recovery** – Works with communities and stakeholders to recover endangered and threatened species, with the goal to minimize or reduce threats to a listed species and improve their status so the species no longer needs Federal protection.

Applicable Laws and Acts

The Service has the statutory mandate and trust responsibility to fulfill its mission derived from various statutes and authorities. The Ecological Services Program plays a significant role in implementing the roles and responsibilities assigned to for the Service under the following authorities (not an exhaustive list):

- *Coastal Barrier Resources Act*, as amended by the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990, (16 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Under this authority, the Service, acting for the Secretary of Interior, maintains the maps of the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS), including proposing changes to Congress to reflect natural and land use changes in the CBRS.
- *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act*, (42 U.S.C. 9601, et seq.). Under this authority, the Service investigates releases of hazardous substances and works with trustees for natural resources to assess and recover damages for injury to natural resources from releases of hazardous substances and to use the damages for restoration, replacement or acquisition of equivalent natural resources.
- *Emergency Wetlands Resources Act*, (16 U.S.C. 3901). Under this authority, the Service maintains the National Wetlands Inventory and provides the national report on wetlands status and trends at 10- year intervals.
- *Endangered Species Act (ESA)*, (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544). The purpose of the ESA is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. The Service and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) administer the ESA. The Service has primary responsibility for terrestrial and freshwater organisms, while the responsibilities of NMFS are mainly marine wildlife such as whales and anadromous fish such as salmon.
- *Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act)*, (33 U.S.C. 1251-1387). Section 404 (m) authorizes the Service to comment on permit applications submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters of the United States. Section 208(i) authorizes the Service to provide technical assistance to States in developing management practices as part of its water pollution control programs and to continue with the National Wetlands Inventory.
- *Federal Power Act*, (161 S.C. 791a et seq.). This Act provides that each license for hydropower projects issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission includes fish ways prescribed by

the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, and that conditions for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of fish and wildlife are based on recommendations of the Service and other agencies.

- *Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA)*, (16 U.S.C. 661-666(e)). One of the early conservation laws, this Act directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- *Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)*, (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407). Under this authority, the Service manages the conservation of certain marine mammals, such as sea otter, walrus, polar bear, dugong, and manatee, consistent with the provisions of the Act.
- *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*, (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). The Service implements this Act to examine the impacts of its actions on the human environment, using public participation in the planning and implementation of all actions. The Service also reviews Federal agency environmental plans and documents when the Service has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impacts involved.
- *Oil Pollution Act (OPA)*, (P.L. 101-380). Under this authority, the Service consults with others on the development of a fish and wildlife response plan for the protection, rescue, and rehabilitation of, and the minimization of risk of damage to fish and wildlife resources and their habitat harmed or jeopardized by an oil discharge.

ACTIVITY: ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

Subactivity: Listing

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Budget Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Listing	(\$000)	20,767	20,767	+667	0	+2,512	23,946	+3,179
	FTE	108	108	0	0	+14	122	+14

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Listing

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Listing	+2,000	+14
• Baseline Capacity	+512	+0
Program Changes	+2,512	+14

Program Overview

The purpose of the ESA is to conserve endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems on which they depend, and thus advance wildlife conservation. Before a plant or animal species can receive the protection provided by the ESA, it must first be added to the Federal lists of threatened and endangered wildlife and plants. Placing a species on the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife (50 CFR 17.11) or the List of Endangered and Threatened Plants (50 CFR 17.12), and designating critical habitat as required under the ESA, focuses resources and efforts by the Service and its partners on recovering the species. Through the Listing subactivity, the Service uses the best scientific information available to identify foreign and domestic plant and animal species that are in danger of extinction or likely to become in danger of extinction within the foreseeable future and thus meet the ESA’s definition of endangered or threatened. This determination helps identify and address the conservation needs of the species, including the designation of critical habitat. Legal protections afforded under sections 7 and 9 of the ESA become effective upon listing, preventing the decline and extinction of many species. Information sought and compiled through the rule-making process associated with the listing determination informs and streamlines subsequent section 7 consultation and section 10 permitting activities and provides information crucial for recovery planning and implementation. In many ways, the listing process sets the stage for recovery needs and objectives, which facilitates early response and implementation.

The ESA uses the following definitions for listing determinations:

ESA DEFINITIONS	
<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
A species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.	A species is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

The Service's Endangered Species Listing subactivity supports development of the recommendations to the Director for listing a species as "Threatened" or "Endangered," uplisting a species from "Threatened" to "Endangered," and designating critical habitat. Species considered for listing can be identified independently by the Service or brought to the Service's attention by petitions received from the public under Section 4 of the Act. The Service also receives petitions for amendments to critical habitat and other actions. Under the ESA, when the Service receives a petition for listing or critical habitat amendments, it must respond within set timeframes. The Listing subactivity does not fund delisting and downlisting recommendations, which are funded through the Recovery subactivity.

Listing determinations, critical habitat designations, and their associated processes are important tools that support the Service's goal to recover species. This support stems in large part from the information developed when conducting the analysis of whether a species meets the definition of threatened or endangered. The Service works closely with States and Tribes during the listing process, which includes the development of a species status assessment (SSA) that reflects the best available scientific and commercial information regarding life history, biology, and the factors affecting the viability of a species, including the impacts of a changing climate. The Service maintains a National Listing Workplan to encourage States, Tribes and the public to undertake conservation activities now for species on the workplan so that the species does not need the protection of the ESA.¹ Recovery efforts for species are also initially outlined based on information to address threats identified within the listing rules. In this way, listing packages are a crucial step on the road to recovery.

The broad range of management tools for domestic species includes recovery planning and implementation under ESA section 4, cooperation with States under section 6, coordination with other Federal agencies under section 7, full take prohibitions under section 9, management agreements and permits under section 10, and other laws and treaties such as the MMPA or Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). In contrast, foreign species' management tools are limited to import and trade restrictions through ESA section 9 and CITES, education and public awareness, and conservation funding through grants. The continuation of a budget sub-cap for listing allows the Service, within its existing resources, to balance its duty to protect both foreign and domestic species in a way that will not detract from its efforts to protect imperiled domestic species.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Support implementation of the approved National Listing Workplan. This plan identifies and prioritizes 12-month findings, listing rules, and critical habitat rules that are required by law. Based on the requested funding level for FY 2023, the Service plans to publish 12-month findings, listing rules, and critical habitat rules for 63 species in FY 2023. Listing determinations will be based on SSAs.
- Support staff work on SSAs, petition findings, rules, public hearings, printing, and economic analyses for critical habitat.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Listing is \$23,946,000 and 122 FTE, a program change of +\$2,512,000 and +14 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Listing (+\$2,000,000/+14 FTE) - Through the Listing subactivity, the Service uses the best scientific and commercial information available to identify species that are in danger of extinction or likely to become so within the foreseeable future and thus need protection under the ESA. As a result of the high number of petitions, over 400 species are awaiting status reviews to determine if listing is warranted. The Service also faces a large volume of deadline litigation for missed statutory deadlines. The Service maintains a 6-year

¹ <https://fws.gov/project/national-listing-workplan>

National Listing Workplan on our website; the current version was updated in March 2022 for FY 2022-2027. Workload demands have exceeded the capacity provided by available resources. The Listing budget has declined since FY 2010, when we last received over \$22 million. Since then, annual appropriations have been between \$18.3 million and \$20.5 million until FY 2021, affecting the Service's capacity to fulfill our requirements. This increase is necessary to combat the cumulative rate of inflation so that the Service can make incremental progress towards building back listing program capability. In addition, increased funds will be used to improve the data collection and analysis, in coordination with States, Tribes, academia, and others, during the development of an SSA that reflects the best available scientific and commercial information regarding life history, biology, and the factors affecting the viability of a species, such as the effects of a changing climate.

Baseline Capacity (+\$512,000/ +0 FTE) - The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$512,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

ACTIVITY: ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

Subactivity: Planning and Consultation

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change from 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Planning and Consultation	(\$000)	109,251	109,251	+4,015	0	+39,541	152,807	+43,556
	FTE	612	612	0	0	+194	806	+194

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Planning and Consultation

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Planning and Consultation Activities: BIL	+17,000	+93
• Planning and Consultation Activities	+10,700	+51
• Energy	+8,000	+47
• Baseline Capacity	+2,841	+0
• Pesticide Consultations	+500	+3
• NEPA Coordination with CEQ	+500	+0
Program Changes	+39,041	+194

Program Overview

Within Planning and Consultation, the Service will contribute to the President’s “Build Back Better” initiative by providing a field-based, landscape-level approach that works collaboratively with industry, agencies, Tribes, and other stakeholders to balance conservation and development needs. The Service works with stakeholders at the planning stages of federally-authorized, licensed, or funded land, water, and energy development projects—from highway expansions to energy development—to ensure that development has minimal impact on wildlife and habitats. Service staff have extensive knowledge in numerous statutory authorities, including the ESA, Clean Water Act, NEPA, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Federal Power Act, MBTA and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and use that background to bring a true “One Service” integrated presence to our work. By engaging in development processes early, Service recommendations save taxpayers money by streamlining the permitting process, reducing paperwork, and ensuring minimized environmental and community impacts of development projects. Advanced biological planning and conservation design also assists communities and industry in adapting to climate change.

Early coordination and involvement in the project siting and design process can minimize the impacts of a project on fish and wildlife. Through the NEPA process, the Ecological Services Program works closely with the lead Federal agency to streamline the review process for Federal projects, including infrastructure and renewable energy. Exercising authority for interagency consultation under section 7 of the ESA, the Service collaborates with Federal agencies and applicants to identify opportunities to reduce their proposed actions’ effects on listed species, while ensuring important economic activity can appropriately proceed.

Environmental review functions constitute a large and growing workload for the Service, and we are continuously seeking ways to improve the efficiency, consistency, transparency, and effectiveness of environmental review and permitting development projects. The Service is enhancing our Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) decision support system to streamline the environmental review process. IPaC currently assists over 49,000 registered users by (1) identifying listed species, critical habitat, and other trust resources (e.g., migratory birds) within a project area and generating ESA section 7 species lists; (2) providing conservation recommendations to minimize impacts to ESA-listed species and other trust resources; and (3) delivering concurrence letters for implementation of programmatic consultations through determination keys (DKeys). In FY 2021, the IPaC program delivered 20,996 streamlined consultation documents and generated over 102,000 official species lists in response to user requests. IPaC also released new functionality called Consultation Package Builder (CPB) that leads Federal agencies through the development of biological assessments; this critical new feature provides more transparency and consistency in the ESA section 7 consultation process and improves conservation outcomes. In FY 2022, the Service will be improving the CPB to further streamline the process of creating a biological assessment, integrating with the new ECOSphere platform to improve consultation reporting, and expanding our delivery of programmatic consultations to cover more species and locations. The Service will be convening a Vision Team for IPaC in FY 2022 to look forward at what future functionality could further streamline the consultation process and develop a plan for FY 2023 and the future. In addition, the Service is refining speciesrange maps in a way that is transparent and repeatable. Improving range maps for listed species further streamlines the environmental review process by helping avoid impacts to listed species and trust resources, and ensure environmental reviews focus on where listed species and trust resources are most likely to be affected by the proposed project.

Using the incidental take permit authority under section 10 of the ESA, the Service provides technical assistance to non-Federal entities in the development of incidental take permit applications that include Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), and issues incidental take permits. The Service's incidental take permit program is a flexible process for addressing situations in which a property owner's otherwise lawful activities might result in incidental take of listed wildlife. Under section 10, the Service facilitates private and other non-Federal land development through species and conservation planning that strikes a regulatory balance for development while mitigating impacts to species.

Water Quality and Pesticide Consultations

As part of our ESA consultations process, the Service works with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to improve and refine methods to conduct ESA section 7 consultations on pesticide registrations under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The Service also works closely with EPA to conduct section 7 consultations on water quality such as establishing national water quality standards, issuing national general permits for discharges, and conducting National Aquatic Resources surveys. The Service develops and implements scientifically rigorous protocols for national consultations with EPA to protect threatened and endangered species and their designated critical habitats by assessing impacts from pesticides and other pollutants. This rigorous and thorough assessment process for evaluating risks to listed species and their critical habitats, which the Service is incorporating in ongoing consultations, will greatly improve how the Service conducts current and future Section 7 consultations on pesticide registrations and discharge permits. Increasing the scientific and technical capacity of the Service will help ensure ESA compliance for pesticides early in the registration process, minimize the threat of lawsuits, and provide more certainty and guidance to applicants for how those chemicals can continue to be available for production of food and fiber in this country, while ensuring the protection of listed species.



Mount Storm Wind Farm. Credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

Renewable Energy

One of the Administration's priorities for which the Department of the Interior will play a prominent role is in securing a sustainable energy future that involves the responsible use of our resources. The unparalleled drive toward clean and renewable domestic energy has increased emphasis on expanding and accelerating hydroelectric, solar, geothermal, wind, tidal, and hydrokinetic energy projects. At the same time, traditional energy sources, such as oil and gas, continue to be developed. Consequently, the Service is increasingly engaged in extensive coordination with other Department of the Interior bureaus, Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and industry early in the process to ensure conservation of trust resources and racial equity as the Nation transitions to carbon pollution free electricity by 2035 and a net-zero emission economy by 2050.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Provide integrated advanced project planning, environmental review, and permitting assistance to address environmental concerns while supporting the Nation's efforts to build back better through energy production, infrastructure, and other development activities.
- Support development and population of data in IPaC, our web-based application, to streamline the ESA consultation process and provide transparency and predictability for Federal agencies and applicants.
- Collaborate with partners by providing technical assistance in evaluating the impacts of proposed Federal activities on fish, wildlife, and plants.
- Consider the needs of local underserved communities when advising on siting determinations, the impacts of Federal projects, and adapting to climate change.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Planning and Consultation is \$152,807,000 and 806 FTE, a program change of +\$39,041,000 and +194 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Planning and Consultation Staffing: BIL Environmental Review (+\$17,000,000/+93 FTE) - In order to effectively support the surge in economic recovery and infrastructure development funded under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Service is requesting additional field office capacity to ensure Service project review and permitting functions are not bottlenecks in the environmental clearance process for priority economic revitalization projects. The BIL has funded a wide variety of development projects ranging from energy efficiency projects funded through the Department of Energy, to culvert replacements under Department of Transportation, to significant construction on our Nation's rivers and harbors by the Army Corps of Engineers. All of these projects will require extensive coordination with the Service to avoid or mitigate impacts to fish and wildlife and the habitats on which they depend. As evidenced by implementation of Title 41 of the FAST Act, although the FWS is rarely the lead permitting agency for infrastructure projects, the Service often has an important environmental review role, especially with respect to section 7 of the ESA. The Service often also serves as a cooperating agency as other agencies comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. By engaging early in project development, Service staff can bring their extensive knowledge in numerous authorities, including the ESA, and NEPA to streamline the permitting process and minimize environmental and community impacts of development projects.

Planning and Consultation Capacity and Tools (+\$10,700,000/+51 FTE) - Additional capacity is also needed for environmental reviews of projects not funded by BIL. Service biologists can provide critical technical assistance to other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, contractors, and private industry to assist with project siting and minimization and mitigation of impacts, while addressing climate change impacts, thereby facilitating timely environmental reviews, improving conservation outcomes, implementing compliance and effectiveness monitoring, and helping others understand and plan for the effects of climate change, especially in disadvantaged communities. For example, the hotter, drier conditions experienced in recent years because of climate change are resulting in significantly longer and more severe fire seasons with significant loss of habitat for listed and at-risk species. In the West, significant acreages were lost in 2020: over 4 million acres of forested habitat in California; an estimated 1.1 million acres were lost in Oregon; almost 400,000 acres in Idaho; and over 800,000 acres in Washington. In the Southeast, the number of fires is staggering – nearly 23,000 fires, representing nearly half of all fires in the United States. Fire risk maps for 2021 validate the concern across the U.S. (see <https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/07-Jul.png>). The Service is requesting additional capacity to provide timely and expert support and collaboration with Federal and non-Federal land managers, and Tribes to address the growing fire threat.

The Service is also seeking additional resources to provide more automated tools to facilitate environmental reviews and coordination. The Service would add new functionality to IPaC to streamline the Section 7 consultation process in a transparent and consistent way. The development of ECOSphere, which hosts IPaC, into a robust tracking and transactional workflow system will allow Service biologists to manage work for listed species and other trust resources throughout the continuum of the species protection provided by the ESA. ECOSphere is a cloud-based pool of applications and workflows that provides access to Service data in regards to threatened and endangered species, conservation of habitat and species, refuges, and migratory birds. ECOSphere provides a central point to gather and store information from Federal, State, and Tribal partners to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States. Expanding the data management and delivery of information used by Service biologists to manage the conservation and recovery of these species will boost efforts internally and externally, as well as streamline the review of high priority infrastructure and renewable energy development projects. Workflows that centralize the information and manage data in a consistent manner, including timeline dependencies and notifications, will create efficiencies in process and streamline coordination across offices, biologists, and partners for conservation.

Energy Staffing (+\$8,000,000/+47 FTE) - In order to effectively support the Administration's priorities for accelerating renewable energy production in the United States, the Service is requesting additional field office capacity to ensure that project review and permitting functions are not bottlenecks in the environmental clearance process for renewable energy projects. This new capacity will enable and deepen the Service's contribution to the Government-wide approach to addressing the climate crisis envisioned in E.O. 14008. For example, E.O. 14008 states the Administration's goal of doubling offshore wind energy production by 2030 while ensuring robust protection for our lands, waters, and biodiversity and creating good jobs. Concurrently, E.O. 14008 also stresses the importance of revitalizing the economics of coal, oil and gas, and power plant communities foreconomic and social recovery. Strengthened Service programs will help advance the clean energy transition by efficiently reviewing projects on public lands, in offshore waters and elsewhere to increase renewable energy production while ensuring robust protections for wildlife.

Additional field office capacity will allow the Service to focus on early engagement in renewable energy development processes. When the Service engages early, our recommendations save taxpayers money by facilitating timely decisions and ensuring that environmental and community impacts are minimized. Additional field office capacity will also allow the Service to provide timely and expert support to non-Federal entities and landowners seeking incidental take permits for renewable energy projects. Lastly, new capacity will support pro-active biological planning and conservation design, which will help communities

address climate change and industry make better decisions regarding where to pursue renewable energy development.

Baseline Capacity (+\$2,841,000/ +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$2.8 million in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Pesticide Consultations (+\$500,000/+3 FTE) - The section 7 consultations on pesticide registrations are a complex, ongoing process involving the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fishers Service (NMFS), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), registrants and the public. EPA's extensive consultation needs for registration of new pesticides, new pesticide uses, and the required registration review of existing pesticides is currently driven by litigation. Several lawsuits have been filed against EPA, the Service, and NMFS by non-governmental organizations citing the threat to listed species and their designated critical habitats arising from noncompliance of pesticide registration with section 7 of the ESA. Due in part to these lawsuits and related settlements, EPA has a large backlog of section 7 consultations for pesticide registrations and, in addition to 6 recent consultation requests, will most likely be requesting initiation of consultation for many more of these chemicals in the coming years. These national consultations often address most or all domestically listed species and their critical habitats. The Service is seeking additional resources to support these consultations, given the development of new pesticides and technologies as well as new uses that will result in increasing numbers of pesticide registrations and consultation requests in the coming years.

NEPA Coordination with CEQ (+\$500,000/+0 FTE) – funding will support the National Environmental Policy Act work, including technical assistance for agencies provided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

ACTIVITY: ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

Subactivity: Conservation and Restoration

	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Conservation (\$000)	34,617	34,617	+1,058	0	+18,599	54,274	+19,657
and Restoration FTE	166	166	0	0	+93	259	+93

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Conservation and Restoration

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Environmental Response & Restoration	+6,000	+40
• Candidate Conservation	+4,800	+27
• National Wetlands Inventory	+4,000	+3
• Coastal Barrier Resources Act	+2,000	+13
• Marine Mammals	+1,500	+10
• Baseline Capacity	+799	+0
• Sea Otter Assessment	-500	+0
Program Changes	+18,599	+93

Program Overview

Through the Conservation and Restoration program, the Service supports collaborative species conservation efforts, works to protect and restore habitats that are important to Federal trust species, and provides mapping products and databases that are essential tools for conservation and restoration of species and habitats by other Federal and State agencies, Tribes, and the public. Activities under this program will further the Administration’s priorities in multiple areas by providing technical experts to improve habitat connectivity and protect wildlife and habitat; providing tools and technologies to assist other Federal agencies, industry, States, Tribes and other partners in their decision-making to advance conservation of listed and at-risk species while balancing the needs of the communities; aligning conservation with the needs of landowners through different working models for partnerships; reducing the potential of harm to the environment through planning and preparedness for oil and hazardous materials spill response; encouraging mitigation/adaptation efforts for riverine or coastal projects and providing information and tools to advance community planning in order to prevent repeated damage from natural disasters; and supporting land acquisition and restoration projects that connect underserved communities with their local natural resources and wildlife.

Candidate Conservation

Candidate Conservation focuses on two primary activities: species assessment and facilitating voluntary conservation efforts for species under consideration for listing under the ESA. Candidate Conservation uses all available information to conduct a scientifically rigorous assessment process that identifies species that warrant listing. The Service uses a species status assessment framework (SSA), which is an analytical approach to deliver foundational science for informing all ESA decisions. The 2019 and 2020 Candidate

Notice of Review, published on November 16, 2020, identified a total of 11 domestic species as candidates for listing.

Candidate Conservation also provides technical assistance to private landowners, States, Tribes, and Federal agencies for developing Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA) and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA) for candidate and other at-risk species, such as the monarch butterfly. Candidate Conservation was highlighted as a conservation priority in the Administration's report outlining the America the Beautiful initiative², which sets a goal of conserving 30 percent of the Nation's lands and waters by 2030.

For example, the Service collaborates with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop landscape level partnerships to conserve at-risk species by leveraging the financial incentives available in the Farm Bill with the regulatory incentives available under the ESA. Immediate opportunities exist to expand and enhance the Working Lands for Wildlife model of conservation delivery, with specific emphasis to create and maintain regenerative agricultural, grazing, and forest management systems that (1) recover and conserve at-risk species such as pollinators; (2) encourage adoption of healthy soil and habitat practices which sequester carbon, reduce nitrogen emissions, and deploy climate mitigation strategies; and (3) provide long-term regulatory predictability to keep their working lands working.

For candidate species, the Service uses a proactive, strategic, and collaborative approach for conservation planning that is designed to reduce or remove identified threats. A conservation agreement or strategy is then prepared that covers the entire range of one or more candidate species, or a landscape scale plan targeting threats in a particular area that supports multiple at-risk species. Designing and implementing a conservation strategy early can successfully preclude the need to list a species. For example, in 2021, we found the Virgin Spinedace not warranted for listing in part due to a conservation plan for the species: the Virgin Spinedace Conservation Assessment and Strategy. Since this conservation plan was implemented in 1995, the distribution of the species has increased to within 95 percent of its historical distribution. Implementation of the plan is ongoing and involves Federal, State, and local partners.

² <https://doi.gov/priorities/america-the-beautiful>

Marine Mammals

Marine mammals are a resource of great cultural, aesthetic, economic, and recreational significance. Enacted in 1972, the MMPA is one of the most important statutory authorities for conserving and managing marine mammals. This statute provides protection by prohibiting (with certain exceptions): (1) take of marine mammals in U.S. waters and by U.S. citizens on the high seas, and (2) the import, export, and sale of marine mammals and marine mammal parts and products in the U.S. Under the MMPA, marine mammal populations, and the health and stability of marine ecosystems upon which they depend, are required to be maintained at, or returned to, healthy levels. The MMPA assigns the Department of the Interior, through the Service, responsibility for the conservation and management of polar bears, walrus, sea and marine otters, three species of manatees, and dugongs. Through regular monitoring, the Service can learn more about the health and dynamics of marine mammal populations and the effects of global changes on marine and coastal environments.

Meeting the Service's mandate for the conservation of marine mammal species requires communication and cooperation with other Federal agencies, State governments, Alaska Native Organizations, scientists from numerous institutions and organizations, industry groups, and nongovernmental organizations. Through active collaboration and coordination, the Service is able to enhance the effectiveness of implementing the MMPA and achieve its goal of optimum sustainable population levels for marine mammal stocks. In FY 2023, the Service will continue to work with partners to sustain efforts to survey and assess population status and trends for sea otters, Pacific walrus, polar bears, and West Indian manatees and will continue to support response efforts for stranded or beached marine mammals. The Service will also continue efforts to maintain current stock assessment reports for all 10 marine mammal stocks under the jurisdiction of the Service. Working with Alaskan natives and local communities, the Service will coordinate management of the Pacific walrus stock with Russia and the two polar bear stocks shared with Russia and Canada, in support of our existing international agreements. The Service will continue to review requests for marine mammal incidental take authorizations and ensure any authorizations issued have a negligible impact on the stock as required under the MMPA.

National Wetlands Inventory

The Service is the principal Federal agency tasked with providing publicly available information on the status and trends of our Nation's wetlands. Wetlands provide habitat for fish, wildlife and plants - many of which have a commercial or recreational value, recharge groundwater, reduce flooding, provide clean drinking water, offer food and fiber, and support cultural and recreational activities, supporting the Administration's priorities related to Climate Change and Build Back Better. Unfortunately, over half of America's wetlands have been lost since 1780, and wetland losses continue today. The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) provides an online mapping resource that gives detailed information on the abundance, characteristic, and distribution of America's wetlands. The wetland data layer underlying the mapper is the best available data on wetlands for the Nation. It is used to expedite conservation and business decisions on, for instance, siting of infrastructure or other development projects to reduce impacts to wetlands and promote a wide array of environmental benefits including climate resiliency. The Service works extensively with other Federal, State and Tribal partners to continually update the data layer and mapper. However, approximately 70% of NWI data are over 20 years old and do not meet modern data quality standards and over half of Alaska is unmapped. In FY 2023, the Service will continue to partner with other federal and state agencies to update priority wetland data through cost sharing. In addition, we will have a draft for interagency review of the sixth decadal report to Congress on the status and trends of the Nation's wetlands. As required by law, this report provides an assessment of the quantity of America's wetlands, supporting the "no net loss of wetlands" goal and informing policy and management decisions across the Federal Government.

Coastal Barrier Resources Act

In the early 1980s, Congress recognized that certain Federal actions and programs have historically subsidized and encouraged development on coastal barriers, resulting in the loss of natural resources; threats to human life, health, and property; and the expenditure of millions of tax dollars each year. To remove the Federal incentive to develop these areas, CBRA designated relatively undeveloped coastal barriers along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts as part of the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS), and made these areas ineligible for most new Federal expenditures and financial assistance. CBRA does not prohibit or restrict development conducted with non-Federal funds.

Implementing CBRA relies on mapping capabilities. The Service continues to take significant steps to improve efficiencies and effectiveness of CBRA administration including: (1) maintaining the official CBRS maps and the mappers that make CBRS data more accessible to property owners, project proponents, and other interested stakeholders (2) supporting CBRA consistency consultations for federally funded projects affecting the CBRS. In FY 2023, the Service will conduct comprehensive remapping projects for CBRS units in Alabama and Florida and conduct 5-year review (to account for geomorphic change) for 28% of the CBRS acreage.

Environmental Response and Restoration

Our coasts, rivers, estuaries, wetlands and other natural places are home to spectacular native wildlife and provide Americans with unrivaled places to fish, hunt, and experience the great outdoors. They also play a critical role in our economy, generating revenues from tourism and recreational activities, while providing us with clean water and performing countless other important ecological functions. There are many pressures on wildlife resources along coastal ecosystems including the ongoing effects of hazardous materials and toxic chemicals released from facilities damaged by hurricanes. Climate change-induced sea level rise and more intense hurricanes put not only our coastal refuges at direct risk, but also the vast petrochemical industry sharing these ecosystems. The Service's Environmental Response and Restoration Program protects and restores fish and wildlife populations, and habitats that have been injured by the release of oil or hazardous substances. To be effective in responding to emergency spills, the Service must maintain a cadre of trained responders. Funding for this preparedness is critical to maintain the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's required training certificates or medical monitoring, to supply responders and Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) practitioners with the equipment and supplies to prevent exposure and/or minimize injuries to spilled oil or environmental contaminants, and to conduct associated pre-assessment investigations. Trained responders increase the Service's capacity to provide technical support and expertise to the U.S. Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency who rely on the Service to identify resources at risk and oversee the collection and rehabilitation of oiled birds and other wildlife during spill events.

The Environmental Response and Restoration program oversees the NRDAR activities nationwide, managing over 90% of the 426 active Departmental NRDAR cases. To achieve restoration, the Service uses its technical expertise to convert damage assessment recoveries to on-the-ground restoration. The Service uses appropriated funding to support ongoing cases and conduct early investigations that could potentially lead to restoration projects worth millions of dollars. The program has a commitment to the public in restoring injured natural resources and supporting local communities, rural economies, States, and Tribes.



FWS Project coordinator planting tree seedlings as part of bottomland hardwood reforestation Deep Fork National Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma (FWS photo)

In FY 2021, the Service put more than \$27 million of recovered funds on the ground to restore habitat, fish and wildlife for the American people, enhancing, restoring, or protecting over 203,000 acres and 233 stream miles. As a result, 25 restoration projects with direct benefits to threatened and endangered species were completed, and more than 4,200 acres and 100 miles of waterways were made available for public recreational activities. The economic impact of NRDAR restoration generates millions of dollars for the local economy and hundreds of year-long jobs.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget request will allow Ecological Services to:

- Review and process section 10 enhancement of survival permit applications for candidate and other at-risk species.
- Update the national wetlands layer data by working extensively with other Federal and State partners; and submit the sixth decadal report to Congress on the status and trends of the Nation’s wetlands.
- Prioritize NRDAR activities to identify opportunities for new cases, accelerate assessment casework that has a nexus to underserved communities, and increase capacity for restoration implementation to address injuries to natural resources and benefit economic recovery.
- Participate in oil spill planning meetings and training, spill drills, the formulation of Regional Contingency Plans and Area Contingency Plans and carry out section 7 consultation on those plans and response actions.
- Address requests from property owners who seek revisions to CBRS maps and improve the Service’s engagement with Federal action agencies and our responsiveness to their requests for CBRA consistency consultations.
- Maintain current stock assessment reports for MMPA protected species, process and issue Incidental Take Regulations, and engage in and support conservation partnerships to address animal standings and unusual mortality events.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Conservation and Restoration is \$54,474,000 and 259 FTE, a net program change of +\$18,799,000 and +93 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Environmental Response and Restoration (+\$6,000,000/+40 FTE) - Through the Service's Environmental Response and Restoration program, the Service supports the NRDAR and environmental response training (spill response planning and coordination). In support of the NRDAR program, the Service will use the requested increase to build capacity to work with Tribal, State, and other Federal co-trustees to conduct assessment activities, accelerate restoration planning and implementation, and increase opportunities for employee development through establishment of a mentoring and training program. There are currently 426 active Departmental NRDAR cases, of which the Service manages 385 cases. To achieve restoration, the Service uses its technical expertise to convert damage assessment recoveries to on-the-ground restoration. The Service will prioritize backlogged casework, with an eye toward opportunities for restoration in underserved communities. We will also focus on land acquisition projects with restoration activities that can offset climate impacts and increase conservation to contribute to the Administration's America the Beautiful initiative, which sets a goal of conserving 30 percent of the Nation's lands and waters by 2030. In FY 2021, the Service NRDAR program and our federal co-trustees managed more than \$200 million in funds recovered from responsible parties to implement restoration projects for the benefit of the American people. The economic impact of NRDAR restoration generates millions of dollars for the local economy and hundreds of yearlong jobs while protecting Federal trust resources, public health and safety, and restoring and enhancing essential ecosystem services.



USFWS photo. Buffalo River at confluence with Cazenovia Creek, Buffalo NY.

A recent \$6.25 million NRDAR settlement will be used to restore natural and cultural resources, and to preserve, in perpetuity, over 70 acres of undeveloped habitat, along the Buffalo River in New York, with benefits to the entire City of Buffalo community, including underrepresented groups. Restoration projects will create river access and fishing opportunities for public use and enjoyment. A portion of the recovery will fund cultural and ecological restoration programs on behalf of Tuscarora Nation.

The Service will conduct ongoing cases and initiate early investigations that could potentially lead to restoration projects worth millions of dollars. This is especially important in economically disadvantaged communities where the Service represents these communities in negotiations on restoration plans and actions.

Hazardous substance releases, exacerbated by climate change, threaten millions of miles of coastline, river systems, lakes, and terrestrial habitat and the species that depend on these habitats. These ecosystems are home to spectacular native wildlife and provide Americans with unrivaled places to fish, hunt, and get outdoors. They also play a critical role in our economy, generating revenues in tourism and recreational opportunities, while providing clean water and other important ecological functions that are especially important to underserved communities. Past spills are a testament to the significant risk spills pose to our trust resources. In FY21, the Service evaluated almost 2,000 spill reports a year and initiated a response for more than 400. Recent hurricanes have highlighted the need for our technical assistance to the Refuge Program and Office of Emergency Management with regard to contaminant releases, pesticide applications, and more. The Service emphasizes contingency planning and cooperation at the local, regional, and national level to minimize injury to fish, wildlife, and sensitive environments from hazardous substance releases and oil spills. With the recent increase in weather related events and the number of oil and gas facilities currently in existence, particularly those along the coast, it is imperative for employees responsible for planning and

responding to spills and other natural disasters to be effectively trained in those areas. The Service will increase spill response capacity nationwide to ensure a consistent approach and better train, plan, prepare and respond to incidents to minimize impacts to fish and wildlife and their habitats and facilitate restoration of those resources. Service staff will be able to participate in area contingency planning meetings, regional response team meetings, and critical exercises and drills to improve our ability to provide support to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and EPA. The USCG and EPA rely on the Service to participate in the formulation of Area Contingency Plans; carry out section 7 consultation on those plans and response actions, prevent or reduce impacts of spilled oil on fish and wildlife and their habitats, oversee the collection and rehabilitation of oiled birds and other wildlife, and conduct natural resource damage assessments to facilitate restoration of fish and wildlife resources affected by the spill. The Service remains committed to its role as a partner in conserving America's natural resources, and effectively responding to spills is a key element of this commitment.

Candidate Conservation (+\$4,800,000 / +27 FTE) - Integrating the conservation objectives of candidate conservation, along with our other authorities, helps the Service and local communities achieve a balance between species conservation and economic and local priorities. This funding will be used to support conservation efforts at different scales, at the State agency level for landscape conservation efforts as well as at the local landowner level. The Service will focus on increasing our capacity to work with landowners to develop conservation agreements and, as appropriate, permit them to provide regulatory assurances for participating landowners. Guided by the National Listing Workplan, the States can leverage their localized expertise and relationships to provide landowners with technical assistance to achieve specific conservation goals for candidate and petitioned species and thus provide regulatory certainty to participating landowners and potentially eliminate the need to list a species. Candidate Conservation was highlighted as a conservation priority in the Administration's recently released report outlining the America the Beautiful initiative, which sets a goal of conserving 30 percent of the Nation's lands and waters by 2030.

For many listed species, conservation happens through voluntary efforts on private working lands. These voluntary conservation actions are key to helping to prevent species from needing the protection of the Act while contributing to pollinator and wildlife habitat and providing carbon-sequestering opportunities. Additional capacity would allow the Service to stand up a specialized team that would simplify and accelerate the process for getting section 10 permits and associated candidate conservation plans in place and functioning for working lands. Consistent with the Administration's 30x30 initiative, the team would develop, permit, and monitor implementation of these voluntary landowner agreements. The Service would also be able to expand its effort in working with other Federal agencies, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to offer regulatory predictability when partnering with farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to keep their working lands working, similar to the Working Lands for Wildlife Program.

Updating National Wetlands Inventory maps (+\$4,000,000 / +3 FTE) - The Service's Inventory (NWI) geospatial dataset provides detailed information on the abundance, type, and distribution of America's wetlands, which is used to model the effects of climate change and develop climate adaptation and resilience strategies. Additionally, government and private sector organizations rely on NWI data to enhance and streamline infrastructure planning, permitting, and mitigation decisions. For example, the states of Michigan and Minnesota save \$750,000 and \$1 million, respectively, each year by using the NWI dataset to support their regulatory review and planning programs. Use of NWI data by environmental consulting firms saves an additional estimated \$7.8 million annually. Contemporary wetlands data get infrastructure projects to the construction phase faster, while supporting the long-term health and resilience of our environment. However, the last major NWI mapping initiative occurred over 30 years ago, and the dataset needs substantive reinvestment to continue to support informed public and private sector decision-making. An estimated investment of \$40M over 10 years is needed to map approximately 625 million acres, focusing on unmapped portions of Alaska, coastal areas and areas of anticipated rapid economic development in the lower 48 States. This funding request is the first installment of a long-term reinvestment in the Nation's

wetland dataset. Funding will be used primarily to contract out for data collection and quality control. The increase will be used to update about 10% of infrastructure development priority areas and Alaska. The focus will be to strategically update wetlands data in areas of significant change and development interest, where wetlands function to abate flooding from storms and provide water storage and filtration, as well as provide habitat for many of the Service's trust resources, including about half of threatened and endangered species.

CBRA Consistency Consultation Reviews (+\$2,000,000 / +13 FTE) - The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) is an underutilized tool that restricts most new Federal expenditures that encourage development of these ecologically sensitive and unstable areas (e.g., flood control projects, disaster assistance, and flood insurance). The proposed increase in funding would support CBRA consistency consultations for federally funded projects affecting the CBRS, as recommended in the Government Accountability Office's report issued March 10, 2021 (GAO-21-258 – <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-258>).

Marine Mammal Protection Act (+\$1,500,000 / +10 FTE) - The Service has responsibility for 10 marine mammal stocks, protected under the MMPA; all of these populations are highly vulnerable to climate change. Additional capacity would allow the Service to bolster Service-wide procedures and tracking for MMPA administration, including incidental harassment authorizations, incidental take regulations, stock assessment reports, conservation plans, grant administration, and other responsibilities. The added capacity would provide the necessary staff time to process MMPA permits, and develop assessments and reports satisfying regulatory requirements and meeting mandatory timeframes. Furthermore, the Service would be able to provide the vital engagement necessary to strengthen our co-management relationships with Alaska Native Organizations. Lastly, the Service would commit resources critical to supporting conservation partnerships to address human/animal conflict, animal strandings, and unusual mortality events, all of which are growing stressors to these species and are steadily exacerbated by the effects of climate change. For example, West Indian manatee populations along the Atlantic coast of Florida are suffering high level of mortalities. The Service, partnering with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other partners in the Manatee Rehabilitation Partnership, are coordinating closely on investigations as to the cause of the distress, while providing supplemental forage and exploring other short and long-term response options. Funding is needed to support this and other conservation partnerships for highly vulnerable marine mammals species.

Sea Otter Assessment (-\$500,000/0 FTE) – Within the FY 2021 Appropriations bill, Congress directed the Service to study the feasibility and cost of reestablishing sea otters on the Pacific Coast of the contiguous United States, and to report to Congress on the results of such a study within 1 year of passage of this Act. Funding for this assessment is no longer required.

Baseline Capacity (+\$799,000/ +0 FTE) - The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$799,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

ACTIVITY: ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

Subactivity: Recovery

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Budget Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Recovery	(\$000)	105,031	105,031	+2,783	0	+17,321	125,135	+20,104
	FTE	454	454	0	0	+38	492	+38

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Recovery

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Recovery Activities	+15,508	+38
• Baseline Capacity	+1,991	+0
• Zero Emission Vehicles	+922	+0
• Florida Grasshopper Sparrow	-100	+0
• Wolf-Livestock Demonstration Program	-1,000	+0
Program Changes	+17,321	+38

Program Overview

Preventing extinction and recovering listed species has always been, and will continue to be, one of the Service’s highest priorities. The goal of the Recovery program is to minimize or remove the threats that led to the species’ listing and to work toward improving the status of listed species so that protection under the Act is no longer necessary. This process requires planning, monitoring, and management together with close coordination with Service partners. The Service plays a vital role in guiding the recovery planning process, and in facilitating, supporting, and monitoring the implementation of recovery actions by the Service and others.

Recovery plans, which are non-regulatory blueprints for the conservation work that needs to be done to recover a species, are required under the ESA. Recovery plans identify specific recovery tasks, establish downlisting and delisting criteria, and provide timetables and cost estimates. Recovery criteria provide specific targets to measure delisting and downlisting objectives in recovery plans ensuring that funding and other resources are directed towards those actions that will have the most benefit for the species and regulated communities. Recovery plans are often developed collaboratively with interested partners and may address multiple species. The Service provides the opportunity for public review and comment for each draft recovery plan. The Service strives to enhance and increase partnerships with agencies and organizations to implement highest priority recovery actions identified in recovery plans for endangered and threatened species under the trusteeship of the Service in the United States and its Territories, such that known threats to the species may be reduced or eliminated.

The standards for delisting a species consider the same five statutory factors as the listing of a species. This requirement ensures that all species proposed for delisting receive the same careful analysis to determine whether or not they meet the statutory definitions of a threatened or endangered species as is done for determining whether to add a species to the list. To encourage collaboration, the Service maintains a national downlisting and delisting workplan to enable our partners participate in a substantive way to ensure that species ready for delisting or downlisting meet their recovery plan objectives.



After more than three decades of conservation partnerships inspired by the Endangered Species Act, the Service celebrated the delisting of the interior least tern due to recovery in January 2021. Thanks to the diverse efforts of local, State, and Federal stakeholders across an 18-State range, the tern's populations are healthy, stable, and increasing. Credit: Laurie Sheppard/USFWS

American Rescue Plan Support for Care of Captive Species

Section 6003(2) of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (H.R. 1319-91) provided \$30M to the Service “for the care of captive species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, for the care of rescued and confiscated wildlife, and for the care of Federal trust species in facilities experiencing lost revenues due to COVID-19.” The FWS established a cooperative agreement with the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) on September 2, 2021, to solicit applications and distribute the funding to eligible beneficiaries efficiently and equitably. AZA launched a call for applications from September 13, 2021, through November 1, 2021, in the following three captive care categories: 1) U.S. native plant and animal species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); 2) wildlife rescued from the wild; and/or 3) wildlife confiscated by the U.S. Government at U.S. ports and borders or otherwise involved in international trade and held in animal care facilities. Eligible facilities submitted 101 applications, for a total request of \$38,869,482. AZA is completing its review of the applications; we anticipate awards being issued starting in March 2022.

Service biologists support the implementation of the ESA via collaborative conservation actions that are advantageous, feasible, and practicable for all parties. Staff provide technical assistance to our partners to support and guide recovery projects. Recovery projects can range from habitat restoration to captive rearing and reintroduction to landowner agreements that provide habitat for one or more listed species for a set period of time. The Service also provides technical assistance in the development of Safe Harbor Agreements, which are voluntary landowner agreements that benefit species and provide assurances that landowner conservation actions (e.g., habitat restoration, reintroduction), will not result in additional regulation on the landowner.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Support work to complete the recovery responsibilities required by statute - preparing recovery plans for newly listed species within two and a half years of the final listing, reducing the recovery plan backlog, completing 5-year reviews for approximately 20% of listed species annually, acting on the recommendations to reclassify or delist species, and encouraging collaborative partnerships with others for recovery implementation.
- At the requested FY 2023 funding level, the Service expects to propose or finalize 25 delisting or downlisting rules.
- Provide staff and funds to support on-the-ground recovery of listed species that prevent extinction and expand recovery efforts.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Recovery of Listed Species is \$125,135,000 and 492 FTE, a net program change of +\$17,321,000 and +38 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Catalyzing Recovery for Listed Species and Preventing Extinction (+\$15,508,000, +38 FTE) – In December 2021, the Service conducted an informal review of its Recovery funding and identified twelve species for which it expends over \$1 million annually to support recovery efforts for a total of \$23 million. In addition, the Service identified a dozen more species that similarly require a big investment of Service funds to sustain recovery efforts due to the intense management commitments that are needed. On this list are species of significant interest nationally such as Mexican wolf, grizzly bear, black-footed ferret, and most Hawaiian birds that need continual support. As a result, there are many species for which the Service has few resources available to engage in recovery efforts. Funding is drastically needed to meet the critical needs for all listed species. Funding through this increase would be used to support the increasing costs of maintaining current recovery programs to reduce human/wildlife interactions, manage captive populations until reintroductions back to the wild are possible, and support our partners, state and local, who have insufficient resources to recover these species.

In addition, we see many opportunities to engage new partners in supporting recovery efforts. For many listed species, recovery happens through voluntary conservation on private lands, consistent with the Administration's goals for the America the Beautiful initiative. These voluntary conservation actions are key to meeting delisting or downlisting goals while respecting the management objectives of landowners. In FY 2023, these funds will be the start of a multi-year investment to provide capability for Service offices to catalyze and support high priority recovery activities that contribute to conservation actions outlined in Service recovery plans for priority species. There are over 15,000 priority 1 actions identified in recovery plans, of which most need additional funding to achieve the intended outcome. Most of the requested funding will be supporting projects to immediately implement or expand recovery efforts or prevent the extinction of the most imperiled endangered species. Simultaneously, these projects often mitigate the effects of climate change, including high-severity wildfire and invasive species. In FY 2023, the Service will catalyze the recovery of endangered species by making recovery funds available to implement recovery actions that could lead to species recovery or prevent extinction. The Service piloted similar efforts during the past two decades that led to the delisting or downlisting of more than 34 species including the interior least tern delisted in February 2021.

The demand exists to fund recovery actions that do not require a cost match from the States or private landowners. Most of the Service's current funding for recovery projects, such as Recovery Challenge grants or the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grants to states, require a cost-match, limiting the ability to engage with economically disadvantaged landowners or communities with limited resources. Dedicating funding to support on-the-ground recovery of listed species, with an emphasis on partnerships with economically disadvantaged landowners, will facilitate conservation within these communities while expanding recovery activities across the range of listed species, thus leading to delisting or downlisting sooner.



After decades of protection and conservation efforts, Texas' critically endangered Attwater's prairie-chicken population is at its highest since 1993. Based on the 2021 spring count, the Service estimates the current population has grown to at least 178. Credit: John Magera USFWS

Currently 1,671 species found in the U.S. are listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA. Of these, 1291 species have a final recovery plan. Recovery plans take time to develop in order to ensure that the stakeholders support the recommendations and will advance the recovery of the species. The Service estimates that it takes 1-2 years to draft and complete a recovery plan. Because of the backlog, the Service projects completing approximately 30 recovery plans and 300 5-year status reviews annually with this budget increase.

To better manage the recovery program, we will invest in building tools to integrate the Service's information related to the status of listed species to inform decisions. Centralizing the information needed to support recovery actions and status determinations for listed species will help prioritize recovery actions, while also informing consultations with other agencies and technical assistance to landowners. Bringing information from on-the-ground recovery actions, grants, and technical assistance together will enable Service and our partners to make decisions about current and future recovery activities based on the best available information. Connecting all of this information spatially will provide visibility to ensure that local and regional efforts are coordinated to ensure the best return on the investment, for the species and the taxpayer. This multi-year investment in information management will provide our field staff with better tools to develop recovery plans, monitor the status of species, and prioritize and implement recovery actions. This investment will build off similar investments in other aspects of the ES program to integrate the information so decision-making is based on the best available science and continually updated to reflect the status of a listed species.

Baseline Capacity (+\$1,991,000/ +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$2 million in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions (+\$922,000/+0 FTE) – The 2023 budget includes funding to convert approximately one third of the Service's sedan fleet to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and provide approximately 130 charging stations and hydrogen fueling stations to support those vehicles and future ZEVs. This conversion will immediately reduce the Interior's contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and dependence upon hydrocarbons. The investment in infrastructure will support these new vehicles and ensure charging infrastructure is available for subsequent ZEVs. This project is being coordinated across Interior and with other agencies to maximize utility of charging and hydrogen fueling stations in areas where multiple agencies operate. The funding also supports a small planning and coordination function to effectively deploy the fleet and charging infrastructure.

Florida Grasshopper Sparrow (-\$100,000/-0 FTE) - The budget does not request dedicated funding for this program in order to focus on other recovery activities. Recovery efforts for the Florida grasshopper sparrow will continue using general program activity funding and other funding sources.

Wolf Livestock Demonstration Program (-\$1,000,000/-0 FTE) - The budget does not request funding for this program in order to focus on other recovery activities. Funding for recovery of listed species is limited and the Service is focused on preventing extinction and improving the status of species through on-the-ground conservation actions for listed species.

Habitat Conservation

HABITAT CONSERVATION

Activity: Habitat Conservation

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Partners for Fish and Wildlife	(\$000)	56,859	56,859	+1,182	0	+9,356	67,397	+10,538
	FTE	206	206	0	0	+15	221	+15
Coastal Program	(\$000)	13,360	13,360	+360	0	+2,256	15,976	+2,616
	FTE	43	43	0	0	+6	49	+6
Total, Habitat Conservation	(\$000)	70,219	70,219	+1,542	0	+11,612	83,373	+13,154
	FTE	249	249	0	0	+21	270	+21

Summary of 2022 Program Changes for Habitat Conservation

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Partners for Fish and Wildlife Activities	+8,500	+15
• Coastal Program Activities	+2,000	+6
• Baseline Capacity	+1,112	+0
Program Changes	+11,612	+21

Program Mission

Habitat Conservation, which includes the Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) and Coastal Programs, as well as the Farm Conservation Program, provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and other conservation partners to voluntarily protect, conserve, and restore private lands. By working together with landowners, the Service achieves voluntary habitat conservation by providing technical and financial assistance for the benefit of Federal trust species. Through these partnerships, Service biologists deliver strategic habitat conservation, landscape-scale conservation planning and design, and implement habitat improvement and protection projects that conserve species of greatest conservation concern, improve habitat connectivity, and promote ecosystem health and resilience considering effects of climate change. Supporting voluntary conservation with partners such as private landowners is critical to achieving the vision of the President’s America the Beautiful initiative addressing the impacts of climate change, building back better by supporting nature-based infrastructure, providing support to underserved communities, and promoting racial equity and environmental justice. Service programs such as the PFW and the Coastal programs are well positioned to work collaboratively with other Service programs and a diversity of external partners including states, tribes, private landowners, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to support the America the Beautiful initiative.

Program Elements

The PFW and Coastal Programs support the America the Beautiful initiative, including the goal of conserving 30 percent of the Nations’ lands and waters by 2030 through ongoing efforts to deliver cooperative, on-the-ground conservation programs in targeted geographic areas in biologically sensitive landscapes. Field-based biologists have an intimate knowledge of the natural resource concerns and conservation challenges in local communities and cooperate with local stakeholders to leverage partners’ resources and Federal dollars to support conservation strategies on both public and private lands. These efforts help conserve America’s natural

resources and traditional land use for future generations, while supporting healthy, biologically diverse fish and wildlife populations; addressing conservation challenges such as climate change resiliency, habitat fragmentation, invasive species; and reducing the threat of climate change impacts to important infrastructure.

The PFW and Coastal Programs channel Federal and private dollars to local communities where they create work to support new jobs and provide income to local contractors and other industries. Money spent in support of projects circulates through the economy, creating more jobs and generating economic activity. The impacts of PFW and Coastal Program funds are multiplied in two dimensions. First, the program expertise and funding can leverage additional resources from other partners that support projects. Second, spending creates work, generates tax revenues, and stimulates economic activity as wages and purchases flow through the economy.

A large part of PFW work involves coordinating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide technical assistance in the development, implementation, and evaluation of Farm Bill conservation programs and initiatives to meet shared conservation goals. This coordination includes the continuation of effective partnerships with USDA, such as the Working Lands for Wildlife model of conservation that contributes to the recovery of declining wildlife populations, while helping to sustain agricultural production on working landscapes. Coordination efforts also include delivery of fish and wildlife technical assistance in support of USDA's efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change by helping landowners implement climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices.

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

The PFW and Coastal Program are implemented under the following authorities:

- *Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act* (16 U.S.C. 661) directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water, and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- *Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956* (16 U.S.C. 742 a-j) establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.
- *Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act* (16 U.S.C. §§3771-3774) provides for the restoration, enhancement, and management of fish and wildlife habitats on private land through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, a program that works with private landowners to conduct cost-effective habitat projects for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources in the United States.
- *Title VII of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019* (P.L. 116-9) pertaining to Wildlife Habitat and Conservation, which reauthorizes the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

**Activity: Habitat Conservation Subactivity:
Partners for Fish and Wildlife**

		2021 Actual	2022 Enacted	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Partners for Fish and Wildlife	(\$000)	56,859	56,859	+1,182	0	+9,356	67,397	+10,538
	FTE	206	206	0	0	+15	221	+15

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Partners for Fish and Wildlife Activities	+8,500	+15
• Partners for Fish and Wildlife Baseline Capacity	+856	+0
Program Changes	+9,356	+15

Program Overview

The PFW program is a voluntary, citizen, and community-based stewardship program for fish and wildlife conservation on private land. Nearly 70% of land in the United States is privately-owned.¹ To implement landscape-scale impacts for wildlife conservation, it is critical the Service engages in conservation with private landowners. PFW biologists serve as habitat consultants who provide free technical and financial assistance to private landowners, managers, tribes, schools, corporations, and local interest groups. Through the program, the Service and private landowners work collaboratively to implement local conservation strategies. In turn, the restored areas provide valuable benefits to the surrounding communities by supporting tourism and recreation, protecting infrastructure from flood damage, and supporting America’s agricultural production by conserving soil, controlling pests, and benefitting pollinators.

The PFW program continues to be a leader in climate change adaptation, which focuses on providing cooperators tools to live with the effects of climate change. A great example is working with local communities on water conservation projects which allow them to be more resistant to increased periods of drought. Climate-proofing for the future, or resilience, is another strong point as public private partnerships will be key to addressing extreme weather events caused by climate change. Funds spent in support of restoration projects create jobs, generate tax revenues, and spur economic activity in local economies. A USFWS report titled “Restoration Returns: The Contribution of Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Coastal Program Restoration Projects to Local U.S. Economies (2017 Supplement)” found that every dollar the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program invested in a project creates \$6.15 in local economic returns.

PFW projects provide an opportunity to put a new generation of Americans to work conserving and restoring public lands and waters, increasing reforestation, increasing carbon sequestration in the agricultural sector, protecting biodiversity, improving access to recreation, and addressing the changing climate. Additionally, habitats that PFW have restored have been found to increase property values, which greatly benefit the American people.

In FY 2021, the PFW program worked with private landowners and partners to complete 2,085 projects across the nation. Since inception, the program has restored more than 7 million acres of habitat while leveraging program dollars at a ratio of 4:1 or greater. In FY 2023, the PFW program will build on this success by assisting implementation of America the Beautiful, expanding work on species migration corridors and landscape

¹ <https://wildlifemanagement.institute/outdoor-news-bulletin/september-2020/who-are-private-landowners-midwest>

connectivity, conserving pollinators, bolstering government-to-government relationships with sovereign Tribal nations, collaborating with private landowners, and implementing a variety of tools related to securing the future of species of greatest conservation concern. This includes using tools like Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances and Safe Harbor Agreements. PFW habitat restoration projects provide cost-effective solutions to combatting climate change in ways such as restoring healthier upland landscapes to retain water longer through droughts, restoring and expanding natural wetland systems to improve storm and flooding resiliency, applying prescribed fire to remove excess fuels for wildfires, increasing biodiversity and sustainability on agricultural operations, and sequestering carbon by restoring and scaling healthy soils. PFW delivers climate solutions at a landscape-scale in ways such as connecting cold, clean, and complex waterways, which support native fish reproduction to expanding overwintering habitat in migration corridors for species impacted by warming temperatures. The PFW program and its partners are key in achieving our nationwide and global climate goals.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: Hat Creek Ranch Sage Steppe and Wildlife Corridor Project



Partners for Fish and Wildlife in Montana completed multiple projects on the Hat Creek Ranch (HCR) in the Big Hole watershed of southwest Montana to enhance sage steppe habitat and wildlife migratory corridors. HCR is home to a diverse array of wildlife species including greater sage grouse, sage steppe obligate songbirds, pronghorn, elk, moose, mule deer, numerous carnivores, raptors, and Arctic grayling.



PFW removed ten miles woven wire fencing, which are difficult for wildlife to negotiate and can lead to mortality from being caught in the fence or delays in movements to seasonal habitats, at HCR to open an important pronghorn migration route. Wildlife friendly fences were installed that have a smooth bottom wire set at 18” and a top wire at a maximum 42’, and will also benefit elk, deer, moose, and carnivores.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service photos.

Additionally, PFW staff enhanced range and riparian conditions on 4,981 acres, restoration of 5 acres of wet meadow and other mesic habitat, and removal of invasive conifers on 100 acres. The restored wet meadow habitat areas have a disproportionate value to wildlife in the sage steppe landscape. Cumulatively, these projects will enhance healthy habitat and corridors for wildlife and maintain a sustainable and economically viable ranch.

The HCR Sage Steppe and Wildlife Corridor Project exemplifies the importance of landowner stewardship and partnerships necessary to enhance and protect wildlife habitat, maintain open spaces, and support a working landscape. Partners for this project include Hat Creek Ranch, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, and the Montana Conservation Corps.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- In FY 2023, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program will engage in voluntary conservation efforts with willing landowners to assist in execution of the America the Beautiful initiative, help to conserve pollinators, work with Tribes and other underserved communities and combat global climate change and work with

private landowners on finding natural solutions for carbon sequestration.

- At the requested FY 2023 funding level, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program will restore and enhance more than 42,000 wetland acres, 260,000 upland acres, 750 riparian miles, and 140 fish passage structures.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Partners for Fish and Wildlife is \$ 67,397,000 and 221 FTE, a program change of +\$9,356,000 and +15 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Activities (+\$8,500,000/+ 15 FTE) –At the requested funding level, the Service will increase the ability to restore and enhance an additional 5,388 wetland acres, 32,970 upland acres, 97 riparian miles, and 18 fish passage structures. These accomplishments will advance voluntary conservation on private lands and support high priority DOI and Service efforts. These accomplishments will further the Administration’s America the Beautiful initiative and the goal of conserving 30% of the Nation’s lands and waters by 2030. The public-private partnerships forged through these agreements will enhance relationships and build trust with local communities.

Baseline Capacity (+\$856,000/+0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$856,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: Habitat Conservation
Subactivity: Coastal Program

		2021 Actual	2022 Enacted	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Coastal Program	(\$000)	13,360	13,360	+360	0	+2,256	15,976	+2,616
	FTE	43	43	0	0	+6	49	+6

Summary of 2022 Program Changes for the Coastal Program

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Coastal Program Activities	+2,000	+6
• Coastal Program Baseline Capacity	+256	+0
Program Changes	+2,256	+6

Program Overview

The Coastal Program is a voluntary, partnership-based program that provides technical and financial assistance for habitat conservation in coastal watersheds. The locally based field staff work with diverse partners, including Federal, State and Tribal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private landowners, to improve and protect habitat on public and private lands. The Coastal Program uses a landscape approach to the conservation of Federal trust species. The Coastal Program conservation actions are guided by a five-year national strategic plan that incorporates the goals and priorities of our partners and stakeholders.

Coastal watersheds and estuaries are highly dynamic, diverse, and complex areas that support 45 percent of threatened and endangered species, 85 percent of waterfowl, and 68 percent of commercial fish. They are home to 40 percent of the U.S. population and produce 50 percent of the Nation’s economic output, resulting in intense development pressure. In addition to providing valuable fish and wildlife habitat, coastal ecosystems supply clean drinking water, attenuate floods, and provide recreational opportunities to coastal communities.

The Coastal Program supports planning and conservation actions to respond to climate change stressors and implement projects that increase coastal ecosystem resilience, incorporate adaptation strategies, promote habitat connectivity, and conserve species of greatest conservation concern. Through its technical and financial assistance, the Coastal Program works with partners, including indigenous and underserved communities to deliver habitat conservation, in support of the America the Beautiful initiative. By focusing resources on addressing the impacts of climate change to marginalized coastal communities, the Coastal Program is supporting the environmental justice goal of America the Beautiful. This includes by co-administering the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program that helps States and U.S. territories protect and restore coastal wetlands also contributing to the initiative to conserve 30 percent of the Nation’s lands and waters by 2030.

The Coastal Program provides value to the American public by leveraging partners’ resources at a ratio of 5:1, multiplying the Service’s conservation impact. A USFWS report titled “Restoration Returns: The Contribution of Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Coastal Program Restoration Projects to Local U.S. Economies (2017 Supplement)” found that every dollar the Coastal Program invested in a project creates \$10.33 in local economic returns. The Coastal Program projects support the Administration’s goal of creating family-supporting jobs, with approximately 1,023 local jobs created from our projects.

This investment stimulates local economies by supporting jobs necessary to deliver habitat conservation, including environmental consultants, engineers, construction workers, and landscapers. These jobs also

generate indirect economic activities that benefit local businesses.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: Texas City Prairie Preserve and Dollar Bay Restoration Project.

Estuarine marshes are considered high-priority nursery habitat for fish and wildlife species, including Gulf menhaden, spotted seatrout, Atlantic croaker, white shrimp, and blue crab. This project established a breakwater and intertidal marsh creating a living shoreline that improves coastal resiliency and prevents coastal erosion and flooding.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service photos.



2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- In FY 2023, the Coastal Program will continue to focus on implementing DOI priorities in collaboration with State, Tribal, coastal communities, and private landowners, building on program success by improving the resiliency of coastal communities to the impacts of climate change, enhancing coastal habitat connectivity, enhancing ecosystem resiliency, conserving Federal trust species and pollinators, and supporting the America the Beautiful Initiative by investing in underserved communities and supporting nature-based infrastructure.
- The Coastal Program will follow its growth investment plan, which was developed to guide allocation and investment up to the \$25 million authorization level in pending legislation. Under this investment plan, the 2023 increase will strategically rebuild the capacity of the regional programs, which will include additional benefits to underserved and indigenous communities. This funding will enable the regions to deliver a level of service necessary to address the highest conservation priorities and accomplish the goals identified in their strategic implementation plans.
- At the requested FY 2023 funding level, the Coastal Program will restore or protect approximately 37 miles of stream/shoreline, 10,926 wetland acres, 8,903 upland acres, and remove 28 fish passage barriers.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the Coastal Program is \$15,976,000 and 49 FTE, a program change of +\$2,256,000 and + 6 FTE from the 2022 annualized CR.

Coastal Program Activities (\$2,000,000/+6 FTE) –The request restores capacity to complete conservation

projects and improve ecosystem health and resilience to climate change impacts and benefit communities of fish, wildlife, plants, and people. For example, restoring coastal wetlands and watersheds improves ecosystem health for coastal dependent birds and fish and reduces the risk of floods in at-risk coastal communities; and installing living shorelines reduces coastal erosion and builds oyster reefs and salt marsh, which support sustainable aquaculture, recreation, and commercial fisheries. These projects contribute to the Administration's America the Beautiful goal of conserving 30% of the Nation's lands and waters by 2030. At the requested funding level, the Service will increase the ability to restore and enhance an additional 1,581 wetland acres, 2,735 upland acres, 5 riparian miles, and 4 fish passage structures. The funding also allows the Service to continue to engage historically underserved communities and implement projects that provide socio-economic benefits as well as environmental benefits.

Baseline Capacity (+\$256,000/+0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$256,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

National Wildlife Refuge System

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Wildlife and Habitat Management	(\$000)	239,568	239,568	+6,732	0	+27,349	273,649	+34,081
	FTE	1,201	1,201	0	0	+58	1,259	+58
Refuge Visitor Services	(\$000)	75,033	75,033	+2,290	0	+19,704	97,027	+21,994
	FTE	480	480	0	0	+80	560	+80
Refuge Law Enforcement	(\$000)	40,907	40,907	+1,357	0	+8,008	50,272	+9,365
	FTE	214	214	0	0	+36	250	+36
Conservation Planning	(\$000)	2,523	2,523	+90	0	+3,071	5,684	+3,161
	FTE	16	16	0	0	+10	26	+10
Refuge Operations	(\$000)	358,031	358,031	+10,469	0	+58,132	426,832	+68,801
	FTE	1,911	1,911	+0	0	+184	2,095	+184
Refuge Maintenance	(\$000)	145,822	145,822	+2,367	0	+23,064	171,253	+25,431
	FTE	523	523	0	0	+70	593	+70
Total, National Wildlife Refuge System	(\$000)	503,853	503,853	+12,836	0	+81,196	597,885	+94,232
	FTE	2,434	2,434	0	0	+254	2,688	+254

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for National Wildlife Refuge System

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Wildlife and Habitat Management Activities	+16,900	+49
• Inventory and Monitoring	+5,000	+5
• Marine National Monuments	+1,000	+4
• Refuge Water Efficiency (Quivira)	-500	+0
• Refuge Visitor Services Activities	+3,000	+25
• Civilian Climate Corps	+8,000	+35
• Urban Wildlife Conservation Programs	+7,000	+20
• Refuge Law Enforcement Activities	+7,000	+36
• Refuge Planning	+3,000	+10
• Deferred Maintenance	+2,000	+0
• Maintenance Support	+6,500	+70
• Annual Maintenance	+8,895	+0
• Equipment and Vehicle Management	+3,993	+0
• NWRS Baseline Capacity	+9,408	+0
Program Changes	+81,196	+254

Program Mission

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and restoration of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Program Elements

The National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) embodies our Nation's commitment to conserving wildlife populations and biodiversity for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. The Refuge System spans more than 850 million acres of lands and waters and includes 567 national wildlife refuges, 38 wetland management districts, 49 coordination areas, seven National Monuments, and 760 million acres in Marine National Monuments.

The Refuge System protects forests, prairies, desert, coral reefs, tundra, and wetlands in all 50 States and five U.S. territories as well as providing critical habitat for a range of wildlife both rare and abundant. Amid unprecedented human demands on the environment and other stressors such as drought, disease, and climate change, the Refuge System relies on broad management capabilities to ensure the integrity and health of the Nation's fish and wildlife. Through careful long-term planning with public involvement, managers deploy a variety of wildlife conservation tools that include habitat restoration, land acquisition, infrastructure maintenance, prescribed fire, visitor services and outreach, emergency management, wilderness preservation, and law enforcement.

With units in every ecosystem and paired with robust partnership programs, the Refuge System has the potential to facilitate conservation in all 50 States, including vast expanses of coastal and marine resources. These characteristics make the Refuge System critical to the America the Beautiful initiative and achieving the Administration's goal of conserving at least 30 percent of the Nation's lands and waters by 2030.

With refuge units near communities of all sizes, the Refuge System delivers outdoor recreational, ecological, and economic benefits to local communities, while striving to address racial inequality in wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation. In FY 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Refuge System hosted a record breaking 65 million visits to national wildlife refuges, an increase of 38% since FY 2010. According to the Banking on Nature 2017 report, the economic impact on local communities from recreation visits totaled \$3.2 billion of spending in regional economies. The Refuge System also generates \$1.1 billion in job income and over 41,000 jobs nationally. Through the Refuge System groundbreaking Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, the Refuge System is targeting investments to underserved communities and addressing racial inequalities in recreational access and conservation participation.

National Wildlife Refuges supports local and regional economies, Americans' health and well-being, and are an important source of jobs and recreation. The Refuge System is responding to the President's Executive Order 14008, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad," by enhancing nature's benefits to American communities by conserving migratory birds, protecting endangered species, restoring, and managing habitats, combatting invasive species, and preparing for and responding to natural and human-caused emergencies. The Refuge System provides contributions to the improvement of air and water quality, the reduction of soil erosion, improvement of soil health and ground water retention. Additionally, refuges reduce impacts from hurricanes on coastal communities, sequester carbon, and store excess water during storms and spring snow melts.

Emergency Management & Physical Security

The Service's Office of Emergency Management and Physical Security program (OEMPS) provides expertise and leadership for the Service's emergency management and physical security responsibilities nationwide. The Emergency Management program coordinates the Service's response to natural and

human-caused emergencies such as hurricanes, wildlife disease outbreaks, unusual mortality events, pandemics, and hazardous chemical spills. The Physical Security program averts unauthorized access to the Service's employees, property, and facilities.

The OEMPS plays a key role in integrating and synchronizing efforts to address preparedness and security for the Service. The Refuge System provide oversight, guidance, expertise, and leadership through the integration of our programs and participate in activities as described in the National Response Framework. Through this effort, the Service takes measures to prevent, protect against, prepare for, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all hazards that may affect any part of the Service, the species, and habitats managed, and the people and communities served.

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

The National Wildlife Refuge System is implemented under the following authorities:

- *The Fish and Wildlife Act* (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j) establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.
- *The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act* (16 U.S.C. 661-666e) directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water, and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- *The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act* (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) provides authority, guidelines, and directives for the Service in administering the lands and waters of the National Wildlife Refuge System, including establishing six wildlife-dependent recreation activities as priority uses.
- *The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act* (P.L. 105-57) spells out wildlife conservation as the fundamental mission of the Refuge System, requires comprehensive conservation planning to guide management of the Refuge System, directs involvement of private citizens in land management decisions, and provides that compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate use that should receive priority in refuge planning and management.
- *The National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Improvement Act* (P.L. 111-357) authorizes cooperative agreements with nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and promotes volunteer, outreach, and education programs.
- *The Refuge Recreation Act* (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use, when such uses do not interfere with the area's primary purposes.
- *The National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act* (P.L. 106-408) reinforces National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act provisions to raise public understanding and appreciation for the Refuge System.
- *The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 410hh-3233, 43 U.S.C. 1602-1784) provides for the designation and conservation of certain public lands in Alaska, including units of the Refuge System, and for the continuing subsistence needs of Alaska Natives.
- *The Migratory Bird Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 715-715d, 715e, 715f-715r) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct investigations and publish documents related to North American birds and establishes a Migratory Bird Conservation Commission to approve areas recommended by the Secretary for acquisition.
- *The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act* (16 U.S.C. 718a-718k) requires waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older to possess a valid Federal Duck Stamp.
- *The Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (16 U.S.C. 703-712) establishes Federal responsibility for protecting and managing migratory birds.

- *The Wilderness Act* (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136) establishes a National Wilderness Preservation System for the permanent good of the whole people.
- *The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006* (P.L. 109–295, title VI) mandates the development of both the National Preparedness Goal and National Preparedness System.
- *The Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act of 2006* (P.L. 109 – 417) improves the Nation’s public health and medical preparedness and response capabilities for emergencies, whether deliberate, accidental, or natural.
- *The Homeland Security Act of 2002* (P.L. 107-296, title V) created the Department of Homeland Security. Title V addresses the response time and preparedness of responders, for terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. In addition, it establishes standards, joint exercises, and trainings.
- *The Presidential Policy Directive-40* (PPD-40) (July 15, 2016), National Continuity Policy, prescribes continuity requirements for all Federal Executive Branch Departments and Agencies to ensure a comprehensive and integrated national continuity program that will enhance the credibility of our national security posture and enable a more rapid and effective response to and recovery from a national emergency.
- *The Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5* (Feb. 28, 2003) enhances the Nation’s ability to manage domestic incidents by establishing a single, comprehensive National Incident Management System.
- *The Department of the Interior Departmental Manual Part 900 - Emergency Management Program* outlines policy, functions, and responsibilities for emergency management and homeland and national security for all bureaus and offices within the Department.
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policies* (090 FW 1, 090 FW 2, 32 FW 1) establish responsibilities for continuity of operations, emergency management. and physical security within the Service.

Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System

Subactivity: Wildlife and Habitat Management

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Wildlife and Habitat Management	(\$000)	239,568	239,568	+6,732	0	+27,349	273,649	+34,081
	FTE	1,201	1,201	0	0	+58	1,259	+58

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Wildlife and Habitat Management

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Wildlife and Habitat Management Activities	+16,900	+49
• Inventory and Monitoring	+5,000	+5
• Marine National Monuments	+1,000	+4
• Baseline Capacity	+4,949	+0
• Refuge Water Efficiency (Quivira)	-500	+0
Program Changes	+27,349	+58

Program Overview

Through its wide-ranging wildlife and habitat management and partnership activities, the Refuge System facilitates conservation on millions of acres across the United States and its territories. Wildlife and habitat management includes a host of scientifically sound management tools, including water management, habitat management and restoration, collaboration with stakeholders, wilderness character monitoring, and invasive species eradication. These tools are all aimed at ensuring a balanced conservation approach to benefit both wildlife and people for a climate resilient American future.

General Wildlife and Habitat Management

The Wildlife and Habitat Management subactivity funds refuge operations, including monitoring plant and animal populations; restoring wetland, forest, grassland and marine habitats; managing habitats through manipulation of water levels, prescribed burning, haying, grazing, timber harvest, and planting vegetation; controlling invasive species; monitoring air quality; investigating and cleaning up contaminants; controlling wildlife disease outbreaks; assessing water quality and quantity; and addressing the human dimensions of wildlife management. These activities are vital for the Refuge System to achieve its mission at local, landscape and national levels.

Inventory and Monitoring

To successfully deliver durable and effective conservation outcomes in a changing environment, it is imperative that the Refuge System understand how, and at what rate, the geophysical, biological, and human environments are changing. It is equally critical that the Refuge System monitors the effects of management interventions to inform adjustments to our strategies and to maximize the efficiency of appropriated resources. The Refuge System accomplishes this through an iterative process of adaptive management. Inventory and monitoring activities of wildlife populations and both the natural and built environments inform conservation planning activities that identify and prioritize our Service management interventions.

Subsequent monitoring and evaluation provide transparent results of those interventions which subsequently inform planning activities in an iterative cycle. Thus, the Service maximizes efficiency in achieving conservation outcomes for priority resources. This approach is transparent and science-driven, it is also labor intensive, specifically for the planning and monitoring responsibilities. It relies on an interdisciplinary team who conduct inventory and monitoring activities of our nation's biological resources, ecological processes, physical environment, and human preferences, behaviors, and tolerances. These factors combine to influence conservation approaches and management outcomes throughout the Refuge System. The inventory and monitoring team is coordinated by the Natural Resource Program Center to ensure that collected data are consistent and relevant at multiple scales, leverage the activities of the Refuge System partners, and that data analysis and storage achieve the highest scientific standards.

The America's Rescue Plan Act provided the National Wildlife Refuge System with a one-time appropriation of \$10M to address zoonotic disease to prevent the next pandemic. The NWRS has invested in unifying the sometimes-disparate efforts of the Federal Agencies, States, and Tribes by providing capacity to coordinate activities across jurisdictions. The additional capacity for the Regional Wildlife Agency Associations and the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society will result in leveraged activities of the Federal Agencies, State and Tribal governments to create a coordinated national network to detect, diagnose, respond, and prevent future disease outbreaks. Through these efforts, cross-jurisdictional disease planning, training, and surveillance will greatly enhance our collective ability to detect, respond and contain wildlife disease outbreaks that could pose threats to wildlife, domestic animals, and humans. While the ARP Act is focused on zoonotic diseases with pandemic potential, the detection and management of other diseases of concern (Chronic Wasting Disease) will be greatly enhanced by the creation of a cross-jurisdictional network. With this one-time funding the NWRS will build the foundation of a coordinated and efficient national network of wildlife disease management.

In addition to leading collection of relevant data in accordance with the highest scientific standards, the Inventory and Monitoring program of the National Wildlife Refuge System also provides for data curation services and systems to ensure preservation of collected data. Integrated systems ensure both preservation and access to information for Service employees, partners, academia, and the public.

Invasive Species Management

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, invasive species and habitat loss are the two greatest threats to the federally listed threatened and endangered species in the Refuge System and overall biodiversity throughout the United States. Invasive species negatively impact native species through habitat modification, competition, predation, herbivory, pathogenic vectors, and by hybridizing with natives. They are one of the most serious threats to native plants, fish, and wildlife populations. Management activities are critical to preventing the introduction, establishment and spread of invasive species, and controlling or eradicating invasive species where they are present. Funds are used to inventory, monitor, and treat invasive species on refuge lands to protect and restore native ecosystems. Treatment methods can include mechanical removal, pesticide applications, prescribed burns, flooding, or biological controls.

The Refuge System works with partners to implement invasive species mitigation and restoration projects by using invasives strike teams for early detection and rapid response (EDRR). EDRR aims to limit the

establishment or range of invasive species and prevent the need for more costly ongoing treatments often required once invasive species populations are established. The Refuge System has 14 strike teams, with at least one team in each Service Region.

The Large Invasive Species allocation is a \$1 million allocation of Refuge System invasive species funding that is competitively awarded to one refuge each year to completely eradicate or achieve 99% maximum control of one or more invasive species. Since its inception, the Large Invasive Species Allocation has funded successful projects that include rat eradication at Palmyra Atoll and Desecheo NWR; Spartina eradication and control at Humboldt Bay NWR and San Francisco Bay NWR; and yellow crazy ant eradication on Johnson Atoll. Native biodiversity is now thriving at these sites.

Marine National Monuments

The Service manages nearly 760 million acres of submerged lands and waters within five Marine National Monuments (Marianas Trench, Pacific Remote Islands, Papahānaumokuākea, Rose Atoll, and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts). The Service’s Marine Program provides coordination and representation for the five Marine National Monuments and National Wildlife Refuges with marine responsibilities. Marine National Monuments are considered the most unspoiled tropical ecosystems under U.S. purview and are some of our Nation’s last frontiers for wildlife conservation and scientific exploration. Threats to conservation of the marine environment continue to become more severe. The United Nations projects the human population will reach 8.5 billion by 2030, generating greater amounts of greenhouse gases, producing more waste, and depleting world fisheries. This makes it even more important to protect large intact marine ecosystems. Spanning an area larger than the Continental United States, the Marine National Monuments represent the greatest opportunity for the Service to sustain marine biodiversity and environmental health by providing vital habitat for sea turtles, sharks, and coral reefs, along with many other threatened, endangered, and unknown species. Marine National Monuments are integral to the goals of the America the Beautiful initiative by protecting approximately 25% of the Nation’s total marine area.

These areas provide management certainty and large-scale ecosystem protections while decreasing human stressors which allows for greater biodiversity, biological productivity, and ability for species to move to more suitable areas as conditions change. Marine National Monuments are areas of significant carbon sequestration. These areas also benefit commercial fisheries outside of monument boundaries by protecting spawning grounds and nursery areas. Plastic pollution and discarded fishing nets continuously enter the



The USFWS has partnered with NOAA and others to remove over 950 tons of marine debris from Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument since 1996 (photo credit James Morioka, NOAA)

marine monuments causing damage to fragile reef habitats and killing fish and wildlife through ingestion or entanglement. Considerable resources are expended to remove marine debris from these remote areas.

While these areas are too remote for the public to visit, monument staff work to bring “the place to the people” through outreach at visitor centers and aquariums including a film for IMAX theaters, live streaming deep sea exploration events, classroom activities, and online news and articles.

Monument managers strive to engage Native Pacific Islanders in the creation of monument management plans.

Within Papahānaumokuākea, co-management agencies worked to create a guidance document to integrate Native Hawaiʻian culture and knowledge into monument management. Managers also provide on-site learning opportunities to interns through the non-profit group *Kupu*. The trainings include character building, service learning, and environmental stewardship for young adults from Hawaiʻi and other Pacific islands.

2023 Program Activities

The 2022 budget will:

- Enable the Refuge System to recruit and retain a talented workforce that is reflective of the diverse communities we serve with emphasis on racial equity and underserved communities. We will offer development and training opportunities to help sustain local economies through employment and partnership. We will protect our workforce and our volunteers through appropriate health and safety programs that promote safe working conditions. We will embrace fully climate change goals to manage public lands for resilient landscapes while sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through clean energy and green infrastructure.
- Enable the Service to focus on wildlife and habitat management activities in support of Secretarial priorities, including conservation stewardship, utilizing natural resources, expanding access for outdoor recreation, and using science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources. This includes using traditional approaches, such as water level manipulation, prescriptive grazing, and selective timber harvesting, to achieve desired habitat conditions for fish and wildlife. Healthy habitats are vital to ensure sustainable wildlife populations, whether they are imperiled or game species. The Service expects to actively manage more than 3 million acres of habitat.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Wildlife and Habitat Management is \$273,649,000 and 1,259 FTEs, a program change of +\$34,081,000 and +58 FTEs from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Wildlife and Habitat Management Activities (+\$16,900,000/+49 FTEs)— The request will support implementation of the America the Beautiful initiative by remobilizing diverse American scientific and professional talent in Wildlife and Habitat management with the addition of 49 FTEs. The mission of the Refuge System can only be met when the capacity exists to manage habitat for wildlife and fish, invite and engage visitors, and build conservation partnerships. Providing an effective level of staffing is integral to the success of the Service, the Refuge System, and the conservation of America's lands and waters. Over the past ten years, the National Wildlife Refuge System full-time-equivalent staffing has decreased by nearly 25 percent. These reductions have occurred as the number of units in the Refuge System grew, the Refuge System was entrusted to manage more than 759 million acres of submerged lands and waters across five Marine National Monuments and over 6 million acres opened or expanded for hunting and fishing. The Refuge System will support E.O. 14005, Ensuring the Future is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers and E.O. 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, by responding to the climate crisis by managing crucial habitat using landscape conservation approaches.

The mission of the Refuge System is fulfilled, in part, by building resiliency for species and the habitats they depend upon. The greatest challenge the Refuge System currently has is to do this in the face of a rapidly changing climate. Wildlife Refuges are managed in a continuous iterative adaptive management cycle (planning, design, implementation of actions, and monitoring the effectiveness of those actions) to achieve specific outcomes that improve resiliency and sustainability. The Refuge System priority is to ensure that our conservation strategies complement and build on those of our partners while fulfilling the Service's stewardship responsibilities. However, this science-driven work requires significant investment in our capacity to carry out planning, design, and monitoring. Additional funds will be used to increase staff with expertise in spatial

ecology, biology, botany, and hydrology throughout the organization to help integrate Service lands into large landscape conservation priorities.

America the Beautiful - The Refuge System will begin to fill critical vacancies in Wildlife and Habitat Management that support scientific studies, habitat restoration and management, landscape conservation, and climate resiliency. Recruitment will focus on entry level positions to attract the next generation workforce to career opportunities in conservation and civil service. The Refuge System is dedicated to recruiting a workforce that reflects the communities the Refuge System serve through strong relationships with youth and veteran organizations and a goal to rebuild our capacity with team members of racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity.

Wildlife Disease Prevention - The Service has limited capacity to proactively manage wildlife disease risks that pose threats to not only wildlife but domestic animals and humans as well. Additional funding will be used to conduct surveillance and monitoring activities on and around wildlife refuges, as well as leverage those of other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and non-governmental organizations. These activities are a vital part of creating a national, cross jurisdictional network that will enhance timely detection and diagnosis of, as well as effective response to, disease outbreaks. In addition to detection, diagnosis, and response, preparation and planning must be collaborative across the broader wildlife health partnership. This funding will allow staff to complete disease contingency planning to ensure that Refuge System efforts are done in coordination with and contribute to a broader landscape-level strategy. Implementing a coordinated response will maximize the chances of containing a disease outbreak and limiting impacts on both the wildlife and human populations.

The Service chairs the Department of the Interior's One Health Group that works toward a more proactive approach on wildlife, human and environmental health issues. One Health is multi-disciplinary approach that operates on the idea that the health of wildlife, domestic animals, and human health are inextricably linked and confronting all will help us overcome some of the greatest infectious disease challenges of our generation. Most international, Federal, and State animal and human health agencies recognize the importance of One Health and have designated resources and personnel towards this comprehensive approach to health and environmental problems improving the country's ability to prevent the next global pandemic. To implement a proactive One Health approach, the Refuge System will invest in more disease prevention, and inter-agency coordination. Additional funds will be used to hire wildlife veterinarians, wildlife health experts, biologists, technicians and conservation social scientists necessary to move the program towards a more proactive approach. Increased capacity will support intra-agency coordination to ensure the Service is addressing emergent infectious diseases collaboratively.

Pollinator Conservation - North America faces a pollinator crisis that impacts our natural ecosystems, our agricultural security, and the Nation's economy. Habitat loss and degradation, expansive pesticide use, and climate-driven impacts are causing increasing vulnerabilities and declining resiliency. Iconic species, like monarch butterfly and American bumblebee, have captured the public's attention. The list of at-risk pollinator species continues to grow. By mobilizing capacity, expertise, and partnerships, the Service will prioritize pollinator conservation to stabilize populations and ensure the sustained ecosystem and economic services that they provide. Results will benefit a broad array of trust resources, most notably declining migratory birds, provide benefits to a variety of sectors of society (including underrepresented communities), and contribute to climate change resiliency. The Refuge System will work in concert with partners and across Service programs to advance conservation of pollinators by: (1) advancing pollinator science including species range and distribution, population status and trends, and threats assessments, (2) strategic partnerships including expanding collaboration with States and Tribes, and (3) outreach and engagement that targets conservation agencies, private industry, and the public. This investment will complement the work with Science Applications as we invest in inventory and monitoring for pollinators on Service lands.

Inventory and Monitoring (+\$5,000,000/+5 FTE)— Investments in monitoring of priority resources on Refuge lands are needed to inform planning efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of management interventions, especially in a rapidly changing human and climactic environment. A robust Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) program provides a scientifically defensible and transparent rationale for the expenditure of public funds through management activities. By monitoring the impacts of resource management actions, the Refuge System can better target management activities for desired outcomes and inform effective strategies on changing landscapes.

Climate change poses an existential threat to the entire world. Impacts are seen from rural areas to urban centers. Climate change does not discriminate against any community, ecosystem, or economy. In addition, because of climate change, threats to national security and major weather changes are increasing daily. It's imperative that we, as U.S. Citizens, work together to slow the warming of the earth by decreasing greenhouse gases and find alternative energy sources. An emerging framework for natural resource management referred to as RAD (Resist, Accept, or Direct) calls on land managers to make conscious decisions about whether management interventions should attempt to resist, accept, or direct the impacts of climate change. The intent is to make informed and transparent decisions in order to maximize the effectiveness and the durability of conservation investments. In order to make these kinds of transparent choices, we must first understand how the environment is changing: How fast is it changing? What is changing towards? How will that impact our trust resources? Service staff, working with the U.S. Geological Survey's Climate Adaptation Science Centers and other climate scientists are integral to ensure the Service develops a consistent and systematic approach to consideration of climate change. Additional funding will be used to build capacity and provide resources to develop predictive models and decision support tools to inform climate adaptation strategies across the landscape. Establishing this expertise will ensure that conservation investments are made using the best available science and that those investments will both accomplish what they are intended to accomplish and persist on the landscape for a period that would provide a wise return on investment of public resources.

Wildlife and Habitat Management: Baseline Capacity (+\$4,949,000/+0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$4.9 million in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Marine National Monuments (+1,000,000/+4 FTE) – This budget increase will enhance coordination capability in Headquarters and the Region to engage partner agencies, organizations, stakeholders, and indigenous communities, inspire stewards and visitors, and improve our understanding through science and monitoring for the conservation and management of marine monuments. The increase will allow better communications with other USFWS programs to connect monument actions with national and international initiatives. This budget increase will also increase the ability to strategically leverage interagency resources, especially for climate change threats, protecting coral reefs, and biological monitoring through remote sensing. Policies will be standardized across the five marine monuments, increasing management consistency. This budget increase will also fund the removal of fishing nets and other damaging marine debris from these remote areas. Increased program capacity will enable us to increase outreach capabilities to further engage youth and indigenous people to help inspire the next generation of ocean conservation.

Refuge Water Efficiency (Quivira) (-\$500,000/-0 FTE) – The budget does not request funding for this program in FY 2023. Funding will be invested in other priority Refuge System projects.

Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System

Subactivity: Refuge Visitor Services

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Refuge Visitor Services	(\$000)	75,033	75,033	+2,290	0	+19,704	97,027	+21,994
	FTE	480	480	0	0	+80	560	+80

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Refuge Visitor Services

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Refuge Visitor Services Activities	+3,000	+25
• Civilian Climate Corps	+8,000	+35
• Urban Wildlife Conservation Programs	+7,000	+20
• Baseline Capacity	+1,704	+0
Program Changes	+19,704	+80

Program Overview

Opportunities for outdoor recreation drew a record-breaking 65 million visits to national wildlife refuges in FY 2021. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, America’s public depended greatly on access to their public lands for recreational opportunities. The Service responded by applying recommended science-based responses to keep employees and the public safe and to simultaneously provide access to public lands managed within the Refuge System. This included developing creative approaches to virtual programming, applying innovative measures for customer service and improved sanitation protocols.

While some visitors take part in wildlife-dependent recreation such as hunting and fishing, many more enjoy walking, paddling, wildlife viewing or nature photography. In support of the Administration’s priorities and to advance racial equity, the Refuge System is investing in improving the visitor experience by modernizing public use infrastructure, improving equitable access, increasing recreational opportunities, and offering education, training and outdoor experiences that foster long-term connections with new audiences. These activities offer visitors a chance to unplug from the stresses of modern life and reconnect with their natural surroundings. The Refuge System is committed to enhancing access to recreation by removing economic, physical, and programmatic barriers.

As a designated High Impact Service Provider by the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11 Section 280, the Service’s Refuge System is responsible for maintaining a high level of customersatisfaction and community engagement in its delivery of services to socially and racially diverse local communities across the country. To accomplish this, and support of the President’s Management Agenda to deliver excellent, equitable and secure Federal services and customer experience, the Service welcomes, and orients visitors through in-person and on-line trip planning tools, manages a variety of recreation opportunities, protects cultural resources, and creates and delivers engaging interpretive and education programming in-person and virtually to people of all ages and backgrounds.

The Refuge System also supports many Service-wide community engagement programs including a robust volunteer program, youth and veterans' programs, Friends groups, and the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program (UWCP). Through these programs, the Refuge System strives to ensure safe, welcoming experiences for everyone and create lasting relationships to meet community needs.

Youth and Careers in Nature

The Refuge System youth programs are vital to supporting the Administration's goals of building an outdoor economy by developing a Civilian Climate Corps that introduce a new generation of Americans to conservation and climate resiliency work and careers in nature and science. From high school aged Youth Conservation Corps summer work programs to temporary student employment (Pathways) positions, youth gain critical real-world job experiences, mentorship, and mobility across the Refuge System.

The Service builds upon existing, proven programs with new and creative approaches to offer public service opportunities, support education and outdoor learning laboratories, and engage young Americans in conservation work and provide recreational access to public lands. Each year, the Service relies on thousands of eager, qualified youth interns and volunteers to engage in important functions of refuge operations including trails maintenance, invasive species response, habitat restoration, greet visitors and perform other necessary tasks. Through these efforts, the Service has developed more than 50 partnerships with non-profit youth serving organizations to recruit and employ youth in entry level internships and temporary employment.

Urban Wildlife Conservation Program

The Urban Wildlife Conservation Program (UWCP) is one of the Service's primary focal points for supporting the Administration's Justice 40 initiative to advance racial equity in conservation and recreational access. The program includes 101 urban national wildlife refuges, seven flagship urban national wildlife refuges that innovate scalable solutions for the broader conservation community, 32 designated Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership cities, and 30 Urban Bird Treaty cities.

This Service-wide program builds on the idea that long-term, meaningful relationships with diverse communities are how the Refuge System will best achieve equitable conservation outcomes. This requires a new way of doing business—including innovative approaches, skill-building, and a workforce that better mirrors the diversity of America. Together with the Civilian Climate Corps as directed in Executive Order: 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, UWCP is well positioned to help formulate community-centered foundations, and to deliver the eight *Standards of Excellence* - measurable indicators of success that are also a commitment to racial equity, social and environmental justice, and natural resources conservation in the communities we serve.

Cultural Resources

The Service's Cultural Resources program began in the mid-late 1970s in response to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800. Today, the Service-wide cultural resources program is a primary means of engagement with Native American Tribes and other descendant communities via consultation with these groups over Trust resources. The Program supports the Department's priorities to conserve, manage, protect, and restore cultural resources, and promote Tribal well-being, equity, and justice.

The cultural resources program monitors and protects thousands of cultural and historic sites, including sites

sacred to Native Americans, ancient burial mounds, Tribal and settler cemeteries, homesteads, lighthouses, fish hatcheries and battlegrounds along with more than 6 million museum property items that have come to the agency via laws like the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and for which the Service is now a steward. Continued successes will require investment in and innovative additions to our workforce that will result in better management of these non-renewable resources and better consultation and engagement with those communities whose cultural patrimony we are entrusted with protecting.

2023 Program Activities

The 2022 Budget will:

- In support of E.O. 13985 *Advancing Racial Equity in Support of Underserved Communities through the Federal Government* the Refuge System will introduce new users to recreational and other outdoor activities and improve our digital infrastructure and ability to offer new technologies. The Service will continue to strategically balance the expected increases in public demand for services while sustaining high rates of visitor satisfaction (≥ 90 percent), and ensuring the continued conservation of plants, animals, and habitat.
- Expand on our service to urban communities, furthering the Department's priorities of restoring and building on a tradition of trust through community-centered conservation efforts. The Urban Wildlife Conservation Program delivers targeted community-driven conservation and recreation that addresses racial inequality in wildlife conservation and access to nature. We will continue to engage with local communities and increase opportunities, through grants to educational organizations, creating living wage jobs that hire employee's representative of local communities and create nature play areas and outdoor skills centers that cater to the local community. We will also work to increase access for urban communities through transportation incentives and enhancement of trails networks.
- Support the Department's commitments to conserve, protect, manage, and restore natural and cultural resources. The Refuge System is expanding its efforts to better meet Tribal consultation and Section 106 review requirements, improving education, monitoring, and protection of cultural resource sites, and improving the Service's Museum property management.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Visitor Services is \$97,027,000 and 560 FTE, a program change of +\$19,704,000 and +80 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Refuge Visitor Services Activities (+\$3,000,000/+25 FTE)— The mission of the Refuge System can only be met when the capacity exists to execute habitat management, visitor engagement, and partnership building. Providing the appropriate level of staffing is integral to the success of the Service, the Refuge System, and all the lands and waters we manage. Over the past ten years, the Refuge System full-time-equivalent staffing has decreased by nearly 25 percent. These reductions have occurred as the number of visits to Wildlife Refuges continue to increase an average of 3% a year, from 45.7 million in FY 2011 to over 61.4 million in FY 2020. As we rebuild capacity, we will focus on increasing the diversity of our visitor services workforce by focusing on entry-level positions and recruiting candidates from historically marginalized communities. In addition, a portion of this increase will fund the administration of the Civilian Climate Corps (CCC) program. Additional funding will enable the Service to implement and administer the CCC by providing additional capacity in regions to recruit and supervise the next generation of conservation professionals. CCC Funding will allow the Service to provide living wage internship opportunities that will help rebuild the workforce and create clear pathways to careers in conservation. This funding will contribute to rebuilding the visitor service workforce, focusing on entry-level

positions that will greet visitors, teach students, engage communities, and coordinate volunteer programs. These positions are critical to providing safe and welcoming access to visitors. The structure of these positions will also provide career opportunities for diverse applicants.

Civilian Climate Corps (+\$8,000,000/+35 FTEs) – This budget increase will help the Service mobilize the next generation of conservation and climate resilience workers and maximizing training opportunities and good jobs. Funding will support President Biden’s vision of a Civilian Climate Corps as detailed in E.O. 14008 “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.” The Service is well- positioned to help establish a new Civilian Climate Corps to tackle the issues of the 21st Century and work towards the goals set out by the President: 1) conserving and restoring public lands and waters, 2) bolstering community resilience, 3) increasing reforestation, 4) increasing carbon sequestration in the agricultural sector, 5) protecting biodiversity, 6) improving access to recreation, and 7) addressing the changing climate.

Urban Wildlife Conservation Programs (+\$7,000,000/+20 FTE) – The requested funds will allow the Service to expand the Service’s Urban Wildlife Conservation program, which has demonstrated local successes in the locations that have been provided funding. Funding will ensure long-term resources at more urban refuges and engagement in more community partnerships; it will enable the Service to create a culturally relevant and welcoming environment for visitors; expand youth and local hiring opportunities; and improve access for disadvantaged communities through public transportation and trails projects.

The Urban Wildlife Conservation Program (UWCP) creates opportunities for the 80% of Americans who live in urban areas to benefit from time spent in nature. More than 100 national wildlife refuges are within 25 miles of a population of more than 250,000 people. The UWCP creates long-term, meaningful partnerships with disadvantaged communities to make conservation and recreation experiences relevant and positive.

This increase will provide \$1 million above the typical individual unit allocation to seven additional urban refuges. The funds will be used to expand and improve citizen science, conservation education, recreation, and habitat restoration programs, with the overarching goal of increasing the quality and quantity of urban wildlife habitat. To increase access for historically marginalized communities, the Service will expand transportation and facilities projects, and decrease barriers by developing better signage, interpretive and educational materials. The UWCP will expand grant opportunities and develop a new grant program that supports the human dimensions of conservation, focusing on conservation education outcomes.

Additional funding will help expand the Service’s opportunities to connect in areas without national wildlife refuges. UWCP partnerships provide funding for local non-profit organizations working with refuges, ecological services offices, fish hatcheries or other offices to engage local communities in conservation, such as removing invasive plants or cleaning waterways. By increasing funds for urban refuges, the Service can increase the number of innovative community- based conservation projects.

Baseline Capacity (+\$1,704,000/+0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$1.7 million in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System

Subactivity: National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Refuge Law Enforcement	(\$000)	40,907	40,907	+1,357	0	+8,008	50,272	+9,365
	FTE	214	214	0	0	+36	250	+36

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Refuge Law Enforcement Activities	+7,000	+36
• Refuge Law Enforcement Baseline Capacity	+1,008	+0
Program Changes	+8,008	+36

Program Overview

The National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement (NWRS LE) program supports the Department of the Interior priority of safeguarding the integrity of a vast and abundant public lands network while serving and protecting those who enjoyed a record 65 million wildlife-dependent recreational visits in FY 2021. The Refuge System’s cadre of Federal wildlife officers support protection of endangered species, habitat conservation and a broadspectrum of Service programs, ensuring public safety and education, resource protection, and protecting Native American resources and Alaska Native subsistence rights.

As leaders in the law enforcement community in building trust with local communities, the Refuge System actively recruits and hires Federal wildlife officers from diverse and underrepresented communities. The program has increased the diversity of its workforce while creating a community of practice where law enforcement professionals are not only good stewards of public lands; they are also good neighbors.

Federal wildlife officers serve as ambassadors for the Refuge System and the Service. They support the public as hunter safety instructors; coordinate with veterans and disabled sportsperson’s groups to create outdoor opportunities; and lead youth shooting, hunting, and fishing events on refuges. They are routinely involved with local and other Federal law enforcement agencies in cooperative efforts in supporting nationwide disaster recovery efforts.

The NWRS LE has integrated community outreach and de-escalation techniques into both its initial and follow-on training. With a focus on human and civil rights, the program has taken a boldstep forward to establish cross cultural communications with local and indigenous communities. The program works with non-profit groups that focus on creating access to the outdoors for urban communities to build trust between Refuge System officers and communities of color and create opportunities for internal reflection and training on relationship building and intervention.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Undertake efforts to improve trust within our communities, modification to our training, such as hiring practices to specifically address intervention and bias, incorporating organizational values

and ethics into all aspects of law enforcement.

- Establish mandatory Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) investigative training to 100% of the commissioned law enforcement of the NWRS to enhance monitoring and the protection of cultural resources and to prioritize resource crimes against the Native American community.
- Support work to implement Executive Order 13985- Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal government and the Secretary's priority to promote equity and environmental justice by continuing to provide effective public safety and resource protection by building a law enforcement workforce that represents the American people. National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement will enhance regulations to ensure equality in the protection of individuals and cultures.
- Continue to support the Secretary's priority to strengthen the government-to-government relationship with sovereign Tribal nations and Secretarial Order 3399, Department-wide approach to the climate crisis and restoring transparency and integrity, to the decision-making process by supporting the enhancing Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGRPA).
- Diversity and Inclusion in the Workforce –NWRSLE will continue to recruit, hire, and train new Federal wildlife officers utilizing hiring practices that have demonstrated significant increases in women and underrepresented populations in the workforce. With the Service's National Hiring Program for law enforcement, we will continue to expand on our current 20% women/diverse hiring rates and provide more opportunities for promotion and advancement into mid-level and senior leadership positions for women and people of color. We will also develop a Pathways internship/recent graduate program that would provide tangible recruitment and diversity benefits in NWRS LE.
- Pursuing Equity – NWRSLE will expand training of Federal wildlife officers in connecting and creating meaningful partnerships with the communities we serve and promote equity in the delivery of public safety services. Refuge System officers will continue to expand engagement with Native Alaskan and Native American communities, nationalize the inventory and monitoring of sacred cultural resources sites, expand training in the Archeological Resource Protection Act and the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act. NWRSLE will establish a board of advisors with members comprised of diverse backgrounds across the Service to review our policies and practices and seek ways to improve for the people we serve.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement is \$50,272,000 and 250 FTE, a program change of +\$8,008,000 and +36 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement Activities (+\$7,000,000/+36 FTE) – This funding increase will support the retention of workforce gains realized in FY 2022 and the addition of 36 Federal Wildlife Officers to increase the workforce to 269 FTEs and support a no-net-loss of law enforcement and protection activities. This allows for the continued hiring and support of Federal Wildlife Officers who are embedded in the local community, with a focus on equity, inclusion, and community engagement. Through retention and support efforts, officers will continue to represent a broad range of diversity, including race, gender, language, life experience, age, and cultural background, to improve the understanding and effectiveness in working with all communities.

This increase will allow the hiring of 36 new Federal Wildlife Officers (FWOs), to continue fulfilling the International Associations of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recommended number of minimum officers and allow the NWRS LE to continue leading change in the 21st Century Policing. While the IACP has indicated that NWRS LE has less than a third of the recommended number of FWOs, this nimble workforce is a national leader in law

enforcement and provides visitor safety to over 65 million visitations annually to the National Wildlife Refuges and the communities they serve. NWRS LE will also purchase computers for each new officer and allow for replacement of 10% of the current officers' laptops.

Building Trust – The Service will continue leading by example in the use of body worn cameras by modernizing the body worn camera program that was established in 2014. As the first DOI law enforcement program to standardize the use of body worn cameras for all field law enforcement activities, NWRSLE will continue to invest in the body worn camera program. The Service will modernize the camera inventory, improve the data management and storage capacity, increase training for Federal wildlife officers and managers, and develop standard practices in transparent reporting of law enforcement activities to the public. The 2023 budget will:

- Fund the National Wildlife Refuge System-wide deployment of body worn cameras, data management, and conducted electrical weapon systems. These integrated systems would increase transparency by more reliably capturing confrontational interactions with the public and provide seamless data storage, retrieval, and transcription capability.

Refuge Law Enforcement: Baseline Capacity (+\$1,008,000; +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$1 million in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System

Subactivity: Conservation Planning

	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Conservation Planning (\$000)	2,523	2,523	+90	0	+3,071	5,684	+3,161
FTE	16	16	0	0	+10	26	+10

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Conservation Planning

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Refuge Planning	+3,000	+10
• Baseline Capacity	+71	+0
Program Changes	+3,071	+10

Program Overview

The Refuge System’s ability to conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitats for future generations of Americans begins with our commitment to conservation planning. Planning guides on-the-ground stewardship of threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, inter-jurisdictional fish, and other species of special concern entrusted to us by the American people. We develop our plans using an interdisciplinary approach, to ensure management activities address diverse biological and socioeconomic issues.

Consistent with *Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation*¹, the Service is preparing the Refuge System to confront challenges posed by climate change, invasive species, habitat fragmentation and urbanization. To be successful, these issues must be addressed collaboratively. Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) and step-down management plans drive on-the-ground management on wildlife refuges across the Country. CCPs are based on Landscape Conservation Designs (LCD), often developed with the assistance of our Science Applications program, which create a framework by linking refuge planning and management actions to create functional landscapes and ensure that refuge-level actions contribute to a landscape-level vision. In collaboration with communities, design development looks at current and future conditions and determines where on the landscape to focus program delivery. On many wildlife refuges, targeted restoration is necessary to bring altered landscapes back into balance. These restoration efforts create landscape-level habitats capable of supporting viable populations of target species; be resilient to climate fluctuations; restore ecosystem processes; integrate partnerships; and integrate with future acquisition efforts.

CCPs identify goals and objectives for refuge management and identify strategies to achieve these goals and objectives. The 1997 National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act mandates that the Service complete a CCP for every unit of the Refuge System and revise it every 15 years. Many of the CCPs need revision and so it’s timely to update our processes by incorporating landscape level influences, such as climate, into the next generation of CCPs. Additionally, these long-term management plans, as well as step-down management plans, rely on public participation during development and give communities a stake in their local refuge. Public participation provides refuges a powerful alliance with local communities

¹ <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/pdfs/FinalDocumentConservingTheFuture.pdf>

and encourages improved quality of life beyond refuge boundaries. The next generation of plans will broaden consideration of factors in surrounding landscapes that can impact refuge resources, incorporate the best available science, encourage collaboration with partners, and inspire action to align with the America the Beautiful goals. Conservation planning ensures that refuge management and land protection efforts are based on priorities that support the mission of the Refuge System and conservation objectives in cooperation with State fish and wildlife agencies.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Conservation Planning is \$5,684,000 and 26 FTE, a program change of +\$3,071,000 and +10 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Refuge Planning Activities (+\$3,000,000/+10 FTE) – With the addition of 10 FTEs, the Service will be able to guide landscape-scale conservation delivery, encourage working with partners to catalyze conservation action, and achieve positive outcomes amid climate pressures on wildlife habitats, ensuring that refuge management objectives, restoration actions, and biological monitoring achieve Service goals and objectives. The funding will increase expertise in the form of planners, spatial ecologists, biologists, botanists, and hydrologists with the goal of enhancing our adaptive landscape management. This increase in staffing would also assist in updating the Refuge System’s CCPs to ensure that each Refuge continues to be adaptively managed to fulfill its established purpose and respond to natural and human pressures.

Baseline Capacity (+\$71,000/+0 FTE) – The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$71,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System

Subactivity: Refuge Maintenance

	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Refuge Maintenance (\$000)	145,822	145,822	+2,367	0	+23,064	171,253	+25,431
FTE	523	523	0	0	+70	593	+70

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Refuge Maintenance

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Deferred Maintenance	+2,000	+0
• Maintenance Support	+6,500	+70
• Annual Maintenance	+8,895	+0
• Equipment and Vehicle Management	+3,993	+0
• Maintenance Baseline Capacity	+1,676	+0
Program Changes	+23,064	+70

Program Overview

The Refuge Maintenance subactivity underpins every aspect of the Refuge System operation. Infrastructure investments create jobs and support local, state, and national economies, directly supporting the Administration’s jobs and economic recovery goals to Build Back Better. Investments also modernize facilities and fleets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support climate change resiliency. The Refuge Maintenance subactivity includes visitor and administrative facilities maintenance; fleet and heavy equipment; and infrastructure for wildlife and habitat management, fire management, law enforcement, and public access and outdoor recreation. Refuge Maintenance is one of several Refuge System program areas where the next generation of conservation workers can find employment opportunities through the Civilian Climate Corps (CCC).

The Refuge Maintenance budget consists of four program elements:

- **Maintenance Support:** Refuge Maintenance Support includes supplies, materials, and salaries to maintain and manage facilities and equipment. Maintenance employees, including youth hired through the CCC, are critical in proactively maintaining facility and equipment assets. This results in significant cost savings, compared to waiting for repairs to become deferred. Maintenance employees spend about half their time maintaining infrastructure and equipment and the other half maintaining habitat and supporting public recreational activities.
- **Annual Maintenance:** Annual Maintenance encompasses all non-staff expenditures for preventative maintenance needed to keep the Service’s infrastructure and mobile equipment fleet functioning. Annual maintenance includes repair of system failures before they are deferred; and preventive maintenance—including scheduled servicing, repairs, and parts replacement—required to achieve the expected life of facilities and equipment. Proactively maintaining facilities through Maintenance Support and Annual Maintenance is 40 percent more cost effective on average than waiting until maintenance is deferred. These funds are critical in providing the American taxpayers the maximum return on investment but are inadequate to support a full life cycle infrastructure

management approach that enables elimination of deferred maintenance and long-term management of the portfolio.

- **Deferred Maintenance:** Deferred Maintenance projects repair, rehabilitate, dispose of, or replace constructed real property assets. Funds are directed to the highest priority, mission-critical projects based on facility condition, asset priority, consequences of failure to act, and return on investment in accordance with Departmental guidance and stepped down FWS guidance that support our wildlife and public use mission and the Administration's priorities and objectives. Projects are prioritized by the field, operations, and facilities managers that know firsthand the field-based mission impacts, return on investment, and outside funding opportunities available. Projects are annually reported to DOI and OMB in the five-year plans. The Service uses a strategic, portfolio-based approach to manage assets in a manner that informs decision-making and maximizes efficient and effective mission delivery with an emphasis on mission critical assets. The Refuge System has worked to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog using Maintenance Action Teams, proactive investments, improved policies, improved data quality and increased focus on preventative and routine maintenance investments. Funding from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Fund, will help to slow the rate of the deferred maintenance backlog growth (See LRF chapter for more information) but is only one component of a fully supported life cycle infrastructure management program that will provide a 2:1 return on investment adequately supported.
- **Equipment and Vehicle Management:** The Refuge System requires an extensive fleet of vehicles and equipment to successfully carry out the conservation mission and provide safe and reliable public recreation and education opportunities. The Refuge System employs rental and leasing options to provide a cost-effective, efficient program. Equipment and Vehicle Management funds optimize the management of fleets to meet mission needs and serve as an example for the efficient use of public assets. The Refuge System is actively focusing on modernizing our equipment and vehicles by implementing utilization and age standards, and investing in a smaller, more agile fleet including zero emission vehicles.
 - **Fleet Management:** Most of the vehicles used on refuges are four wheel- drive trucks and utility vehicles for transporting personnel, equipment, materials, and tools to remote sites for firefighting, wildlife and habitat management, and law enforcement.
 - **Small Equipment:** Specialized equipment such as all-terrain vehicles, small aircraft, boats, small tractors, snowmobiles, trailers, agricultural implements, and similar equipment is needed to access, maintain, and restore habitats in remote or rugged areas. In total, the Refuge System's small equipment fleet consists of about 5,000 assets.
 - **Heavy Equipment:** Heavy equipment management includes acquisition, rental, and repair of heavy equipment. Agricultural, earthmoving, and construction equipment are used to maintain wetland impoundments and roads; construct and maintain wildlife habitat; control

invasive plants; and maintain and construct visitor facilities such as boardwalks, observation platforms, fishing piers, hunt blinds, tour routes, and trails. The Service owns nearly 4,000 heavy equipment assets with a combined replacement value of about \$423 million.

Service facilities and equipment are in a constant state of degradation, while identified deficiencies are being corrected other deficiencies develop. Industry standards indicate between two and four percent of the current replacement value (CRV) of constructed assets should be invested in maintenance each year to maintain assets in good condition. However, using a data-driven prioritization approach to life-cycle investment strategies, employing Maintenance Action Teams, and the disposing of unneeded assets, the Service will optimize maintenance, sustaining Refuge assets in acceptable condition. Migrating focus to this type of proactive life cycle management would save the American taxpayers approximately 40% by repairing and replacing infrastructure before repairs are deferred and cause additional damage requiring expensive emergency repairs. The additional funding proposed for maintenance combined with permanent authorization and increased funding under the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) will assist the Service in shifting towards an appropriate life-cycle management approach.

Specifically, the Service receives up to \$95 million annually from GAOA to address deferred maintenance needs, such as repair and rehabilitation of dilapidated bunkhouses, repair and replacement of accessible boardwalks and trails, and repair of high hazard dams to preserve restored habitat and protect neighboring communities. However, GAOA primarily addresses that which has been degraded or deferred and is for proactive life cycle investment requirements, like scheduled roof and window replacements before the work becomes deferred and causes further damage that drives up the cost of restoring the asset to good condition. Without life cycle management capacity costly deferred repairs and system failures accumulate, which result in inadequate public recreation opportunities, continued barriers to equitable access to public lands, limited ability to reduce carbon emissions and inadequate resiliency to climate change. The requested maintenance funding is vital to support all types of Service maintenance needs, which enables the best use of funds by transitioning to life-cycle maintenance and ensuring safe a reliable public recreational and educational opportunities and resilient wildlife habitat.

Federal Lands Transportation Program

Transportation touches every aspect of the Service. The visiting public relies on safe roads, trails, and parking areas. Land managers rely on safe access to natural resources so they can conserve lands and waters. To access these lands, efficient and safe transportation corridors must be in place. In support of the Service's primary conservation mission, we develop environment context-sensitive transportation assets and road treatments, improve, and build alternative transportation systems and connectivity to other public systems, and repair hydrologic flows with improved culverts and bridges to prevent flooding and damages to public lands and neighboring communities.

The Service's transportation program is also integral in breaking down racial inequities to improve safe, reliable access to public lands for all Americans. We are analyzing different ways to help visitors and local communities know about their lands, how to reach them, and be safe while doing so. We work closely with neighboring communities and cities to identify opportunities for improvement, including installing signs on State or local roads, installing off-road multi-modal trails, and connecting with local transit and trail systems and frequently provide the needed match funding for Federal Land Access (FLAP) awards provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation. These awards are specifically intended to improve the safety and access to Federal lands. The Service has worked with communities surrounding refuges to add

turning lanes, new bike, and pedestrian trails, new or improved access points and pedestrian safety, and other projects to better welcome visitors.

The Service has been part of the surface highway bill since 1998 and will receive \$36 million per year through the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This important funding source provides about one-third of the projected requirement to maintain the transportation portfolio in good condition through proactive life cycle management. Demand for outdoor recreation increased significantly in FY 2020 and FY 2021 and highlighted the need for transportation improvements both on- and off-refuge to ensure all Americans feel welcome and can access public lands.

The Service's network has over 5,400 miles of public use roads, 5,000 public use parking lots, over 300 public bridges, 23 on-refuge transit systems, and 2,100 miles of terrestrial trails and boardwalks. The Service leverages a variety of funding sources to manage this extensive system, including the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP), FLAP, and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), all funded through the Highway Trust Fund, as well as Service appropriated and non-appropriated funding sources by completing projects through Maintenance Actions Teams with both FLTP, Deferred Maintenance and GAOA funds. The Service effectively leverages funds from these, and other, sources to maximize improvements to its transportation infrastructure, enhance relationships with States and local jurisdictions, improve returns on investments, and increase safe and equitable access to public lands. These funds are often necessary to complete complex projects involving many partners. Since 2013, the Service has helped gateway communities and local partners successfully apply for 132 FLAP awards totaling \$203 million, including providing \$20 million in FLTP matching funds. These investments, along with the successful leveraging of funds, support the Administration's jobs and economic recovery goals and provide equitable access to support Environmental Justice.

Funds from the Highway Trust Fund fuel long-range planning and maintenance of the Refuge System transportation assets to meet the needs of visitors, staff, and biological resources. Projects are prioritized based on six overarching goals: coordinated opportunities; asset management; safety; environmental sensitivity; equitable access, mobility, and connectivity; and visitor experience. The same priorities are used to develop five-year project plans. On average, proactive life cycle maintenance is 40 percent less expensive than waiting until assets fail or become deteriorated.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Refuge Maintenance is \$171,253,000 and 593 FTE, a program change of +\$23,064,000 and +70 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Deferred Maintenance (+\$2,000,000/+0 FTE) – The Service will complete approximately 30 additional deferred maintenance projects with this proposed increase. These projects will address current deferred maintenance deficiencies to ensure employee, volunteer and public safety.

Maintenance Support (+\$6,500,000/+70 FTE)— This funding is an important step in helping the Service move towards restoration of an infrastructure workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve and has adequate capacity to maintain Refuge System assets using a life-cycle investment model to prevent growth of the deferred maintenance backlog. The 70 FTEs will help the Service begin to fill the gap created by the reduction of over 25% of wage- grade positions over the past decade. The Refuge System maintains over 44,000 assets representing over \$40 billion in public investments, including 6,400 buildings, 17,500 roads, bridges, and trails, 8,700 water management and 11,400 other real property assets. A robust maintenance workforce will continue responsible rehabilitation, maintenance, and construction of Service infrastructure and further the goal to focus on resilient infrastructure and a diverse workforce.

Annual Maintenance (+\$8,895,000/+0 FTE) – Additional funding will be used to completing routine maintenance proactively to prevent maintenance from being deferred. The funding will be used, though a balanced approach, to purchase materials and supplies to complete proactive preventative maintenance with the maintenance workforce and through contracts with local and regional companies. Maintenance includes routine annual maintenance of furnaces, painting and upkeep of buildings and recreational infrastructure, grading trails, roads, and parking lots to support safe and reliable access, proactively maintaining boardwalks, piers, docks, and other recreational assets to extend the life of the components to ensure they don't become hazards to the visiting public; preservation of cultural and historic structures infrastructure; maintenance of water control structures, levees, fences, and other wildlife management infrastructure to provide and protect habitat; maintenance of roofing, siding and windows on educational centers, bunkhouses, and maintenance shops before they start leaking and create further damage; and routine maintenance to high hazard dams and flood protection levees to protect neighboring communities.

Equipment and Vehicle Management - Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions (+\$3,993,000/+0 FTE)— The 2023 budget includes funding to accelerate conversion of the Service's light-duty fleet to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and relates to Refuges' construction funding request to provide an initial phase of charging stations and hydrogen fueling stations to support those vehicles and future ZEVs. This conversion will immediately reduce the Interior's contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and dependence upon hydrocarbons. The investment in infrastructure will support these new vehicles and ensure charging infrastructure is available for subsequent ZEVs. This project is being coordinated across Interior and with other agencies to maximize utility of charging and hydrogen fueling stations in areas where multiple agencies operate. The funding also supports a small planning and coordination function to effectively deploy the fleet and charging infrastructure.

Baseline Capacity (+1,676,000/+0 FTE) – The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$1.7 million in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Migratory Bird Management

MIGRATORY BIRD MANAGEMENT

Activity: Conservation and Enforcement
Program: Migratory Bird Management

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Conservation and Monitoring	(\$000)	28,784	28,784	+872	0	+12,762	42,418	+13,634
	FTE	120	120	0	0	+26	146	+26
Permits	(\$000)	3,411	3,411	+112	0	+4,602	8,125	+4,714
	FTE	24	24	0	0	+8	32	+8
Federal Duck Stamp	(\$000)	556	556	+19	0	+1,016	1,591	+1,035
	FTE	3	3	0	0	+1	4	+1
North American Waterfowl Management/ Joint Ventures	(\$000)	15,122	15,122	+278	0	+2,690	18,090	+2,968
	FTE	42	42	0	0	+0	42	+0
Total, Migratory Bird Management	(\$000)	47,873	47,873	+1,281	0	+21,070	70,224	+22,351
	FTE	189	189	0	0	+35	224	+35

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Management

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Conservation, Capacity, and Regulatory Enhancements	+7,500	+16
• Improving Permitting for the Future	+4,500	+8
• Clean Energy	+3,500	+9
• NAWMP/Joint Ventures	+2,500	+0
• Urban Bird Treaties	+1,000	+1
• Federal Duck Stamp Program	+1,000	+1
• Baseline Capacity	+945	+0
• Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions	+125	+0
Program Changes	+21,070	+35

Program Overview

The Migratory Bird Program is the premier Federal leader in migratory bird conservation and manages birds in the U.S. and internationally through effective partnerships, applied science, and innovative strategies. Migratory birds are enjoyed by millions of Americans for birding, hunting, and viewing around their homes and in their communities. According to the Service’s 2013 *Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis*, 47 million birders spent nearly \$41 billion on trip and equipment-related expenditures. Similarly, the Service’s 2016 *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, migratory game birds such as ducks and geese attracted 2.4 million hunters who spent \$2.3 billion on hunting related expenditures. Migratory birds also provide important ecosystem

services to people, including insect and rodent control, plant pollination, and seed dispersal providing billions of dollars of economic benefits.

The Service is responsible for ensuring the continued existence of healthy migratory bird populations for the benefit of the American public. To address the precipitous decline of almost three billion birds in the last half century, we prioritize conservation actions for at-risk birds of conservation concern, and develop strategic and collaborative approaches to bird conservation at landscape scales with Tribes, States, and many other partners. We sustainably manage ducks, geese, and other migratory game birds to provide for hunting opportunities for generations to come. We also protect and restore millions of acres of habitat with our partners.

Program Elements

Four elements comprise the Migratory Bird Management program:

- Conservation and Monitoring – Coordinates, monitors, and conducts research activities around the status and health of migratory bird species of management and conservation concern. Uses the results to set and evaluate migratory bird hunting seasons, develop conservation plans, and create regulations that ensure healthy and sustainable populations, while providing cultural, recreational, and economic opportunities. Works with partners to balance human-wildlife conflicts and seeks to reduce human-caused mortality of migratory birds.
- Permits – Provides authorization of take and possession of protected migratory bird species for scientific, religious, educational and other activities. Through permitting and other authorizations, biologists track the impact of these activities, and ensure that such activities are conducted in a manner that safeguards migratory bird populations and promotes conservation efforts.
- Federal Duck Stamp Program – Produces the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp), which is required for anyone 16 years of age and older to hunt waterfowl and purchased by many others to support habitat protection. Proceeds from the sale of the stamp are deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and expended to conserve wetland habitats within the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan and Migratory Bird Joint Venture Partnerships – Employs a tripartite agreement among the United States, Canada and Mexico as a basis for promoting collaborative, voluntary partnerships that restore or protect waterfowl and other migratory bird habitat.

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

More than 25 laws, treaties, and conventions mandate that the Service sustain over 1,000 species of migratory birds and their habitats, including:

- The *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 668-668C) prohibits import, export, or take of bald or golden eagles including their parts and products without permits, and prohibits the sale, purchase, or barter of their parts or products.
- The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 2901-2911) directs the Secretary of the Interior to undertake research and conservation activities, in coordination with other Federal, State, international and private organizations, to fulfill responsibilities to conserve migratory nongame birds under existing authorities. The Secretary is required, for all species, subspecies, and migratory nongame birds, to monitor and assess population trends and status; to identify environmental change and human activities; and to identify species in need of additional conservation and identify conservation actions to ensure perpetuation of these species.

- The *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act* (16 U.S.C. 718) requires waterfowl hunters to purchase and possess a valid Federal waterfowl hunting stamp before take of migratory waterfowl and directs proceeds to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to conserve wetland habitats within the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- The *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (16 U.S.C. 703-712) establishes Federal responsibility for protecting and managing migratory birds and implements bilateral migratory bird conventions with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia.

Subactivity: Migratory Bird Management
Program Element: Conservation and Monitoring

	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Conservation and Monitoring	28,784	28,784	+872	0	+12,762	42,418	+13,634
(\$000)							
FTE	120	120	0	0	+26	146	+26

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Conservation and Monitoring

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Conservation, Capacity, and Regulatory Enhancements	+7,500	+16
• Clean Energy	+3,500	+9
• Urban Bird Treaties	+1,000	+1
• Baseline Capacity	+637	+0
• Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions	+125	+0
Program Changes	+12,762	+26

Program Description

Most bird families across North America are declining, and many species are at risk of becoming threatened or endangered. North America has lost nearly three billion birds since 1970. Data reveal that many species of grassland birds, seabirds, forest birds, shorebirds, and aerial insectivores among others, declined precipitously over this time. The Service's comprehensive migratory bird conservation and monitoring activities and commitment to working in partnership are helping to address this crisis and to stop further losses of migratory bird species.

Conservation

The Service's migratory bird biologists and managers are engaged in coordination, monitoring and research on migratory bird species that are critical components of our wetland, forest, grassland, coastal and ocean ecosystems. The health of populations of waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds, seabirds, aerial insectivores, and other groups of birds is an indicator of the health of our environment. The Service works with partners—in the U.S. and internationally across migratory bird ranges—to understand how changes in habitat, pesticide use, collisions and other threats affect migratory bird status and trends, and to identify conservation and management actions that can bring birds back.

The Service's Migratory Bird Program provides expertise in developing regulations and policies for the conservation and management of over 1,000 species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Staff throughout the country provide technical assistance on our regulations and policies to other Service programs, other Federal and State agencies, Tribes, select industries, and private partners. Additionally, we work with partners to gather data to build scalable tools (site-level, regional level, and national level) and develop guidance such that renewable energy projects have information to avoid and minimize impacts to eagles and other migratory birds, and infrastructure projects incorporate designs to reduce potential impacts on crucial habitats for birds. Finally, our staff provide training through various venues (e.g., National Conservation Training Center, cross-programmatic meetings, professional conferences) on our regulations and policies to ensure our partners understand the standards needed to comply with our regulations and why such conservation measures are necessary.

Voluntary Approaches to Reduce Bird Mortality

Win-win for Communication Towers

- Every year more than 6 million bird fatalities occur at communications towers in the U.S.
 - Simple actions like extinguishing non-flashing lights, as encouraged by the FAA, reduces bird collisions by as much as 70%
 - In 2021 the Service released [a video](#)* to educate tower owners about how using flashing LED lights can simultaneously save money and reduce bird fatalities
- *<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLHNROmS2U>

Looking Within the Service

- Almost 1 billion birds collide with building glass in the U.S. every year—most collisions occur at homes and low-rise buildings
- In 2021 the Service began conducting an online survey of its owned and leased properties to assess and address bird collision risk as an agency
- Facilities identified as high-risk learned about low-cost and attractive options to treat glass and reduce collisions
- Construction plans using *Great American Outdoor Act* funds incorporated bird safe measures

Working with Others

- The Service-facilitated [Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds](#)** plans to send a letter to GSA requesting bird safe measures for Federal buildings
- The Service is working with the College of William and Mary to develop a mobile app that would allow the public to assess the risk of bird collisions at buildings and suggest glass treatment options
- The Service works with Federal agencies to develop Memoranda of Understanding outlining how Federal agencies and the Service can cooperatively work to conserve migratory birds

** <https://www.fws.gov/partner/council-conservation-migratory-birds>

Another role of the Service’s Migratory Bird staff is to provide leadership at all levels (e.g., regionally, nationally—and sometimes at the continental or hemispheric level) to organize groups focused on Birds of Conservation Concern¹ (BCC) species, suites of BCC species, or ecosystems in which migratory birds serve as indicators of system health. We regularly work with diverse stakeholder groups to develop or tailor conservation strategies for BCC species, lead focused working groups composed of topical experts, and support international collaboratives to ensure conservation planning and delivery consider the full annual cycle of migratory birds. Through these efforts, we leverage the power of partnerships, prioritize actions (research, monitoring, habitat conservation), avoid duplication of efforts, and catalyze investments of time, treasure, and talent from Federal and State agencies, Tribes, non-profit organizations, foundations, universities, and the private sector. Examples of such efforts range from the recently-formed [Pinyon Jay Working Group](#)², initially focused on identifying critical research needs and limiting factors for a very under-studied species, to very well-established groups delivering critical information that guide conservation investments over large scales (e.g., [Golden-winged Warbler Working Group](#)³, [Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative](#)⁴).



Communication tower with guy wires and non-flashing lights, which pose a threat to birds. Flashing LED lights can reduce bird fatalities and reduce operators’ energy costs. Credit: USFWS

¹ The Birds of Conservation Concern list includes migratory and non-migratory bird species (beyond those already designated as federally threatened or endangered) that represent our highest conservation priorities. The list is based on an assessment of several factors, including population abundance and trends, threats on breeding and nonbreeding grounds and size of breeding and nonbreeding ranges.

² <https://partnersinflight.org/resources/pinyon-jay-working-group/>

³ <http://gwwa.org/>

⁴ <https://atlanticflywayshorebirds.org/>

Reducing Incidental Take

The Service works with partners to reduce the incidental take of migratory birds through both regulatory and non-regulatory means. The Service is leading the development of guidance, recommendations, and beneficial practices to empower the public, Federal agencies, conservation organizations, and industries with the solutions to address direct and indirect impacts to migratory birds. Recent guidance includes revised recommendations for reducing bird collisions with building glass, educational materials for communication tower owners on how to retrofit lighting fixtures to be more efficient and safer for birds, and recommendations for improving building energy efficiency while using bird safe measures to do so. These resources are available to anyone seeking to reduce impacts to migratory birds by going online to the Service's Migratory Bird Program webpage.⁵



Bird-friendly window treatments, seen here at Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, can be attractive, low-cost, effective measures to reduce bird-building collisions. Credit: USFWS

Monitoring

The ability of the Service to deliver conservation benefits to birds, manage the myriad threats facing birds, and provide recreational opportunities for the American public is critically dependent on the quality of our research and monitoring programs. Investigating and monitoring bird populations allows the Service to set and evaluate migratory bird hunting seasons, evaluate management actions, identify population shifts due to climate change and other factors, make informed conservation decisions, and identify priority habitats for conservation. In addition, our research and monitoring programs provide valuable information to assess potential landscape-level impacts of energy and other development activities, to provide recreational opportunities to the public, and to alleviate problems associated with some bird species (e.g., crop and livestock depredation, damage to buildings or equipment, human safety and health).

Research, monitoring, and assessment are the fundamental activities that define the Service's key role in addressing treaty mandates for conserving migratory birds. Monitoring is essential to informing a science-based approach to bird conservation and is critical for setting and evaluating annual migratory game bird hunting seasons, and is essential to the Service's ongoing efforts to improve the status of Birds of Management Concern.⁶ Due to the importance of its survey and monitoring programs, the Service is committed to periodic review and improvement of many of these programs to maximize their utility in informing management decisions while maintaining cost efficiency and enhancing customer service.

Government and non-government resource managers, researchers and other conservation professionals depend on the Service's migratory bird surveys and assessment capabilities to provide accurate,

⁵ <https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-birds>

⁶ Birds of Management Concern are a subset of MBTA-protected species which pose special management challenges because of a variety of factors (e.g., too few, too many, conflicts with human interests, societal demands).

comprehensive population status and trend information. The Service takes its data stewardship responsibilities seriously, and is committed to FAIR data standards (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) by sharing these data through a new, DOI-accessible migratory bird data portal in 2022, with public access to metadata and contact information for all Migratory Bird Program data assets via data.gov.

Supporting Recreational and Subsistence Harvest

Each year, across North America, the Service conducts extensive migratory game bird surveys and bird banding programs that provide valuable information about bird population, harvest, and habitat. Results from these surveys provide the foundation for the establishment of annual hunting seasons for migratory game birds.

Establishing annual migratory bird hunting seasons is a collaborative venture with the States (through the Flyway Councils), Tribes, and in some cases the Canadian Wildlife Service. The Service, in collaboration with its partners, use waterfowl and other migratory bird monitoring data in an Adaptive Resource Management framework to set and evaluate hunting seasons in the United States. This is an iterative process that uses the results of monitoring to inform a series of biological assessments that help establish optimal hunting regulations each year. The biological assessments and harvest strategies are based on agreed upon population models and harvest management objectives that guide the establishment of annual hunting regulations such as season lengths and bag limits. This process ensures migratory bird regulations are commensurate with population status while maximizing recreational hunting opportunities and ensuring long-term sustainable migratory bird populations.

In addition to establishing recreational migratory bird hunting regulations in the United States, the Service is responsible for establishing the Alaska migratory bird subsistence seasons each year. The Service takes into consideration traditional harvest practices and migratory bird population status and protection of nesting birds to establish the spring-summer subsistence regulations. Around 90 species or subspecies of migratory birds are open to bird and egg harvest and include waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds, seabirds, cranes, and owls. These annual regulations enable the continuation of customary and traditional uses of migratory birds by eligible Alaska Natives.

Long-term Monitoring and Climate Change

The Service's 65+ year history of migratory bird monitoring programs provides a unique perspective on shifting bird distributions and habitat conditions across the North American landscape over time. These rich datasets have been widely used in peer-reviewed studies and management plans to assess and mitigate climate change impacts on bird population dynamics, migration chronology, productivity, and habitat acquisition and restoration. The value of these programs is not just in their long duration but also in their continental coverage and consistent, rigorous methodology. Waterfowl population and harvest distributions



Migratory Bird Program staff logging in envelope packages to be sent to hunters in the Parts Collection Survey. In this survey, hunters are asked to mail a wing or tail from every migratory bird they harvest. Information from these parts helps us monitor annual productivity and sport harvest and is used to help set hunting regulations each year. Credit: USFWS

from these surveys provide baseline data for diverse uses, including prioritizing land acquisitions across the National Wildlife Refuge System, establishing continental population goals for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, modeling population responses to climate change projections from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and investigating human participation trends in hunting activity and harvest.



Goose-eye view, northern Quebec, Canada, Canada Goose Survey. Credit: USFWS



The Urban Bird Treaty Program

Millions of people throughout the Nation enjoy watching, feeding, and photographing birds. In urban areas, birds represent people's most frequent contact with wildlife. Urban areas can provide important habitats for birds, especially those on migration that need safe, food-rich areas to rest and refuel. But cities also pose a host of threats to birds, from collision hazards such as building glass and lights to hazardous trash and pesticides, all of which can result in mortality. The Urban Bird Treaty Program is a unique collaboration between the Service and

participating U.S. cities and their partners. The Service provides guidance and technical assistance to help partners carry out projects and become designated as Urban Bird Treaty cities. There currently are 22 cities across the U.S. with active treaties. The program benefits the health and well-being of birds and people and is increasing its focus on serving underrepresented and underserved communities.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Support the development of infrastructure and energy projects through efficient permitting under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, including revision of regulations to improve permitting efficiencies.
- Work with various industry sectors to reduce the incidental take of migratory birds through the development and use of beneficial practices, including development of proposed regulations under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Provide monitoring, technical assistance, conservation planning, and promote bird-friendly practices to tackle the conservation issues facing birds of conservation concern within grassland birds, forest birds, shorebirds, seabirds and aerial insectivores.
- Monitor migratory game bird species abundance and harvest and establish and evaluate annual migratory bird hunting seasons.
- Implement a comprehensive cormorant management strategy, as informed by activities conducted in FYs 2021 and 2022.
- Work with stakeholders to reduce conflicts caused by species such as common ravens and black vultures.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Conservation and Monitoring is \$42,418,000 and 146 FTE, a program change of +\$12,762,000 and +26 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Conservation, Capacity, and Regulatory Enhancements (+\$7,500,000/ +16 FTE) – The Service’s request for Conservation and Monitoring reflects an approach of working on multiple fronts simultaneously to conserve migratory birds, and includes the following proposed program changes:

Conservation and Capacity (\$4,800,000/ +12 FTE) – The U.S. is facing a staggering loss of populations of most groups of migratory birds, including many at-risk species. At the same time, the U.S. and the world face a growing climate crisis. The Service has an opportunity to take simultaneous action to conserve migratory birds and participate in the Government-wide effort to reduce climate pollution in every sector of the economy and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change. The Service is developing a range of actions to tackle the conservation issues facing grassland birds, forest birds, shorebirds, seabirds and aerial insectivores in addition to the threat of collisions. Targeted investments in partner engagement, monitoring, technical assistance, conservation planning, and promoting bird-friendly practices will greatly leverage the resources of other Service programs and other Federal, State, Tribal, and private conservation partners to dramatically increase the pace and scale of habitat conservation for birds of conservation concern. All of this work will directly contribute to the America the Beautiful initiative, by assisting in identifying important climate-resilient places on the landscape to conserve, and engaging with the Migratory Bird Program’s extensive partner network to expand conservation and restoration on the most important lands and waters for birds and other wildlife.

Regulatory Enhancements (\$2,700,000/ +4 FTE) – The Service is also requesting funding to build efficiencies and improve the clarity of regulations and their implementation under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The additional resources will be used to develop training and outreach materials and expand the Service’s capacity to provide technical assistance to the public to conserve migratory birds. The Service will develop step-down guidance and comprehensive training so that both internal

and external audiences (Federal and State agencies, Tribes, and other and public partners) receive a consistent message about how to interpret Service regulations and policies.

Clean Energy (+\$3,500,000/ +9 FTE) – The Service plays a prominent role in supporting the Administration’s goal of transitioning the Nation to carbon pollution free electricity by 2035 and a net-zero emission economy by 2050. To support a surge in renewable energy development expected in FY 2023 and future years, the increase ensures Service project review and permitting functions are not bottlenecks in the environmental clearance process, while avoiding and reducing project-related impacts on migratory birds. The 2023 request supports capacity for the Service to work with industry to incorporate proven, bird-friendly design elements into project proposals. The request also supports permit process reviews and improvements. By working upfront with the clean energy industry to improve project design and simultaneously improving backend permitting processes, the Service will streamline project permitting and maintain necessary protections for migratory birds. The Service also will explore collaborative research opportunities with other Federal agencies (e.g., U.S. Geological Survey and the Department of Energy) to develop and test equipment and techniques that help avoid or minimize bird interactions and update conservation planning tools that incorporate realistic climate scenarios to improve conservation delivery for birds.

Urban Bird Treaty (+\$1,000,000/ +1 FTE) – At the 2023 request level, the Service will grow the Urban Bird Treaty (UBT) program by investing in partnerships and projects in existing and new UBT cities across the U.S. In part, the funding will allow the Service to do more of what it already does well: provide access to nature, increase awareness of bird hazards, and offer communities a wide array of conservation, education, and outdoor recreation activities. It will strengthen the conservation capacity of partners in existing UBT cities and allow additional cities to become part of the UBT network. Additionally, the Service will identify and engage diverse, underrepresented audiences and encourage their participation in UBT activities through intentional, inclusive, and collaborative actions. Through these activities, the UBT Program will contribute to healthier environments for birds and people and lead to more equitable access to nature for all communities. This work will contribute to the goal of conserving 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030, and complement the proposed increase for the Junior Duck Stamp program described below in the Proposed Program Changes for the Federal Duck Stamp Program.

Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions (+\$125,000/ +0 FTE) – The 2023 budget includes funding to accelerate the conversion of the Service's fleet to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and provide approximately charging stations and hydrogen fueling stations to support those vehicles and future ZEVs. This conversion will immediately reduce the Interior’s contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and dependence upon hydrocarbons. The investment in infrastructure will support these new vehicles and ensure charging infrastructure is available for subsequent ZEVs. This project is being coordinated across Interior and with other agencies to maximize utility of charging and hydrogen fueling stations in areas where multiple agencies operate. The funding also supports a small planning and coordination function to effectively deploy the fleet and charging infrastructure.

Baseline Capacity (+\$637,000/ +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$637,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This

request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Subactivity: Migratory Bird Management
Program Element: Permits

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Permits	(\$000)	3,411	3,411	+112	0	+4,602	8,125	+4,714
	FTE	24	24	0	0	+8	32	+8

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Permits

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Permitting for the Future Baseline Capacity 	+4,500 +102	+8 +0
Program Changes	+4,602	+8

Program Description

The Migratory Bird Program uses permits and other authorizations as important tools in implementing one of the world’s oldest bird protection laws: the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) as well as the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (Eagle Act). Service biologists use permits to promote long-term conservation of migratory birds and encourage joint stewardship with others through these laws.



Golden eagle about to be released after being equipped with a solar GPS transmitter. The Service and colleagues have deployed nearly 1,000 of these transmitters on golden eagles across the United States to collect information essential to management efforts such as survival rates, causes of mortality, and movement patterns. Credit:USFWS

Permits enable the public to engage in specific activities consistent with the MBTA and Eagle Act while providing a means to balance use with conservation. Permits also allow the Service to build partnerships and monitor activities to determine their effects on migratory bird populations. The Migratory Bird Program implements more than 30 regulations and administers more than 40 permit types. The Migratory Bird Program is improving regulations, streamlining policies and developing common sense standards that protect migratory birds while providing regulatory certainty to industry under the MBTA and Eagle Act. Regulatory changes are being designed to support economic recovery. This work also contributes to climate change initiatives by providing regulatory certainty to the energy industry. The Service seeks collaborative and innovative approaches that reduce regulatory costs and uncertainty for industry as well as to help build capacity to monitor and respond to the effects of climate change on bird populations.

Supporting Native American Tribes and honoring Tribal trust responsibility is also a key goal for the Migratory Bird Program. That’s why the Permits Program responded quickly and efficiently to develop procedures to implement the new policy authorizing federally recognized Native American Tribes to retain whole eagle remains. We are also working to pursue new opportunities in partnership with Native American Tribes.

In 2021, the Service launched ePermits, a new, digital platform for permit issuance and tracking. ePermits will lead to improved efficiency and promote economic recovery through reduced burden on the public applying for permits and Service staff that administer the permits. Further development, staff training, and technical support is needed for ePermits to reach its full potential.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Continue to issue permits efficiently for the take, possession and use of birds protected under the MBTA and Eagle Act.
- Continue to build efficiencies into permit regulations and simplify the permit application processes.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Permits is \$8,125,000 and 32 FTE, a program change of +\$4,602,000 and +8 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Improving Permitting for the Future (+\$4,500,000/ +8 FTE) – Demand for the Service to improve the clarity and efficiency of its migratory bird permitting operations is at an all-time high. With the requested funding, the Service will respond to this demand in several ways. First, additional resources will go to support the current regional Permit staff. This will allow the regions to better focus on efficiently processing and administering permit requests received from the public. Next, in response to the Administration’s focus on infrastructure and climate change—and the anticipated increased demand for permits from the wind industry—the Service will hire regional eagle biologists to aid in processing these specialized permits in a timely manner. We also will hire a National Migratory Bird Permit Coordinator to serve as a dedicated liaison for the regional Permit staff and help implement an efficient and effective permit program that strives to create a holistic approach to achieving the balance between meeting societal demands with balancing migratory bird conservation. Through regulatory changes, the Service is looking to focus staff time on areas where conservation outcomes are balanced with minimizing public burden. The current rulemaking activities around the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Eagle Act highlight a need to add technical capacity to ensure effective implementation of these regulatory changes. The Service plans to add staff that can assist in economic and environmental analyses required for legally defensible regulations. Related to this, the Migratory Bird Program will develop programmatic National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents that are adaptable, allowing efficient environmental reviews for future rulemaking actions. Finally, the launch of the ePermits system in 2021 was a huge step forward for bringing efficiency and consistency to how the Service issues permits. A portion of the requested funding will build on this initial success to strengthen the Permits Program by transitioning some migratory bird permit types (e.g., permits involving the take of dead birds—taxidermy, for example) to a fully online, self-service registration process that will reduce the burden for both applicants and the Service. Through these actions, the Service will be well positioned for the migratory bird permitting demands of today and tomorrow.

Baseline Capacity (+\$102,000/ +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$102,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Subactivity: Migratory Bird Management
Program Element: Federal Duck Stamp Program

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Federal Duck Stamp	(\$000)	556	556	+19	0	+1,016	1,591	+1,035
	FTE	3	3	0	0	+1	4	+1

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Federal Duck Stamp Program

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Federal Duck Stamp Program	+1,000	+1
• Baseline Capacity	+16	+0
Program Changes	+1,016	+1

Program Description



The 2021-2022 Duck Stamp features Delaware artist Richard Clifton's painting of a drake lesser scaup. Each fall approximately 200 artists participate in the opportunity to become the next "Duck Stamp Artist" in the only federally regulated art contest.

The internationally recognized Federal Duck Stamp Program supports conservation of vital migratory bird habitat within the National Wildlife Refuge System through the sale of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly known as the Duck Stamp. The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act requires all waterfowl hunters aged 16 years or older to possess a valid Federal Duck Stamp.

Since it was first established in 1934, Duck Stamp sales have raised more than \$1 billion that have been used to conserve over 6 million acres of habitat for birds and other wildlife species.

The Migratory Bird Program produces the stamp, which sells for \$25 and raises nearly \$40 million through sales each year. At least 98 percent of these funds are used to conserve wetland habitats through conservation easements and fee title land purchases in the National Wildlife Refuge System. More than 300 National Wildlife Refuges were created or expanded using Duck Stamp dollars, and there is at least one refuge in nearly every State that has benefitted from the program.

In 2021, Duck Stamps sales totaled over \$37 million. Lands acquired with Duck Stamp dollars provide all Americans with opportunities to enjoy the outdoors by engaging in activities such as fishing, hiking and wildlife watching. In addition to waterfowl hunters, the Service encourages others interested in conservation, including bird watchers, nature photographers, and those who enjoy public wildlife areas to buy Federal Duck Stamps and support conservation. The conservation model of the Federal Duck Stamp is so successful that it became the model for raising conservation dollars for our State wildlife agency partners, other countries, and for other targeted species such as deer, turkey, trout and walleye. The Federal Duck Stamp is also distinctive in the way the stamp is created. Each year, the Service holds an art contest, the only juried art competition sponsored by the Federal government. The winning artwork from the national contest then becomes the next Federal Duck Stamp.

Traditionally sold through a partnership with the U.S. Postal Service, the 2023 stamp will mark the sixteenth year that the Service is selling Duck Stamps through the Electronic Duck Stamp (E-Stamp) program. As of Spring 2022, 28 States participate in the E-Stamp program and E-Stamp sales have increased from 58,000 E-Stamps sold in 2007 (the program's pilot year) to nearly 1 million in 2021. The E-Stamp program is a valuable customerservice tool, making Duck Stamps immediately available to anyone with an internet connection, regardless of their State or country of residence. The COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrated the need for this immediate access and the overall effectiveness of this initiative. The Service will continue to promote participation in the program from qualified States to further meet customers' needs.



At the 2021 National Junior Duck Stamp art contest, Kansas student Margaret McMullen's painting of hooded mergansers took top honors among the 53 State and territorial winners.

In addition to the Federal Duck Stamp, the Service also coordinates the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program. Since 1993, the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program for students in K-12th grade has helped encourage students to explore their natural world, study wildlife and their habitats and then share what they have learned with others in their communities. The Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program strengthens youth connection to nature through a dynamic art- and science-based curriculum that teaches wetland and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through high school. It crosses cultural, ethnic, social, and geographic boundaries to teach greater awareness of our Nation's natural resources.

Students can participate in the Junior Duck Stamp Program at school, at home, in after-school groups, and at refuges, parks and nature centers. After learning about wetlands, waterfowl, and wildlife conservation, students express their learning through a drawing or painting of a duck, goose, or swan and a conservation message. Students then submit their entries to their state contest for local recognition. Each State Best of Show is then forwarded to the National Competition. The top piece of art in the Nation – which is chosen at the annual competition – is featured on the Junior Duck Stamp, sales of which support educational programs and activities that nurture our next generation of wildlife conservationists and land stewards. Winning artwork from State contests may also be used on the cover of the States' annual hunting regulation brochures. The annual art contest participation averages about 20,000 students. Activities and events where students' artwork and other Junior Duck Stamp Program accomplishments are promoted, averages an additional 300,000 families, educators, and community members each year.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Manage the production and sale of the Federal Duck Stamp.
- Promote and diversify participation in the Junior Duck Stamp Program to target underserved and urban populations.
- Promote the Duck Stamp to increase participation in the program and generate revenues for habitat conservation.
- Expand the E-Stamp program to facilitate hunter access and improve satisfaction.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Federal Duck Stamp Program is \$1,591,000 and 4 FTE, a program change of +\$1,016,000 and +1 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Junior Duck Stamp and Urban Refuges (+\$1,000,000/ +1 FTE) – The Service proposes to use the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design (Junior Duck Stamp) program as a vehicle to showcase Urban Refuges, boost annual Duck Stamp sales, and increase diversity and inclusion among children in migratory bird conservation by purposefully expanding art and science-based curriculum activities in underserved and minority communities. The Service will use the requested funding to hire a National Junior Duck Stamp Coordinator; invest in and grow Junior Duck Stamp programs in 35 States that are home to Urban Refuges as well as programs in States and territories without Urban Refuges. This work will complement the proposed increase for the Urban Bird Treaty Program described above in the Proposed Program Changes section for Conservation and Monitoring.

Baseline Capacity (+\$16,000/ +0 FTE) – The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$16,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Subactivity: Migratory Bird Management

**Program Element: North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP)/
Joint Ventures**

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
North American Waterfowl Management/ Joint Ventures	(\$000)	15,122	15,122	+278	0	+2,690	18,090	+2,968
	FTE	42	42	0	0	0	42	0

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for NAWMP/Joint Ventures

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• NAWMP/Joint Ventures	+2,500	+0
• Baseline Capacity	+190	+0
Program Changes	+2,690	+0

Program Description

More than a quarter century ago, waterfowl populations in North America languished at historic lows. The waterfowl management community in the United States and Canada developed a strategy to respond to those low populations through habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement—an unprecedented recognition of the need for international cooperation to help restore these shared resources. This strategy became the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and still serves as a model for international conservation.

Signed by the United States and Canada in 1986, and by Mexico in 1994, the Waterfowl Management Plan has sustained abundant duck, geese, and swan populations across North America by conserving habitats through partnerships for the past 35 years. The Plan has been updated over time and today strives to increase public awareness and understanding that waterfowl provide both ecological and economic benefits to as wide an audience as possible.

The habitat goals of the Waterfowl Management Plan, as well as the conservation and management priorities of national and international shorebird, waterbird, and landbird partnership initiatives, are primarily implemented by 18 Migratory Bird Joint Ventures (JVs)—a network of regional, self-directed partnerships involving Federal, State, and local governments; corporations; individuals; and non-governmental organizations. JVs are a cornerstone of a collaborative effort to bring back the nearly three billion birds lost over the last half century and are considered the model for collaborative conservation in the 21st century, using state-of-the-art science and leveraging public and private resources to ensure that diverse habitat is available to sustain migratory bird populations. JVs have an additional benefit of building capacity of participating partners, making their operations and activities more effective and efficient. In the Administration’s initial report⁷ outlining steps to achieve the America the Beautiful initiative, JVs were identified as an example of effective conservation partnerships that could be expanded.

⁷ <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/report-conserving-and-restoring-america-the-beautiful-2021.pdf>

The JV partnerships play a critical role in addressing problems migratory birds face due to a changing climate. Armed with the best available scientific information, JVs help predict how bird populations will respond to habitat conservation and other management activities, and then tailor conservation plans for those specific populations. These plans employ landscape-level conservation strategies that prioritize and direct habitat management resources where they will have greatest impact and lowest relative cost. This strategy enables JV partners to focus conservation programs on the highest priority areas and identify resources at the level needed to sustain healthy populations of migratory birds.

North American landscapes will continue to change in ways and at scales that have potential to drive bird populations downward, with more species requiring Endangered Species Act protection. JVs recognize the path to effective and sustainable bird conservation must incorporate an understanding of the ways in which people value, use, and depend on the natural environment. Thus, JV efforts seek to align bird conservation with benefits to human society and local communities. JV implementation plans often focus bird habitat protection and restoration in areas that also serve to abate flooding, improve water quality, and enhance carbon sequestration. Focusing on a more integrated approach to landscape conservation that links the ecological and social drivers of conservation together, JVs are working to develop better implementation strategies with existing partners, as well as new approaches to connecting bird conservation with new partners and stakeholders inherent to the changing demographics of America. This approach is well aligned with the principles outlined in the Administration's Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful report and the JV partnerships are well-poised to meaningfully contribute to the recommended areas of focus.

Gulf Coast Joint Venture - Complementary Programs for Birds, Livelihoods, and Recreation on Texas Coastal Private Lands

Quality habitats on private lands are essential to meeting Gulf Coast Joint Venture (GCJV) avian conservation objectives. Consequently, GCJV partners are invested in two synergistic programs that engage private landowners in meeting habitat needs for birds, while contributing to landowner objectives and providing important ecosystem



Victoria County, Texas, landowners standing within their grassland property improved through the Coastal Grassland Restoration Incentive Program. Credit: Eric Grahmann



Texas Prairie Wetland Project biologist and landowners conducting joint site visit to evaluate potential project site. Credit: Taylor Abshier

services. The Texas Prairie Wetlands Project (TPWP) provides technical and cost-share assistance to landowners for development of shallow wetlands. Since its inception in 1991, the TPWP has engaged over 700 landowners and impacted over 90,000 acres toward waterfowl habitat needs stepped down from the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. These habitats are also essential to shorebirds and other wetland wildlife species, while providing places to pursue outdoor recreation such as waterfowl hunting and birdwatching. Importantly,

these wetlands restore some of the floodwater storage “sponge” back into the former coastal prairie to mitigate damages to downstream communities after excessive rainfall. The Coastal Grasslands Restoration Incentive Program (C-GRIP) represents a newer effort to incentivize landowners to improve grasslands through strategic application of prescribed fire, brush removal, grazing management, and vegetative plantings. Since its 2019 inception, C-GRIP has impacted over 40,000 acres and engaged over 30 landowners. Healthy grasslands sequester carbon and contribute to landowner objectives for livestock grazing, while also restoring populations of grassland birds that are among the most continentally imperiled of bird guilds. The Mottled Duck is a resident species of high conservation concern that requires healthy grasslands for nesting and healthy wetlands for the remainder of their life cycle, thus representing a beneficiary (along with people) of both programs. GCJV partners use a spatially explicit decision-support tool, based on the biological requirements of breeding Mottled Ducks, to identify important grasslands and wetlands for conservation through the TPWP, C-GRIP, and other programs.

Central Valley Joint Venture –Achieving balance between birds, wildlife, and communities through dynamic conservation

The Central Valley was once a vast mosaic of wetlands, floodplain forests, grasslands, oak woodlands, and saltbush scrub, but has lost 95 percent of its natural bird habitat. It is now a highly modified and managed landscape that serves many purposes for people and wildlife. The Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV) accomplishes migratory bird habitat conservation through its partnership of public and private organizations. The CVJV partnership supports several dynamic conservation programs that assists farmers in creating seasonal/surrogate habitat on their farmlands. Agricultural lands in the Central Valley, particularly rice fields, play a vital role in providing crucial, but temporary, bird habitat that supplements remaining natural habitats. These working lands provide resources for resident and migratory birds annually during critical periods of their lifecycles (e.g., migration, wintering, and nesting seasons). Additional benefits for farmers and local communities include agricultural residue management, improved water quality and flood control, and increased recreational opportunities, while still maintaining the ability to produce agricultural products and income.



Geese and other waterfowl taking advantage of seasonally-flooded agricultural fields in the Central Valley. Credit: Mike Peters

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan with partners and the Joint Ventures to achieve waterfowl population, habitat, and human dimension objectives.
- Design and implement habitat strategies that work with landowners and other partners to conserve migratory birds across the landscape; and collect and analyze data on Black Duck, Arctic Geese, and Sea Duck species to inform harvest strategies that lead to hunter opportunities.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for NAWMP/Joint Ventures is \$18,090,000 and 42 FTE, a program change of +\$2,690,000 and +0 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Strengthening Joint Ventures' Partnerships (+\$2,500,000/ +0 FTE) – The Service will use a portion of the requested funding to achieve target funding levels for all 21 Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, including addressing base funding deficiencies for the Joint Ventures currently funded at a minimally viable level. This will allow all JVs to address capacity issues that prevent them from fully supporting migratory bird conservation and adaptation. JVs will promote conservation of working lands in collaboration with private landowners and local communities for the benefit of wildlife and help support the Administration's America the Beautiful initiative. Funds will be strategically invested among the JVs to strengthen partners' ability to respond to a variety of pressures, including climate change, drought and flooding, invasive species, and habitat change. Specifically, the increased funding will support increased science capacity, including improved spatial tracking and assessment of landscape level changes; development or enhancement of conservation delivery networks that coordinate partners' on-the-ground conservation projects to accomplish greater results; and improved and increased outreach to raise awareness of JV activities and their many benefits. Together, these investments and activities will target the highest priority species and habitats across the Nation.

Baseline Capacity (+\$190,000/ +0 FTE) – The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$190,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Law Enforcement



OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT



Activity: Law Enforcement

		2021 Actual	2022 CR	2023			Budget Request	Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Law Enforcement Operations	(\$000)	85,950	85,950	+2,495	-144	+10,122	98,423	12,473
	FTE	309	376	0	-1	+41	416	+40
Equipment Replacement	(\$000)	910	910	0	0	0	910	0
Total, Office of Law Enforcement	(\$000)	86,860	86,860	+2,495	-144	+10,122	99,333	+12,473
	FTE	309	376	0	-1	+41	416	+40

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Law Enforcement Operations

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Wildlife Law Enforcement Capacity	+6,194	+27
• Port Inspector Capacity	+2,000	+14
• Baseline Capacity	+1,928	+0
Program Changes	+10,122	+41

Program Mission

The Service is the only agency in the Federal government that has the primary responsibility for management of fish and wildlife through conservation, protection, and restoration of certain populations of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the American public. The Service enhances its conservation mission through the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE). The OLE is the investigative arm of the Service tasked to enforce wildlife laws, regulate wildlife trade, investigate wildlife crimes, help Americans understand and obey wildlife protection laws, and work in partnership with international, State, and Tribal counterparts to conserve and protect wildlife resources. Continuing to prevent introduction or transmittal of zoonotic diseases through inspection of wildlife imports is an important part of the Service’s preparation for future epidemics after lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It’s our mission to protect wildlife and plant resources through the effective enforcement of Federal laws. By working with Federal, State, Tribal, and foreign enforcement agencies and other conservation partners, we help recover endangered species, conserve migratory birds, preserve wildlife habitat, safeguard fisheries, combat invasive species, and promote global wildlife conservation. The Service is responsible for enforcing the U.S. laws, regulations, and treaties that protect wildlife and plant resources. The Office of Law Enforcement officers work to intercept smuggling and facilitate legal commerce in fish, wildlife, and plant resources by investigating wildlife crimes and monitoring the Nation’s wildlife trade.

Program Elements

The program elements for the Office of Law Enforcement:

- Law Enforcement Operations – funds the day-to-day activities of special agents, intelligence analysts, forensic scientists, and support staff who serve critical roles in facilitating legal trade, the fight against wildlife trafficking, and the successful prosecution of criminals who break Federal and international wildlife laws.
- Equipment Replacement – maintains and replaces property and equipment, including scientific instruments at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory; purchases and configures vehicles to satisfy operational requirements.

Economic Benefits

The Service recognizes the hard work of our special agents, wildlife inspectors, intelligence analysts, forensic scientists, and support staff who serve critical roles in facilitating legal trade, the fight against wildlife trafficking, and the successful prosecution of criminals who break Federal and international wildlife laws. In FY 2021, the Service conducted over 9,300 wildlife crime investigations, which resulted in ordered restitution of \$2.6 million in fines, \$633,000 in civil penalties, 14 years in prison, and 233 years in probation. Wildlife Inspectors processed over 157,000 declared wildlife shipments and facilitated legal trade valued at over \$4.4 billion.

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

The Service has the statutory mandate and trust responsibility to fulfill its mission derived from the Nation's wildlife and plant protection laws and several Presidential actions. Brief descriptions of these various laws follow:

- The *Lacey Act* (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378) prohibits the importation, exportation, transportation, sale, or purchase of fish, wildlife, or plants taken or possessed in violation of Federal, State, Tribal, or foreign laws.
- The *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (16 U.S.C. 703-712) makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, kill, capture, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird including their feathers, parts, and products.
- The *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 668-668C) prohibits import, export, or take of bald or golden eagles including their parts and products without permits, and prohibits the sale, purchase, or barter of their parts or products.
- The *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) prohibits the importation, exportation, take, and interstate or foreign commerce of fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species.
- The *Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species* (CITES) is an international treaty to which 183 countries are parties, including the United States. CITES is implemented in the United States under the ESA and provides a set of universal protections and controls involving the international movement of plant and animal species engaged in significant global trade.
- The *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act* (16 U.S.C. 718) requires waterfowl hunters to purchase and possess a valid Federal waterfowl hunting stamp before take of migratory waterfowl.
- The *Marine Mammal Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407) establishes a moratorium on the take and importation of marine mammals, including parts and products.
- The *Airborne Hunting Act* (16 U.S.C. 742j-1) prohibits taking or harassing wildlife from aircraft.
- The *National Refuge System Administration Act* (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) provides guidelines for administration and management of all areas in the refuge system.
- The *African Elephant Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4201-4245) places a moratorium on the importation of raw or worked ivory from African elephant-producing countries that do not meet certain criteria.

- The *Wild Bird Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4901) limits or prohibits the importation of exotic bird species as necessary to ensure that their populations are not harmed by international trade.
- The *Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 5301-5306) prohibits the import, export, or sale of any product, item, or substance containing, or labeled or advertised as containing, any substance derived from tiger or rhinoceros.
- The *Antarctic Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 2401) makes unlawful for any citizen to take, possess, or sell any native bird or mammal from Antarctica.
- The *Archeological Resources Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 470aa) prohibits excavation, removal, damage, or alteration to any archaeological resource located on public or Indian lands without a permit.
- The *Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990* (P.L. 101-644) is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresentation in marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the United States.
- In conducting investigations of wildlife crimes, OLE frequently encounters and investigates violations of other Federal laws to include conspiracy, smuggling, money laundering, narcotics, cybercrimes, unlawful possession and trafficking of firearms, mail fraud, tax evasion, wire fraud, corruption, and bribery.
- The *Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act* (P.L. 114-231) authorizes support for law enforcement training, investigative capacity building, range state conservation programs, and other important tools to protect and sustain wild populations of imperiled species in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and other critical locations.
- The *Presidential Executive Order on Combating Wildlife Trafficking* (issued July 1, 2013) coordinates efforts to combat wildlife trafficking and established a Presidential Task force, which released the *National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking*. The Strategy and accompanying Implementation Plan identify three main objectives – strengthening domestic and global law enforcement, reducing demand for illegally traded wildlife, and building international cooperation.
- The *Presidential Executive Order on Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking* (issued February 9, 2017) strengthens enforcement of Federal law in order to thwart transnational criminal organizations and subsidiary organizations, including criminal gangs, cartels, racketeering organizations, and other groups engaged in illicit activities. This Executive Order specifically lists wildlife trafficking as a targeted transnational crime that presents a threat to public safety and national security.

Program Overview

Through the OLE, the Service protects fish, wildlife, and plant resources by investigating wildlife crimes and monitoring the Nation's wildlife trade to intercept smuggling and facilitate legal commerce. Effective enforcement of the Nation's wildlife laws is essential to the Service's conservation mission and combats wildlife trafficking, a threat to U.S. and foreign species and global security.

Service special agents, wildlife inspectors, intelligence analysts, and forensic scientists play a critical global role in

holding the line for species on the brink of extinction from the accelerating black market of wildlife trade. Service efforts that protect wildlife resources and support strategic habitat conservation are also vital in the face of ongoing threats such as habitat loss and climate change. These threats make wildlife populations even more vulnerable to crimes such as poaching, black market trafficking, and industrial take.



A joint investigation with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission led to conviction and imprisonment of two poachers in violation of the ESA. Ninety-three State and Federally protected sea turtle eggs were taken from a nest. Photo credit: Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

The U.S. remains one of the world's largest markets for wildlife and wildlife products, both legal and illegal. Illegal global trafficking represents a threat to the continued viability of thousands of fish, wildlife, and plants around the world. In some regions, it threatens to undermine not only natural areas, but also governments, economies, and the rule of law itself.

Protecting our Nation's Species

Special agents investigate crimes involving federally-protected resources, including endangered and threatened species native to the U.S., migratory birds, eagles, and marine mammals. Enforcement efforts focus on dismantling criminal enterprises that illegally profit from trade in American wildlife and plants. The Service's law enforcement addresses other potentially devastating threats to wildlife, including habitat destruction, environmental contaminants, and industrial hazards and investigate violations of laws that safeguard wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Service also works with industries whose activities affect American wildlife resources and their habitat to reduce hazards and secure voluntary compliance with wildlife laws.



A joint investigation with Federal, State, and Tribal partners resulted in a man pleading guilty to repeated poaching of bull trout. These trout are an iconic species of the Pacific Northwest, Tribally significant, and listed as threatened under the ESA. Photo credit: USFWS

Working with Native Americans and Alaska Natives

OLE promotes well-being, equity, and justice for Tribes, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Hawaiian Natives, and Insular Areas in numerous ways, which directly supports the DOI priority of strengthening the government-to-government relationship with sovereign Tribal Nations. Examples of this includetraining Tribal conservation law enforcement officers, assisting with criminal investigations, providing eagle feathers andparts for use in religious ceremonies, supporting subsistence hunting, and enforcing Federal laws that protect Native American culture such as the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Archeological Resources Protection Act, and the Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA).



Working with Insular Areas to promote well-being, equity, and justice: training of Guam Customs and Quarantine recruits by an OLE Wildlife Inspector. The training covered statutes, regulations, and species identification. Photo Credit: USFWS

The IACA is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresentation in marketing of American Indian or Alaska Native art and craft products within the U.S.

Native art is a critical part in telling the story of this country and can only be told by Native artists. Artists passed down their skills and traditions through generations so that every piece carries with it cultural significance, family history, and knowledge. Native artists create incredible pieces of both traditional art and contemporary works, and they deserve credit and compensation for their crafts. Buying authentic pottery, jewelry, mixed media creations, paintings and other art from Native American artists helps support Tribal economies.¹

To enforce IACA, OLE works closely with the Department of the Interior’s Indian Arts and Crafts Board.

The Service investigates retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, counterfeiters, and smugglers who fraudulently produce and sell counterfeit Indian arts and crafts. The OLE has assigned special agents to disrupt and dismantle this criminal activity and successes are significant. Numerous defendants have been investigated, indicted and sentenced for their crimes, and their actions were documented in States such as Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, New Jersey, New Mexico and Texas; and in countries such as China, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand.

Most of these defendants ran similar multinational criminal schemes in the Southwest United States that involved fake Native American art mass- produced in the Philippines. These fakes were then smuggled into the U.S. and sold as authentic Indian jewelry to unaware consumers at numerous retailers across the Country.

These crimes were not simple to investigate because they were multifaceted and involved other serious crimes such as identity theft, mail fraud, wire fraud, smuggling, conspiracy and money laundering. Throughout these investigations, OLE agents discovered that counterfeit Indian art criminal networks operated a complex web of middlemen, across the Nation, to distribute and market fraudulent Indian

¹ Secretary Deb Haaland: Supporting Indian Artists <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2T-mgzV3OY>

artwork. In addition, these defendants used their illegal sales to undercut reputable competitors, often taking over their businesses. The millions of dollars generated by these counterfeit Indian art networks supported organized crime in the U.S. and were also funneled to overseas criminal operations.



Two men were sentenced in Federal court for four felony violations of the IACA. The perpetrators were importing Native American-style items from the Philippines and selling to customers in the U.S. as authentic. As part of the settlement, 193,206 counterfeit pieces were seized. Pictured is an undercover purchase of a canteen misrepresented as Navajo made. Photo credit: USFWS

Office of Law Enforcement

To learn more about OLE's work, please visit <https://fws.gov/le/> and if you believe you have knowledge about a wildlife crime, you may report it via the Service's tip line by either calling 1- 844-FWS-TIPS (397-8477) or email fws_tips@fws.gov.

Combating Illegal Global Wildlife Trafficking

The Service's investigation of wildlife trafficking and assistance to international counterparts disrupts highly organized smuggling networks trafficking wildlife around the globe. The Service's trade monitoring activities at U.S. ports provide a front-line defense against illegal wildlife trade. Service wildlife inspectors process declared shipments, intercept wildlife contraband, conduct proactive enforcement operations to catch smugglers, and work with special agents to investigate businesses and individuals engaged in illegal wildlife trafficking. Service law enforcement officers also work to prevent the introduction of invasive species via international trade and travelers. In addition, special agents and wildlife inspectors enforce prohibitions on the importation of injurious wildlife. Costs of the inspection program incurred by the Service are charged against the Service's wildlife inspection user fee account. However, in the event that costs exceed the user fee collections, they are funded by the law enforcement program's appropriated funds.

USMCA Funds

In FY 2020, OLE received \$4 million in the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement Implementation Act to enforce Lacey Act with respect to goods imported or exported between the United States and Mexico during fiscal years 2020 through 2023. This funding provides additional Senior Wildlife Inspection Interdiction Specialists and Wildlife Inspector K-9 Units stationed at the southern border. New intelligence software and processing capability facilitates the collection and analysis of massive amounts of investigative data, particularly focusing on digital communications.

In January of 2021, a shipment that contained 50 pounds of CITES protected sea cucumbers was discovered by a canine Wildlife Inspector team at the Port of Anchorage. The shipment, exported from Mexico and destined to Hong Kong, did not possess the required CITES permit, and was OLE seized. Photo credit: USFWS



Zoonotic Disease Protection

The Service Mission Statement clearly states that all of the efforts its programs and employees make in the interest of wildlife conservation and protection are to be made for the continuing benefit of the American people. No area of focus, including the Service's duty to combat wildlife trafficking, dovetails more with that mission than the prevention of introduction or transmittal of zoonotic infectious disease. As the various classifications of diseases carried by wildlife potentially threaten wild populations of at-risk species, and in some cases may be transmissible to humans, it is necessary to focus an effort to prevent their spread through wildlife trafficking on behalf of the public.

As criminal networks have grown on a global scale, it has become increasingly necessary for law enforcement agencies to rely on any available technology or methodology that allows them to narrow their focus. There are many logistical challenges afforded to Service Wildlife Inspectors and Special Agents tasked with targeting potential disease vectors in imported and trafficked wildlife. Though proper identification, safe physical inspection, communication with cooperating agencies, and intervention with *declared* shipments is taxing enough; OLE staff are primarily expected to intercept undeclared illegal shipments internationally and domestically.



Nearly 100 eastern box turtles, seized from an illegal shipment destined for Asia, were transferred to several partners for care. The turtles were already in poor condition when they were discovered hidden inside falsely labeled boxes. Each turtle had been stuffed inside a tight sock to prevent it from moving, and many had ear and eye infections, likely caused by days of confinement without food, water, or sunlight. Unfortunately these turtles experienced a deadly outbreak of ranavirus — a gruesome disease that affects reptiles, amphibians, and fish, and illustrates both the risks and cruelty of the illegal wildlife trade. There is no cure for this disease and about half of the confiscated turtles died. “The trafficking of U.S. native turtles is a serious threat to wild populations, and an affront to animal welfare,” said Edward Grace, Chief of OLE. “Smugglers often ship turtles in inhumane conditions that promote the spread of diseases, like ranavirus. We are thankful to our wildlife inspectors for intercepting these turtles before they left the country, and to the many partners who stepped up to provide professional care for them.” The eastern box turtle is protected under CITES and cannot be exported without a permit. It’s also illegal to conceal wildlife in a box and attempt to ship it abroad—a violation of the Lacey Act and federal regulations for humane wildlife transportation. Photo credit: USFWS

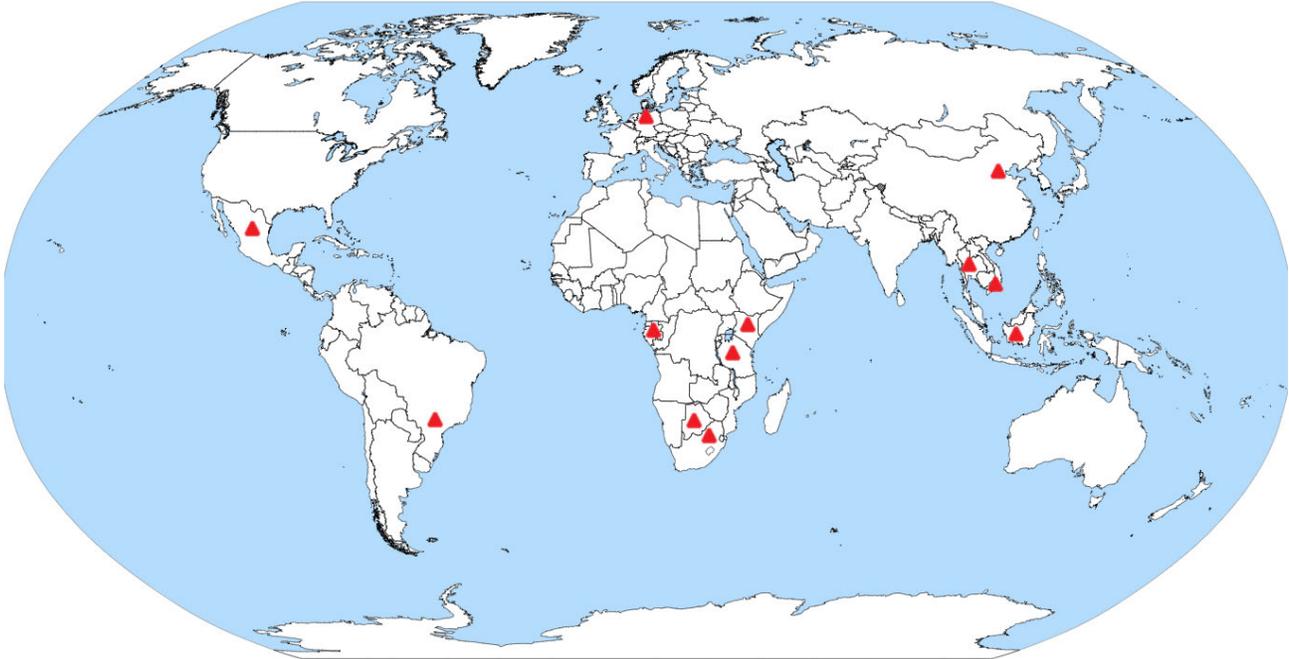
International Operations

The Service’s International Attaché program stations special agents overseas to investigate international wildlife trafficking. In 2021, OLE has 12 personnel worldwide addressing limiting factors in countries that drive or enable the market for illegal wildlife by supporting direct partnerships with foreign governments to share and coordinate intelligence, expand training programs, and provide technical assistance in customs monitoring. The attachés have assisted in wildlife trafficking investigations by providing investigative expertise, as well as highly technical assistance to local governments involved in wildlife trafficking investigations. They have also provided training and capacity building, increased coordination among government agencies, and provided support to Wildlife Enforcement Networks throughout their areas of responsibility.

The International Attaché program is just one example of OLE supporting Wildlife Conservation: “Our Partners” Vision and DOI Priority Centering equity and environmental justice to build and foster national and international collaborations. We build and maintain trust with diverse, inclusive partnerships around the world to support species, habitats, and ecosystems.

² Macdonald, Bridget. “Smugglers gamble with turtles’ lives, causing disease outbreak”

<https://medium.com/usfishandwildlifeservicenortheast/smugglers-gamble-with-turtles-lives-causing-disease-outbreak-6dfa8a412acc>



Wildlife Law Enforcement at U.S. Embassies: Botswana, Brazil, China, Gabon, Germany (AFRICOM), Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam



International Cooperation

In April 2021, special agents arrested a man arriving at John F. Kennedy International Airport for smuggling 35 live finches into the U.S. from Guyana.

The birds were contained in hair curlers, strapped to his legs, and concealed in his suit jacket that had been retrofitted with inner pockets. Information in the criminal complaint was widely reported by multiple media outlets.

Special agents continue to work with the OLE attaché in Lima, Peru, to share information with our counterparts in Guyana regarding the smuggling of live towa towa finches to the U.S. by commercial airline passengers. As a result of information shared, Guyanese authorities have identified coconspirators and are taking actions to recognize and eliminate smuggling pathways at the airports.

Photo credit: USFWS

Facilitating Legal Wildlife Trade

The OLE's mandate to enforce wildlife trade laws encompasses a responsibility to deal fairly and efficiently with the businesses, organizations, and individuals that legally import and export wildlife. The speed and efficiency of wildlife inspection operations affect not only businesses trading in legal commodities, but also the international transportation of wildlife for purposes ranging from scientific research to public entertainment. Officers provide guidance to individuals and businesses to help them obey wildlife laws and expedite their import and export transactions. Customer service efforts use technology to speed trade, streamline communication, and improve public access to information about laws and regulations affecting trade in wildlife and wildlife products.

National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory

The Service's National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory (Lab), the world's only full-service crime laboratory devoted exclusively to supporting wildlife law enforcement, is vital to the Service's efforts to fight illegal wildlife trade and protect plants and animals. Scientists at the laboratory identify the species of wildlife parts and products seized as evidence to link suspect, victim, and crime scene through the examination of physical evidence, cause of death determinations, and crime scene analysis.

The Lab can scientifically identify the species source of mammal, bird, plant, and reptile wildlife parts and products, a function frequently utilized by Service special agents, wildlife inspectors, and Justice Department prosecutors. Conclusive evidence of criminal activity in wildlife investigations often hinges on the investigators' and prosecutors' ability to establish animal or animal parts origin, often by country, so the Lab's capacity is integral to enforcing wildlife laws and treaties. Wildlife populations have identifiable genetic profiles, which result in specific isotopic signatures that reflect a specific geographic location. For example, this research data helps the Service determine where poached elephants were from by analyzing illegal ivory, or where poached rhinos were from by analyzing illegal horns, all of which aid efforts to prosecute criminals and stem poaching.



Senior Forensic Scientist Dr. Pepper Trail explains his initial evaluation process to a group of African delegates visiting the wildlife forensics lab in Ashland, Oregon. Trail is known world-wide for his expertise in bird identification and often assists other countries in investigating black market trafficking of protected and endangered birds. Photo credit: Pepper Trail/USFWS

Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Support Unit

The Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Support Unit (DERTSU) provides special agents in the field with better support for retrieval and analysis of computer-based records and advanced surveillance techniques.

Based in Jacksonville, Florida, and co-located with a group providing similar support to criminal investigators from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, DERTSU is staffed by wildlife crime investigators with skills in computer forensics and technology-based investigations, as well as technical experts in these highly specialized fields. The Unit provides a source of multi-layered expertise (both technical and investigative) to assist field officers with large-scale and complex investigations.

2023 Program Activities

In FY 2023, the Service will continue to utilize its network of special agent and international attachés to build on past successes in combating wildlife trafficking, both domestically and internationally. Investigations will continue to prioritize crimes that jeopardize wild populations of protected species devastated by poaching, black market trafficking, and transnational profiteering. The Service will also focus on special agent and wildlife inspector staffing levels. Due to mandatory retirement age for law enforcement positions, field agents are at an historical low while global responsibilities continue to grow.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Law Enforcement Operations is \$98,423,000 and 416 FTE, a program change of +\$10,122,000 and +41 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Capacity to Enforce Wildlife Laws (+\$6,194,000/+27 FTE) – Due to the physical and dangerous nature of Federal law enforcement work, the Service’s Special Agents face mandatory retirement at 57 years of age. Field Agent numbers are at a historical low while their global responsibilities continue to grow. Within the next four years, OLE will have 29 mandatory retirements. With this funding, OLE will hire a full class of 27 new agents. A newly hired agent attends the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center academy and Field Training for Officers, which is an investment of 1.5 years until the agent is at full performance of sworn duties. This funding is needed ensure adequate overlap of retiring and onboarding officers.

Law Enforcement Operations: Port Inspections Enhancement (+\$2,000,000; +14 FTE) – At the end of FY 2021, the Service had 123 Wildlife Inspectors (including port supervisors), stationed at port locations to process declared shipments, intercept wildlife contraband, conduct proactive enforcement operations to catch smugglers, and work with special agents to investigate businesses and individuals engaged in illegal wildlife trafficking. In FY 2021, Wildlife Inspectors processed over 157,000 declared wildlife shipments, with over 4,000 interdictions. While a significant amount of the costs of the inspection program are funded by user fees, additional capacity costs are funded by appropriated funds. An increase of \$2.0 million would enable hiring of an additional 14 field Wildlife Inspectors that would supplement the inspection workforce at the already established 18 designated ports of entry. This additional staffing would increase the number of inspections and interdictions of illegal and invasive wildlife at the ports of entry while also facilitating the import and export of legal trade.

Baseline Capacity (+\$1,928,000; +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$1.9 million in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

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International Affairs

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Activity: Conservation and Enforcement

Subactivity: International Affairs

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Budget Request	Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
International Conservation	(\$000)	10,294	10,294	+213	0	+480	10,987	+693
International Wildlife Trade	(\$000)	12,738	12,738	+337	0	+7,753	20,828	+8,090
Total, International Affairs	(\$000)	23,032	23,032	+550	0	+8,233	31,815	+8,783
	FTE	72	85	0	0	+9	94	+9

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for International Affairs

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• CITES Secure Paperless Permitting Modernization	+2,500	+0
• Permitting Modernization (ePermits)	+2,000	+0
• International Conservation Capacity	+1,875	+2
• Wildlife Disease and One Health	+1,825	+0
• Addressing Permit Application Workload and Reducing Processing Backlog	+1,200	+7
• Baseline Capacity	+383	+0
• Arctic Council Support	-550	+0
• Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize	-1,000	+0
Program Changes	+8,233	+9

Program Mission

Using an evidence-based approach, the Service’s International Affairs Program works with partners worldwide to conserve fish, wildlife, plants, and the habitats on which they depend, and to maintain the integrity of ecological processes beyond our borders for present and future generations. Through this program, the Service leads domestic and international efforts to protect, restore, and enhance the world’s diverse wildlife and their habitats with a focus on international species, including domestic species that range beyond our borders or are traded internationally.

Program Elements

The International Affairs Program is comprised of the following elements:

- **International Conservation** – These species and regional programs provide technical and financial assistance and engage in partnerships around the globe to address key threats and strengthen capacity to conserve high-priority species and habitats.
- **International Wildlife Trade** – This program is responsible for implementing the Convention on

International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and other laws and treaties to, among other objectives, ensure international wildlife trade is legal and does not threaten the survival of animals and plants in the wild. Through international collaborations and technical and financial assistance, this program strengthens global implementation of CITES, applies scientific analysis to decision-making concerning the conservation and sustainable use of international species, and combats wildlife trafficking. Additionally, this program administers the Service's marine mammal permitting program to ensure that otherwise prohibited activities, such as take and import involving marine mammal species under the Service's jurisdiction, are permitted to ensure conservation of marine mammal populations.

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

The Service has the legal mandate and responsibility to engage in the conservation of wildlife species both within and beyond our borders in the context of several long-standing commitments. These obligations are contained in domestic laws, international treaties, and other multilateral agreements, such as:

- The *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) prohibits the importation, exportation, take, and interstate or foreign commerce of fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species.
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement that aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species.
- The Multinational Species Conservation Acts assist in the conservation and protection of elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, great apes, marine turtles, and freshwater turtles and tortoises in their natural habitats by supporting projects around the world through competitive financial assistance programs:
 - The *African Elephant Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4201-4246)
 - The *Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 5301-5306)
 - The *Asian Elephant Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4261-4266)
 - The *Great Ape Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 6301-6305)
 - The *Marine Turtle Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 6601-6607), amended to include freshwater turtles and tortoises by the *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019* (Public Law 116-9, section 7001).
- The *Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act* (16 U.S.C. 7601-7644) aims to disrupt the ability of terrorists and criminal syndicates to profit from wildlife trafficking.
- The Pelly Amendment to the *Fishermen's Protective Act* (22 U.S.C. 1971-1979) authorizes embargo of wildlife products when foreign nationals are engaging in trade or taking that diminishes the effectiveness of an international program in force with respect to the United States for the conservation of endangered or threatened species.
- The Canada/Mexico/U.S. Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management facilitates and enhances cooperation and coordination among the wildlife agencies of the three nations in projects and programs for the conservation and management of wildlife, plants, habitats, and ecological integrity of ecosystems of mutual interest.
- The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- The Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation in the Western Hemisphere (Western Hemisphere Convention) aims to preserve in their natural habitats all species and genera

of native American fauna and flora from extinction, and to preserve areas of extraordinary beauty, striking geological formations or regions of aesthetic, historic, or scientific value.

- The *Lacey Act* (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378) prohibits the importation, exportation, sale, or purchase of fish, wildlife, or plants taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of Federal, State, Tribal, or foreign laws.
- The *Wild Bird Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4901-4916) helps ensure that exotic bird species are not harmed by international trade and encourages wild bird conservation programs in countries of origin.
- The *Marine Mammal Protection Act* (MMPA) (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407) prohibits, with certain exceptions, the take of marine mammals in U.S. waters and by U.S. citizens on the high seas, and the importation of marine mammals and marine mammal products into the U.S.
- The *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703-712) makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, kill, capture, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird including their feathers, parts, and products.
- The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) and its Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol) aim to protect, preserve, and sustainably manage areas that need conservation to safeguard their special value and the threatened or endangered flora and fauna they contain.

Program Overview

The survival of natural resources important to the American public depends on effective international and domestic conservation efforts. The Service, through the International Affairs Program, supports the Department of the Interior's Strategic Goal to conserve, protect, manage, and restore natural and cultural resources in numerous and complementary manners. These include supporting on-the-ground conservation efforts that address threats and strengthen capacity to manage and protect wildlife; expanding international cooperation, capacity, and commitment to address growing threats to species and habitats; providing leadership in international wildlife conservation policy; and implementing laws and regulations in the United States to promote the legality of international wildlife trade and ensure sustainable use of wildlife.

The complex threats facing species under the Service's purview require a science-based conservation approach coupled with international wildlife and trade policy interventions. For example, the Service works to address the poaching of elephants and rhinos for the illegal trade in ivory and rhino horn by undertaking on-the-ground efforts to protect species in their habitats, providing policy support and interagency collaboration to combat wildlife trafficking, and negotiating with foreign governments to improve treaty compliance. These actions complement the activities of the Service's Office of Law Enforcement, which



Sumatran rhinoceros. Credit: Meenakshi Nagendran/USFWS

enforces and investigates violations of wildlife laws, domestically and in partnership with foreign governments.

Elephants, rhinos, tigers, marine turtles, and apes are just a few of the species that captivate the hearts and minds of the American public. The Service's work in International Affairs extends to numerous native species whose ranges extend beyond our borders, including monarch butterflies, marine mammals, and sea turtles, as well as native species of animals and plants that are traded internationally, including American alligator, American ginseng, and various freshwater turtles. The conservation of these species and the habitats on which they depend provide concrete benefits to U.S. residents and to our and the world's economy. In addition, this work benefits the American public in myriad other ways. Maintaining intact habitats and healthy wildlife populations provides ecosystem services such as clean air and water, helps combat the impacts of climate change, increases resiliency of wildlife and human communities, and helps prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases between wildlife and humans.

The Service works closely with State agencies and Tribes to ensure legal wildlife trade based on sustainable use, and provides technical and financial assistance, working alongside communities and other partners, to strengthen the capacity of other countries to address conservation of species that are important to the American people and global biodiversity. This entails working together to find innovative solutions to address the most urgent threats to species' survival, including poaching and wildlife trafficking, disease, habitat loss, climate change, and inadequate capacity or resources to support wildlife conservation. Through these efforts, the Service's work supports sustainable use and conservation of plants and animals in international trade, from helping to establish protected areas and supporting protected area and wildlife management and community-based conservation, to leading high-level international trade negotiations.



*Forested landscape in Honduras and Belize.
Credit: Levi Novey/ USFWS*

The Service's international wildlife conservation efforts extend to some of the regions of the world that are hardest hit by climate change, which compounds other threats like habitat loss and poaching and can amplify pre-existing vulnerabilities of marginalized human communities around natural resource access and control, including for livestock grazing. Through financial and technical assistance, the Service helps build resilience against climate change by establishing and managing protected areas and other large landscapes while strengthening the capacity of national governments and local communities to

manage them over the long term. Support for landscape-level conservation helps protect habitats acting as carbon sinks and maintain important wildlife refugia, such as the Amazon and Congo Basin as well as savanna and steppe grassland systems. The Service's approach helps build resiliency while supporting local solutions to complex problems.

Healthy intact habitats with rich biodiversity are linked to increased resiliency and reduced likelihood of zoonotic disease transmission between wildlife and humans. Conservation of the world's biodiversity is a critical strategy for reducing the likelihood of future pandemics and is an important component of the Service's international work. Through close collaboration with other U.S. agencies, the Service contributes

to the government-wide One Health approach, holistically considering how human, animal, and environmental health are closely linked. Through financial and technical assistance programs, the Service applies a range of evidence-based approaches that support pandemic prevention at the source, such as addressing illegal commercial bushmeat trade, supporting protected area management, curtailing the spread of injurious species and pathogens, and building multi-partner initiatives to address complex threats to wildlife and human health. Through its engagement on international treaties and conventions, and its role as the U.S. Management and Scientific Authorities of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Service also aids both in halting current disease spread and reducing the risk of future outbreaks via illegal and legal wildlife trade. Although long-term results are not yet known, the disease, economic, and security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to have a strong negative impact on these at-risk species. From 2020 onwards, increases in poaching, wildlife subsistence use, and habitat loss brought on during the pandemic occurred alongside significant reductions in tourist and donor revenue, that reduced the ability of many countries to effectively manage protected areas and wildlife. These devastating findings underscore the critical importance of continuing the Service's longstanding international investment in community-based conservation, protected area management, and combating wildlife trafficking, as well as engaging in the development of One Health approaches more generally. For more detail on how the International Affairs Program reduces the risk of zoonotic disease spillover and spread globally, see the Cross Program Strategies section on 'Preventing Spillover and Spread of Zoonotic Diseases' below.

In FY 2021, the Service published Notices of Funding Opportunity to provide technical and financial support for international conservation. From 1989 through 2020, the Service provided more than 4,400 grants for international conservation totaling nearly \$360 million. Investments in projects with more than 700 partners in developing countries have resulted in more than \$500 million in additional non-Federal support for grant projects, more than doubling the impact of appropriated funding. In addition to the impact on wildlife conservation, these investments help set a positive tone for U.S. relations around the globe, including throughout the Western Hemisphere and across Africa and Eurasia.

International Conservation Strategies

Conserving Priority Species and Habitats across Landscapes



Forest elephants in Gabon. Credit: Alden Whittaker/USFWS

With mounting threats to wildlife and wild places across the globe, investing in protected areas and landscape-level conservation in collaboration with local communities serves as one of the most effective strategies to secure existing wildlife populations and ensure their future survival. Evidence from the scientific literature indicates that adequately staffed and resourced protected areas are linked to stable and increasing wildlife populations. The International Conservation facet of the Service's International Affairs Program has a well-established history of both supporting the creation of new protected areas as well as developing the human and financial capacity to effectively manage protected areas – ranging from supporting the

creation of the first community co-managed protected area in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and supporting the development of the national parks agency of Gabon, to strengthening community forest management in one of Central America's largest intact forest blocks in Belize, and mitigating human-wildlife conflict across mixed-use landscapes in Indonesia. This approach to conserving protected areas has been critical to the survival of the last remaining populations of great green macaws, forest elephants, and other species.

Through the International Affairs Program, the Service also coordinates the U.S. implementation of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, known as the Ramsar Convention or the Convention on Wetlands. This intergovernmental treaty provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the convention and wise use of wetlands and their resources. In this work, the Program designates wetlands of international importance that are, in part, critical as migratory stopover sites for species in a changing climate.

The Service's investment in landscape-level conservation, both domestically and internationally, ensures ecosystem integrity and defends against further degradation due to unregulated industries and an expanding human footprint. It exemplifies a One Health approach – with healthy habitats, supporting healthy wildlife populations, supporting healthy human communities, and vice versa. Protecting intact habitats also serves the critical function of staving off the negative impacts of climate change at both the local and global scale by conserving vital ecosystem services and some of the world's most valuable carbon sinks.

Africa Regional Program

Central Africa's Congo and Ogooué Basins make up the world's second-largest expanse of tropical forest cover. These forests provide habitat to an incredibly diverse array of wildlife and plants and represent a critical carbon sink. Central Africa's forests also provide a vital source of food, clean water, and other benefits to approximately 80 million people across the region. The Service benefits from more than three decades of experience working in Central Africa with foreign governments, multi-donor agencies, other U.S. government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. Building on this experience, a strategic, results-based vision for wildlife conservation in Central Africa was established that focuses on 1) improving site-based wildlife conservation in priority population strongholds in Central Africa; 2) increasing individual and institutional capacity for more effective wildlife protection at the local, national, and regional level, including the professionalization of protected area staff; and 3) directly addressing regional and emerging pressures on wildlife, including zoonotic disease and the unsustainable regional bushmeat trade. Through this program, the Service has achieved significant results, including a long-term government-to-government partnership with the new parks agency of Gabon; a series of seven of the Service's signature MENTOR fellowship programs, which have educated a total of 61 Fellows; and the stabilization of one of the largest remaining populations of critically endangered forest elephants, in Gabon and northern Republic of the Congo.

Latin America Regional Program

Latin America is the most biologically diverse region of the world and is critically important for wildlife conservation efforts in the Western Hemisphere and globally. It holds half of the world's tropical forests, 40 percent of the planet's available freshwater, and nearly 50 percent of the species known to science, making it Earth's richest genetic reservoir and a critical carbon sink for mitigating climate change. The U.S. and Latin America also share many species that depend on the region's unique ecosystems for their survival. Protecting wildlife and habitats in the Western Hemisphere is critical for regional stability, security, and economic prosperity.

The goal of the Latin America Regional Program is to conserve priority species and habitats in the region by reducing threats to key wildlife populations from wildlife trafficking, unsustainable resource use, and human–wildlife conflict. Competitive grants are the main vehicle the program employs to deliver financial and technical assistance to partners.

Through the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, the Service collaborates with the governments of Mexico and Canada to implement regional priorities like wildlife lawenforcement, CITES implementation, shared ecosystem conservation, conservation of species of concern, and migratory birds. The Trilateral is an important space for building relations between the three countries and improving resource management. In May of 2021, the U.S. hosted the 25th anniversary and first virtual annual meeting of the Trilateral Committee. Approximately 250 attendees participated, representing Federal and State government agencies, research and academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector from all three countries. Following a plenary on the Strategic Use of Ecosystem Restoration for the 21st Century, the participants spent the majority of the four-day meeting sharing information, coordinating efforts, and discussing priority topics in work groups. Productive discussions helped strengthen the working relationship between all three countries and led to an adoption of the following priority issues for next year’s meeting: Zoonotic Disease, Climate Change, Integrating Human Dimensions, Technology Innovation for Conservation, and Diversity and Inclusion.

In Mexico, the Service works with local and indigenous communities to protect key species and habitats, like jaguars, scarlet macaws, and monarch butterflies. In Central America, the Service supports partners to implement a regional strategy to conserve the five largest remaining intact forests, which are strongholds for species like jaguars and tapirs, and for mitigating climate change. In South America, the Service assists partners in the Tropical Andes, the Gran Chaco, and Patagonia to curb wildlife trade, reduce human-wildlife conflict, and protect key species. Through these projects, the Service aims to promote sound wildlife management practices that foster sustainable livelihoods for local communities and indigenous people. For example, the Service supports a community-led project to protect scarlet macaws in Honduras’ Moskitia region from trafficking, making it the largest community-based parrot conservation area in Latin America (around the size of the Grand Canyon National Park).

Eurasia Regional Program

Eurasia has a vast and diverse terrestrial and marine environment and is home to numerous iconic species, including tigers, elephants, rhinos, snow leopards, saiga antelopes, and Iberian lynx. The Service’s Eurasia

Saving the Last Great Forests for Wildlife and People



Addressing human-wildlife conflict is key to jaguar conservation. Credit: Wildlife Conservation Society

Studies show that illegal cattle ranching is responsible for more than 90 percent of forest loss in remaining wildlife strongholds in Central America. In addition to harboring wildlife, these forests generate important goods and services for people, including buffering against climate change. Since 2017, the Service has been supporting partners like civil society organizations, indigenous groups, and natural resource management agencies to implement a regional strategy in Central America to protect the region’s five largest remaining intact forest landscapes. This strategy recognizes the drivers of forest loss and commits to concrete actions to address them, and is an important step toward conserving these forests for wildlife and people.

Program works on shared conservation interests with countries across Europe and Asia, focused primarily on promoting technical exchanges and information sharing. The U.S. shares populations of wildlife species that migrate between the U.S. and Eurasia and partners with the relevant countries to share information and improve wildlife management.

Foundations for Evidenced-Based Decision-making

The Service's international financial assistance programs are emerging as agency leaders of evidence-based conservation. In support of the Evidence Act and the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act, the Service's International Affairs Program has pioneered methods and partnerships to establish clear, measurable goals against which progress and Service resources can be monitored and evaluated. For species and projects where Service support has been sustained, the agency is positioned to assess the cost-effectiveness and return-on-investment of its activities. For example, the Service has supported conservation of the highly threatened forest elephant since 1990. At surveyed sites across the region, a reported 60 percent of the current elephant population would not exist today if not for past Service funding and support.

International Affairs' emerging monitoring and evaluation protocol represents an important milestone to improve the agency's monitoring and evaluation of its foreign assistance, and is helping the Service meet important objectives described in Congressional legislation¹. For the foreign species under the International Affairs Program's purview, monitoring and evaluation often require expensive methods or long-time frames, or both, to credibly census and detect population trends. While recognizing these challenges, International Affairs is committed to an iterative approach to improving its practices. Active evaluation-related work includes collaborating with third parties to review and assess the evidence for the activities funded by the Service and building program and partner capacity to report results and outcomes.

International Wildlife Trade Strategies

Sustainable Use of Wildlife

The U.S. is one of the world's largest importers and exporters of wildlife and wildlife products and plays a significant role in the global legal wildlife trade, currently valued in billions of dollars annually. To facilitate legal and sustainable trade between the U.S. and the CITES members – currently 183 countries and the European Union (as of January 4, 2022, Andorra becomes the 184th party) – and to ensure this international trade does not threaten the survival of animals and plants in the wild, the Service is responsible for implementation of CITES in the U.S. Each Party to the agreement designates Management and Scientific Authorities to issue permits, make legal and scientific non-detriment findings, and monitor trade. For the U.S., these authorities are delegated to the Service's International Affairs Program.

CITES Implementation and Leadership

CITES provides the necessary framework to ensure scientific integrity and global cooperation in order to facilitate legal and sustainable trade and combat wildlife trafficking for over 35,000 species of wild plants and animals, which are listed on one of three Appendices. On an ongoing basis, the International Affairs Program implements the treaty by providing leadership for the U.S.'s engagement at CITES meetings,

¹ *Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016* (P.L. 114-191); and OMB memo (January 2018): M-18-04 "Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for Federal Departments and Agencies that Administer United States Foreign Assistance"

ensuring that U.S. exports and imports align with sustainable use of species in international trade, and supporting capacity-building efforts abroad for CITES implementation around the world.

Signatories to CITES, known as Parties, gather at a series of policy and technical meetings. Conference of the Parties (CoP) meetings, which take place every two to three years with the next one scheduled for this fiscal year, in November of 2022, provide an opportunity to promote evidence-based policymaking and strengthen diplomatic relations and collaborations. At these meetings, the Parties review the implementation of CITES, make decisions regarding the financing and function of the CITES Secretariat in Switzerland to enable it to carry out its functions, consider amendments to Appendices I and II, consider reports presented by the Secretariat, and adopt recommendations for the improved effectiveness of CITES. Any Party to CITES may propose amendments to Appendices I and II, resolutions, decisions, and other agenda items for consideration by all the Parties at the meeting.

In addition to the CoPs, the work of the Parties is also carried out through regular Committee meetings, which take place yearly between the CoPs. These include the Standing Committee, Animals Committee, and Plants Committee meetings. The Standing Committee provides general policy and operational direction to the Secretariat regarding CITES implementation and advises the other committees as appropriate. The Animals and Plants Committee meetings fill in the gaps in biological and other specialized knowledge. The committees undertake periodic reviews of listed species and advise when trade in a particular species may be unsustainable.

Throughout this work, the Service adheres to the principle of scientific objectivity and integrity and uses the best available scientific information and trade data to inform U.S. positions for technical meetings and making non-detriment findings.

The Service has always provided leadership at CITES CoPs and technical meetings, coordinated and supported through the International Affairs Program. At a previous CoP, this included encouraging Parties to consider climate change in their evaluations and scientific findings for CITES-listed species affected by both climate change and international trade.

The Service supports sustainable trade compliant with CITES in the U.S. through a variety of activities: administering the nation-wide permitting program, maintaining trade records, supporting law enforcement efforts in confiscations, monitoring trade levels, and updating U.S. regulations to comply with CITES policies. The Service has also focused on strengthening the capacity of partners in developing nations to implement the treaty in their own countries, play leadership roles in CITES decision-making, and improve the effectiveness of CITES as a whole. The International Affairs Program builds capacity abroad, and often in partnership with the CITES Secretariat, by providing technical assistance and financial assistance to improve the ability of other parties to implement CITES.



*Dr. Rosemarie Gnam, Chief of the Division of Scientific Authority, at the 18th Conference of the Parties to CITES, in Geneva, Switzerland.
Credit: Yula Kapetanakos/USFWS*

Supporting U.S. State, Tribal, and Local Economies through Conservation of Native Species

The international trade in CITES-listed native animal species such as bobcats, river otters, freshwater turtles, alligators, and plant species such as cacti and American ginseng, provides livelihoods for rural communities in the U.S. As an example of the value of this trade, from 2013 to 2018 the declared value of U.S. exports of skins from American alligators, bobcats, and river otters totaled more than \$790 million. The Service works to restore trust, reduce regulatory burden, and ensure that sustainable wildlife trade can remain an important part of our economy by working directly and closely with its partner State agencies to implement CITES for species of economic importance. Examples of this collaboration include assessing the status of native species impacted by trade, seeking input on CITES permit findings, facilitating participation on U.S. delegations to CITES meetings, and coordinating CITES export programs. Through the CITES Coordination Committee, the Service also works closely with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) to facilitate communication between State wildlife agencies and the Service's CITES authorities.

Wildlife trafficking undercuts legal trade and reduces populations of in-demand domestic species that are of significant economic value, threatening livelihoods for American communities. The Service's coordination of American ginseng conservation exemplifies how the Service works with States and Tribes to ensure conservation of America's natural resources. In 2020, the harvest of wild and wild simulated American ginseng roots exceeded 33,000 dried pounds, with most of this ginseng being legally exported to Asia. Harvesters ('diggers'), the first tier in the economic chain for the sale and export of American ginseng, received \$600 to \$1,000 a pound for dried wild American ginseng roots. Conservative estimates have placed the wholesale value of wild American ginseng roots at roughly \$26.9 million per year.² The Service is working with State and Tribal ginseng program officials in four American ginseng working groups (enforcement, biology, regulatory, and outreach) across 19 States to address issues and challenges associated with legal and sustainable trade in American ginseng. Each Working Group has identified needed steps to improve the sustainability of wild ginseng. In coordination with the States and Tribes, the Service is now working to support and implement measures that these working groups recommended.

Sustainable Use of Native Species alongside Conservation Supports Local Economies



American alligator at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. Credit: Steve Hillebrand/USFWS

Working with various stakeholders, the recovery of the American alligator, together with the transformation of U.S. industry practices, is a success story that illustrates how conservation and sustainable use can go hand-in-hand and can contribute to building our economy. Once hunted to near extinction, the American alligator made a full recovery due to collaboration between the Federal government, State wildlife agencies, local and Tribal communities, and the leather industry. Today, the management program for American alligators includes a sustainable harvest, supporting industry while also conserving the species and its habitat, which in turn benefits many other species of plants and animals. This collaborative approach can serve as a model to promote sustainable trade and conservation of other native species.

²<https://www.fws.gov/media/wild-american-ginseng-information-dealers-and-exporters>

Innovating and Improving a Responsive and Efficient Permitting Process

The Service's conservation permitting program managed through the International Affairs Program serves approximately 5,200 permit applicants and issues more than 30,000 permits per year under CITES and other permitting authorities. These permits facilitate more than \$675 million in legal wildlife trade annually and authorize a wide variety of activities, such as import, export, and re-export; captive breeding of non-native species; interstate commerce; and marine mammal research and public display.



Permits for biomedical research are instrumental in the fight against COVID-19. Credit: Pan American Health Organization

This permitting work supports individuals, businesses, scientific institutions, States, Tribes, and others, and is a strong component of the Service's work in helping to build back this Nation's economy. In addition, this work is a component of the Service's efforts to fight COVID-19 and other zoonotic diseases, as permits facilitate the import and export of biological samples needed for medical research, including studies on COVID-19 and preventing future outbreaks of other zoonotic diseases.

Another way the Service supports research on zoonotic disease, in addition to potential

impacts of climate change, is through its authorizations and agreements related to marine mammal research, rescue, and rehabilitation activities. For example, the Service's International Affairs Program works with its State, Federal, and private partners to ensure that responses to marine mammal unusual mortality events, strandings, and related research activities are in compliance with the MMPA and ESA. The Service has jurisdiction and authority for implementing the MMPA with respect to the polar bear, walrus, sea otters, the marine otter, manatees, and the dugong, and International Affairs has delegated authority for authorizing activities such as take and import of marine mammals under the MMPA and ESA.

In 2020, the Service launched the first phase of ePermits, a new electronic permitting system that enables permit applicants to apply for their permits online. Multiple Service programs worked together to bring ePermits to fruition and more are joining as the phased rollout gains momentum. Once it is fully operational, this system will streamline the permit application process while improving efficiency and reducing the regulatory burden associated with legal, sustainable trade, and other wildlife use. To date, applicants can submit their applications online and now pay application fees through [pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov), reducing the dependence on regular mail and eliminating data entry errors when mailed applications had to be entered and checks manually processed. We are currently digitizing more sections of the over 60 application forms to facilitate application submission, review, and permit issuance, as well as developing reporting functionality to capture annual and periodic reports required under the terms of many issued permits. ePermits has also been identified as part of E.O. 14058 Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government, where we have identified five high volume use permits and will digitize additional parts. Eventually, ePermits will allow permit processors to harness the power of the data for decision-making, which will provide opportunities for refocusing personnel from administrative record keeping to processing additional permits. Under the FY 2023 budget, the International Affairs Program will use \$5 million, an increase of \$2 million, to build and improve ePermits.

In reviewing permit applications, the Service uses the best available biological information to make

findings, as required by Service regulations, such as whether the trade in CITES-listed species may be detrimental to their survival, or whether it will enhance the survival of species listed under the ESA. Decisions on whether to issue permits are frequently made in close consultation with foreign CITES authorities, State wildlife agencies and Tribes, other Federal agencies, the CITES Secretariat, other relevant experts, and applicants.

Cross Program Strategies

Combating Wildlife Trafficking

Conserving species impacted by wildlife trafficking is vitally important to wildlife as well as people. Wildlife trafficking is a multibillion-dollar transnational crime that involves the unlawful harvest of and international trade in animals and plants or parts and products derived thereof. Organized crime syndicates are well structured, often violent, and capable of moving large volumes of poached wildlife and wildlife products. As such, illegal wildlife trade threatens biodiversity, national security, and economic prosperity by depleting natural resource assets and revenues, driving numerous species of economic and ecosystem value to the brink of extinction.

The Service's International Affairs Program works to counter wildlife trafficking worldwide through a two-fold approach. First, with funds from the Service's program on International Wildlife Trade, International Affairs advances laws and policies related to wildlife trade and trafficking. As the U.S. Management and Scientific Authority of CITES, International Affairs implements the treaty, advancing global policy that supports legal trade and sustainable use of wildlife and combats illegal trade. Since 2016, the International Affairs Program has worked with the Office of Law Enforcement to represent the Department of the Interior as a co-chair on the interagency Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking. Bringing together 17 Federal departments and agencies, the Task Force serves as the primary Federal platform for coordination and priority-setting for a whole-of-government approach to wildlife trafficking. Through the Task Force, the Service helps implement the Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act, providing support to develop and advance anti-trafficking strategies at U.S. Embassies in countries identified as significant source, transit, or destination locations for the illegal wildlife trade.



Cheetahs are one of the focal species of the Combating Wildlife Trafficking financial assistance program. Credit: Ronda Gregario/Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute

Second, with funds from the Service's program on International Conservation, the Service's International Affairs Program provides financial and technical assistance to support on-the-ground conservation actions for species primarily threatened by illegal trade and for building capacity among emerging conservation leaders working on these issues. The Service especially supports efforts focused on understanding and addressing human behaviors along the illicit supply chain, including consumer demand – the ultimate driver of wildlife trafficking. Since 2016, grants and cooperative agreements have supported 55 field partners in more than 40 countries, advancing cutting-edge work such as piloting the use of African giant pouched rats

to detect pangolin scales and hardwoods in shipping containers, and mapping emerging supply chains for lion bone.



Saiga. Credit: Daniel Rosengren

The Service is also increasingly investing in the conservation of international species experiencing profound, rapid declines largely due to wildlife trafficking, and for which strategic seed funding the Service has the potential to catalyze transformational recovery for the species. Initial support for saiga antelope, a flagship species of the Central Asian and Mongolian steppe, has resulted in enhanced community conservation and engagement and an increase in the saiga population at the Ustyurt plateau in Kazakhstan from 1,270 in 2016 to 5,900 in

2019. Finally, investments in capacity building have sponsored more than 40 professionals from Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean to graduate from the CITES Master's Course; graduates are part of a growing cadre of experts leading CITES implementation efforts, and often become leads for their respective country's CITES Authority.

Partnerships to Advance Shared Conservation Goals

Working with others towards shared conservation goals is a theme that runs throughout the Service's international work. Whether it is assisting the California Fish and Game Department to address the illegal trade in *Dudleya* succulents; collaborating with officials from the Government of Oman and colleagues from the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to achieve conservation goals for shared marine turtle species; coordinating with Canada and Mexico to manage shared wildlife species; engaging with zoo staff to strategize how captive rhinos and outreach programs in the U.S. can contribute to the survival of wild rhinos; working with JetBlue Airlines to create an in-flight video to raise awareness about the need to preserve the beauty of the Caribbean; or collaborating with the U.S. Postal Service to raise funds for international wildlife conservation through sales of the Save Vanishing Species semipostal stamp – the Service's past and current partnerships increase the impact and reach of our work and establish the Service as a trusted and respected partner in wildlife conservation around the globe.

Preventing Spillover and Spread of Zoonotic Disease

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the interconnections between wildlife, environmental and human health, and the role of conservation in supporting resilient ecosystems that buffer both humans and wildlife from zoonotic disease spillover. Zoonotic diseases (also known as zoonoses) are caused by pathogens that spread between animals and people. The most effective and efficient way to prevent the next pandemic is to prevent the initial spillover event from wildlife to people at its source. With its ability to influence on-the-ground international wildlife conservation and international wildlife trade through experience, expertise, authorities, and partnerships, the Service's International Affairs Program is the U.S. Government's primary frontline defense for stopping zoonotic spillover and spread before zoonoses leave wild areas abroad.

With support from the International Wildlife Trade and International Conservation programs, the Service

works closely with international partners and through treaties to apply a range of evidence-based approaches to reduce the spread of zoonoses, including:

- *Increasing protections against disease through permitting:* Through the International Affairs Program, the Service administers the injurious wildlife permitting provisions of the Lacey Act. In anticipation of additional species potentially being listed as injurious in the FY 2023, the Service will play a larger role in preventing the spread of zoonotic diseases through expanding these permitting provisions. In addition, the Service plans to expand its current capacity to assess risk in its permit evaluations for CITES-listed species that may carry disease and to examine permitting conditions related to importing and exporting high-risk pathogens.
- *Combating illegal wildlife trade:* Illegal wildlife trade poses a high risk of disease spread given the covert, unsanitary methods of trafficking animals, and has been linked to the spread of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19 and Avian flu. Through serving as the U.S. Management and Scientific Authorities for CITES, engaging with interagency co-chairs on the Presidential Task Force for Wildlife Trafficking, and funding partners to carry out on-the-ground conservation actions to combat wildlife trafficking, the Service aids in both halting current disease spread and reducing the risk of future outbreaks via illegal wildlife trade.
- *Conserving intact ecosystems with connected habitat and healthy wildlife populations:* The International Affairs Program supports projects in Africa, Eurasia, and Latin America to improve wildlife health and habitat such as support for surveillance, research, and efforts to mitigate the spread of zoonotic disease. These efforts help maintain healthy, intact ecosystems that prevent habitat fragmentation and disturbance, a key driver of infectious disease emergence, as well as manage healthy and resilient wildlife populations.
- *Supporting effective protected area management:* The Service's approach to protected area management expands beyond park boundaries to include local communities and buffer zones, thereby supporting the capacity and good governance needed to reduce and respond to existing and emerging diseases. For example, the International Affairs Program supports project partners to understand and address the impacts of transhumance (the regular movement of farmers and their livestock in order to access seasonally available resources), including disease transmission, in and around high-value conservation areas in Africa's Sudano-Sahel.
- *Forming partner networks to navigate complex disease threats:* Through supporting monitoring, data collection, and efforts to understand the drivers of threats to wildlife and linkages to human health, International Affairs' financial assistance programs enhance the U.S. Government's collective ability to reduce disease spread. These efforts include multi-partner initiatives that engage in innovative research, information sharing, developing an evidence base for policy- and decision-makers, and targeted behavior change strategies to understand and reduce emerging threats, including disease.
- *Building capacity among conservation leaders:* The Service supports emerging professionals to engage in MENTOR programs, the CITES Master's Course, and other professional development opportunities. These programs build effective, equipped wildlife conservationists who lead their communities and countries in creatively tackling conservation challenges and implementing international treaties like CITES.
- *One Health approach through collaboration:* The Service takes a One Health approach to reducing zoonotic disease risk by bringing wildlife and ecosystem health to the table when working closely with other U.S. agencies and external partners with expertise in human health and other aspects of animal and environmental health. Coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal

and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), USGS, and others advances a synchronized system for reviewing and permitting wildlife imports and exports in compliance with U.S. and international regulations. Close communication and collaboration with the State Department, USAID, Department of Justice, Forest Service, NOAA, and others enable a “One US Government” approach to combating wildlife trafficking. Partnerships with USAID, USGS, and other agencies enhance technical and financial assistance to support external conservation partners implementing projects globally to conserve species and their habitats and mitigate the risk of zoonotic spillover and transmission.

FWS International Affairs activities funded through the American Rescue Plan Act

- The International Conservation program is:
 - Providing financial and technical assistance that helps prevent future zoonotic disease pandemics by investing in healthy wildlife and habitats and reducing high-risk interactions between humans and wildlife. It plans to launch MENTOR-Bat, the most recent program in its signature MENTOR series, to develop an interdisciplinary, global, One Health-focused team to address the role of bats – in terms of ecosystem health, commercial markets, cultural perceptions, and potential disease spillover – and develop policy actions for bat conservation. MENTOR-Bat is expected to start in FY22 and may extend into FY24. (\$1M; P.L. 117-2, Sec. 6003 (a) (3))
- The International Wildlife Trade program is:
 - Working with the Service’s Office of Law Enforcement and other partners to support the design and implementation of a wildlife and zoonotic disease surveillance system across the U.S. ports of entry, and to facilitate processing of permit applications for international trade related to zoonotic disease research and reducing the spread of disease. This work is expected to start in FY22 and to extend beyond FY23. (\$1M; P.L. 117-2, Sec. 6003 (a) (1))
 - Implementing regulatory permitting requirements for additional injurious species listed by Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) under Title 18 of the Lacey Act. This will include identifying high-risk species in international trade that might carry disease, training biologists or hiring staff with biosafety and zoonotic disease expertise to develop possible mitigation/protocols and requirements for the non-commercial import of these injurious species, and conducting outreach and customer service to permit applicants. This work will build on FAC’s work and is expected to start in FY23. (\$3.5M; P.L. 117-2, Sec. 6003 (b))

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will enable the International Affairs Program to continue to:

- Work with partners around the world to increase transparency and accountability in technical and financial assistance programs for the conservation of species of international concern and their habitats.
- Combat wildlife trafficking through international cooperation and technical and financial assistance programs that focus on species conservation and successful implementation of CITES.
- Support the Service’s work to lead the U.S. at the 19th Conference of the Parties to CITES and follow-through implementation on species decisions and outcomes taken there.
- Advance implementation of CITES and other U.S. wildlife laws domestically and ensure international wildlife trade does not threaten the survival of animals and plants in the wild through decision-making based on robust science.
- Increase the Service’s capacity to address its permit processing workload and become more efficient in permitting through additional enhancements to ePermits.

- Develop solutions to securely eliminate the need for paper-based CITES permitting.
- Prevent the development and spread of zoonotic diseases.
- Develop and implement tools to address and adapt to the impacts of climate change on wildlife and habitats.
- Enhance foundations for evidence-based decision-making.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for International Affairs is \$31,815,000 and 94 FTE, a net program change of +\$8,233,000 and +9 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

CITES Secure Paperless Permitting Modernization (+\$2,500,000/ +0 FTE) -- Separate from and in addition to the base development and administration of the ePermits system (as discussed below), the Service needs to modernize beyond the current paper delivery requirements for CITES permitting and needs to develop the necessary software to create a secure system so that CITES permits can be issued electronically.

The commitment of resources to expand and modernize our permitting program and tools supports U.S. businesses engaged in legal, sustainable trade and reduces administrative burdens. Many industries have the technology to “scan” a permit, ticket, or barcode that indicates authorization or approval for a requested activity. Other countries that implement CITES have more modern capabilities. The goal is for the U.S. to have security measures in place that would allow the Service to electronically issue CITES permits.

The Service recently launched the base ePermit system to electronically accept and process permit applications and issue permits, but International Affairs is still required to print hard copies of CITES permits on printers located in the Service’s headquarters and to mail those hard copies to permit applicants. These methods are necessary for the Service to comply with CITES requirements for the use of special security paper and other security protocols.

Development of software to provide an electronic alternative to CITES security requirements and enable permittees to view their permits onscreen will reduce processing time and will deliver permits to applicants quickly, efficiently, and economically. This software will be integrated into the ePermit system.

Wildlife Disease and One Health (+\$1,825,000/ +0 FTE) –

This funding will enhance the Service’s integration of a One Health approach to address zoonotic disease, wildlife trade, and the conservation of wildlife and their habitats, both domestically and internationally. It will support projects to improve wildlife and habitat health and ecosystem resilience in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including in regions that are hotspots for zoonotic disease. Additionally, by strengthening U.S. permitting processes for injurious species and biomedical materials and supporting capacity building with CITES Parties, the Service will reduce the risk of international wildlife trade being a source of zoonotic disease transmission. The Service will also use this funding to engage in outreach and communication with the American public and global external partners to build awareness about the important role that wildlife conservation plays in preventing the spillover and spread of zoonotic disease and promote human behaviors that support healthy ecosystems and safe, legal wildlife trade.

International Conservation Capacity (+\$1,875,000/ +2 FTE): This includes:

- \$1,225,000 for enhancing financial assistance, including conservation in Latin America, which is the most biologically diverse region of the globe, harboring half of the world's tropical forests, 40 percent of the planet's available freshwater, and nearly half of all species known to science. Protecting and conserving wildlife and ecosystems in Latin America is critical for regional security and economic prosperity. While the focus will primarily be the Western Hemisphere, the program will address conservation issues of imminent concern throughout the world. The projects will support conservation goals that address climate change, support local economies, and improve environmental justice. These projects may include:
 - Conserving shared species of importance for the U.S. and Mexico, such as the Monarch butterfly and the California condor.
 - Bolstering conservation of key habitats, like tropical forests, to protect these stronghold for critical species, like the jaguar, scarlet macaw, and tapir, and adapt to climate change.
 - Promoting sound wildlife management practices and fostering sustainable livelihoods for local communities, indigenous people, and underrepresented groups (women, Afro-descendants, etc.) in the region.
- **\$650,000** to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of its international conservation efforts and increase transparency, accountability, and oversight in technical and financial assistance programs. Efforts support evidence-building activities and evaluation capacity, as directed by the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATTA) of 2016, and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) of 2018. Recognizing the inherent challenges in evaluating wildlife conservation efforts, the Service is employing an iterative approach: First, by developing quantifiable, measurable outcome measures and associated monitoring methods; later by providing technical assistance to grant programs and managing evaluation and evidence-related contracts, grants, and funding opportunities; and representing its programs and the Service to partners on these issues. This will support an Evaluation Officer, one additional staff member, and other resources to implement the effort.

Permitting Modernization (ePermits) (+\$2,000,000/ +0 FTE) -- ePermits, the Service's modernized permitting system, is in year three of a five year project plan. The 2023 budget sustains ongoing development supports new initiatives that are dependent upon completion of current phases, and supports system operations and maintenance. Specifically, the requested increase will:

- Support operations and management, including addressing improvements and adjustments, and minor enhancements (ongoing);
- Improve the e-permit system User Interface for easier access and use by applicants; and
- Streamline the permitting process for applicants and processors to simplify both the permittees' application process and the mechanisms by which processors examine and address permit applications and communicate with applicants. This may also involve integration with other agencies' review processes and permissions.

Addressing Permit Application Workload and Reducing Processing Backlog (+\$1,200,000/ +7 FTE)— This provides additional personnel to address the regular permitting workload and to reduce the permitting backlog and overall permit processing times. The program receives approximately 5,000 permit applications per year and those applications result in 25,000 – 35,000 permits issued each year. Nearly half

of the approximately 2,200 applications currently pending are considered in backlog. Reducing the time it takes to obtain import, export, and re-export permits facilitates trade in wildlife and plants necessary for commercial businesses and, economically beneficial research, including on COVID-19 and other zoonotic diseases.

Baseline Capacity (+\$383,000/ +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$383,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Arctic Council Support (-\$550,000/ +0 FTE)— The budget does not request funding as the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council has ended.

Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize (-\$1,000,000/ +0 FTE)— The budget does not request funding for this program.

Fish and Aquatic Conservation

Fish and Aquatic Conservation

Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
National Fish Hatchery Operations	(\$000) FTE	65,551 332	65,551 332	+1,696 0	0 0	+16,223 +48	83,470 380	+17,919 +48
Maintenance and Equipment	(\$000) FTE	25,822 64	25,822 64	+289 0	0 0	+23,724 +20	49,835 84	+24,013 +20
Aquatic Habitatand Species Conservation	(\$000) FTE	115,240 293	115,240 293	+1,907 0	0 0	+9,962 +22	127,109 315	+11,869 +22
Total, Fish and Aquatic Conservation	(\$000) FTE	206,613 689	206,613 689	+3,892 0	0 0	+49,909 +90	260,414 779	+53,801 +90

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Fish and Aquatic Conservation

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Deferred Maintenance	+15,000	+0
• Hatchery Operations	+12,898	+38
• Annual Maintenance	+7,885	+20
• Fish Technology and Health Centers	+5,000	+10
• Prevention	+4,048	+15
• Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Fund/Team	+2,600	+5
• Baseline Capacity	+2,763	+0
• Population Assessment and Cooperative Management	+2,218	+3
• National Fish Habitat Action Plan	+1,000	-8
• Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions	+615	+0
• Truckee River Operating Agreement	+200	+0
• National Fish Passage Program	+0	+8
• Pacific Salmon Treaty	-150	-0
• Hydrilla, Eel and Milfoil Invasive Grasses	-200	-0
• Snakehead Eradication	-250	-0
• Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership	-400	-0
• Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey	-818	-1
• Yukon River Salmon Agreement	-1,000	-0
• Pacific Salmon Treaty	-1,500	-0
Program Changes	+49,909	+90

Program Mission

The Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) program works with partners and the public to conserve fish and other aquatic resources for the continuing benefit of the American people. For over 150 years, the Service has provided economic and ecological benefits through the conservation of aquatic species and habitats. Since its inception as the United States Commission on Fish and Fisheries in 1871, the Service’s Fisheries Program has worked collaboratively with Native American Tribes, States,

landowners, and other partners and stakeholders to achieve the goals of healthy, self-sustaining populations of fish and other aquatic species, and the conservation or restoration of their habitats. Building on this foundation, the FAC program will work closely with our partners in FY 2023 to implement the ambitious conservation goals established by Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, and Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful. The FAC program focuses on restoring and retaining connected freshwater ecosystems to provide habitat for aquatic species and foster resiliency to effects of climate change.

Program Elements

The Fish and Aquatic Conservation program is comprised of the following program elements:

- National Fish Hatchery System Operations – propagates healthy, genetically diverse aquatic species to help re-establish wild populations, conducts applied scientific research, monitors and diagnoses aquatic animal health in captivity and in the wild, and develops management models to conserve fisheries in the face of climate change.
- Maintenance and Equipment – maintains property and equipment, including the repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of constructed assets, for 85 National Fish Hatchery System facilities and a National network of 51 Fisheries Offices (FOs). The Service’s ability to accomplish its mission and ensure the safety of employees and visitors is dependent upon the condition of key assets associated with water delivery, aquatic species propagation, and effluent management.
- Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation – works to assess, conserve, and restore aquatic habitats and some of the Nation’s most iconic fish and other aquatic species. This work conducted by FOs includes initiatives to conserve aquatic species, support climate adaptation, and build resiliency. Specific program areas include:

- *Habitat Assessment and Restoration* – improves habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms through programs such as the National Fish Passage Program and the National Fish Habitat Partnership.
- *Population Assessment and Cooperative Management* – works in cooperation with Federal, Tribal, and State partners to understand current and emerging challenges facing our Nation’s aquatic resources, to proactively manage these complex systems, and to monitor and evaluate the impacts of conservation actions.
- *Aquatic Invasive Species* – prevents and controls the introduction and spread of invasive species, a primary threat to the Nation’s natural resources. The FOs conduct the work through leadership of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, Injurious Wildlife Listings, and national invasive species education campaigns.

Economic Benefits

The economic value of fisheries conservation is substantial and well documented. The Service’s 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation reported that 35.8 million U.S. residents over 15 years old went on 383 million fishing trips, totaling 459 million days afield, and spent more than \$46.1 billion.

The positive environmental, social, and economic effects stemming from the Service’s work are of growing importance to communities nationwide, as the health and well-being of Americans are linked to the health and well-being of nature. Americans illustrated the link between their health and well-

being and a healthy functioning aquatic environment in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, fishing license sales increased by 38 percent. These new anglers were younger, more ethnically diverse, and more urban than existing anglers. Fishing and other aquatic-based recreational opportunities are multi-cultural, multi-generational experiences that improve the quality of life for diverse American families and generate substantial economic returns for local communities. These outdoor recreational opportunities depend on the Service's vital work to conserve fisheries and our Nation's diverse aquatic habitats.



Fishing license fees, taxes on sport fishing equipment, electric outboard boat motors, and motorboat fuel all support conservation and restoration. Photo credit: USFWS

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

The Service's Fish and Aquatic Conservation program is authorized by a wide range of statutes, treaties, compacts, court orders, mitigation agreements, and cooperative agreements. Relevant statutes include, but are not limited to:

- *The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956* (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j) — establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.
- *The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act* (16 U.S.C. 661-666(e)) — directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- *The Endangered Species Act* (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544) — prohibits the import, export, or taking of fish and wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species; provides for adding species to and removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species; and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery.
- *The Mitchell Act* (16 U.S.C. 755-757) — authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to carry on activities for the conservation of fishery resources in the Columbia River Basin.
- *The Colorado River Storage Project Act* (43 U.S.C. 620) — provides that facilities will be built and operated to mitigate losses of, and improve conditions for, fish and wildlife in connection with the Colorado River Storage Project.
- *The Sikes Act* (16 U.S.C. 670a-670o) — directs the Secretary of Defense to conserve and rehabilitate natural resources on military installations and requires the military to work with the Service in preparing integrated natural resource management plans.
- *The Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention and Control Act*, as amended by the *National Invasive Species Act*, (NISA, 16 U.S.C. 4701 et seq.) — authorizes the Service to develop and implement a program to prevent and control infestations of zebra mussels and other nonindigenous aquatic invasive species in waters of the United States.
- *The Lacey Act Amendment*, (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378) — provides that the Secretary designate injurious wildlife and ensure the humane treatment of wildlife shipped to the United States.
- *America's Conservation Enhancement Act*, (16 U.S.C. 8201 et seq.) — Title II encourages partnerships among public agencies and other interested persons to promote fish conservation.

Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation
Subactivity: National Fish Hatchery System Operations

		2021 Actual	2022 CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
National Fish Hatchery	(\$000)	65,551	65,551	+1,696	0	+16,223	83,470	+17,919
Operations	FTE	332	332	0	0	+48	380	+48

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for National Fish Hatchery System Operations

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Hatchery Operations	+12,898	+38
• Fish Technology and Health Centers	+5,000	+10
• Baseline Capacity	+1,225	+0
• Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership	-400	0
• Yukon River Salmon Agreement	-1,000	0
• Pacific Salmon Treaty	-1,500	0
Program Changes	+16,223	+48

Program Overview

The National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) consists of 71 National Fish Hatcheries, one historic National Fish Hatchery, six Fish Health Centers, seven Fish Technology Centers, and the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership Program. The NFHS operates under the authority of numerous treaties and consent decrees, statutes, and recovery and restoration plans.

The Service’s 71 propagation hatcheries raise over 100 million fish each year to aid in the recovery of threatened and endangered species, restore imperiled species, mitigate the impact of Federal water development projects, and enhance recreational fishing opportunities for the American public. Hatcheries are increasingly called on to sustain and rear a wide range of other aquatic species due to the growing impacts of habitat fragmentation and degradation, invasive species, and climate change. A national network of highly skilled Fish Health and Fish Technology Centers support hatcheries by conducting applied scientific research to advance the understanding of these species and refine propagation and stocking programs.

In 2021, 71 species of fish and 58 other aquatic species, such as endangered freshwater mussels, were propagated and distributed from the Service’s NFHS facilities. These facilities also implemented 315 recovery actions called for in approved Recovery Plans and Biological Opinions, benefitting 92 federally listed species and providing refugia for 33 listed species facing catastrophic events such as wildfires, droughts, or floods. To help avoid further declines and Endangered Species Act listings, NFHS facilities worked closely with FAC partners to implement Fisheries Management Plans and other



Endangered freshwater mussels. Photo credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

agreements, benefitting at least 59 at-risk species.

National Fish Hatcheries’ proximity to waterways and connections with local communities make them well positioned to promote administration priorities and the America the Beautiful initiative by increasing equitable recreational angling opportunities for a diverse public in both nature-rich and nature-deprived communities.

Fish Health Centers



Scientists from the Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center, Washington, conduct genetics, fish health, and DNA testing. Photo credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

Our six Fish Health Centers (Health Centers) are the hub of the Service’s aquatic animal health program. Aquatic animal health professionals at Health Centers detect, monitor, and mitigate disease-causing pathogens that threaten aquatic species. Their findings inform decisions that improve the health of captive fishes at Federal, Tribal and State hatcheries along with fish populations in the wild.

Working closely with State and Tribal partners via programs like the National Wild Fish Health Survey, Health Centers help maintain the health of native fish populations important to local communities, subsistence harvest, and recreation. To help prevent the introduction and spread of dangerous aquatic pathogens, fish health professionals investigate emerging health issues, such as invasive species that can be vectors for disease. The Health Centers are also an integral part of the Nation’s aquatic animal health testing system: the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. This network of standardized testing facilities serves as the preeminent source of information on the status of aquatic animal pathogens in the wild and facilitates interstate and international commerce of aquatic animals, while protecting the natural resources of the U.S.

Fish Technology Centers

Fish Technology Centers (Tech Centers) provide the scientific foundation for recovery and restoration programs and enable fisheries professionals to carry out their work more effectively. The seven Tech Centers conduct practical research in animal culture biology, genetics, ecological physiology, nutrition, biometrics and modeling, and cryopreservation for application in aquatic resource management. The knowledge gained through Tech Centers informs and benefits conservation, the aquaculture industry and other fish propagation efforts. Tech Center staff have

Expanding Collaborative Conservation Through Fish Technology

The Service is committed to collaborating in a broad-scale program to restore native prey species to the Great Lakes, including targeted research, monitoring and assessment, and captive propagation of *Coregonus* species. Restoring these native prey species can improve the success of the Service’s Lake Trout restoration efforts and thwart the deleterious ecologic effects of invasive species. Production of Bloater by the Lamar Fish Technology Center and other State, Federal and Provincial hatcheries is an essential element of the native prey restoration plan for Lake Ontario. The Lamar FTC is conducting research on improved broodstock diets for multiple *Coregonus* species. The collaborative project includes fish health support and targeted research to improve and assess survival and fitness of hatchery reared fish. The Service’s research activities are carried out with many partners, including the U.S. Geological Survey and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.



published more than 1,000 papers in peer-reviewed journals over the last 30 years, covering a broad range of scientific fish conservation challenges and findings to support the conservation of aquatic resources across the Nation.

Aquatic Animal Health

The Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership (AADAP) program ensures Service compliance of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and helps maintain the health and fitness of fish reared at Service hatcheries.



A hatchery volunteer helps a student learn how to fish. Photo credit: USFWS

AADAP works with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), other Federal and State agencies, Tribes, academic institutions, and private partners to obtain FDA approval of safe and effective new drugs needed for aquaculture and fisheries management. AADAP is the only program in the country singularly focused on obtaining critically needed new drugs for use in aquatic species. AADAP is comprised of four sub-programs: the National Investigational New Animal Drug (INAD), Research, New Animal Drug Approval (NADA), and Outreach programs. These programs provide Federal, State, Tribal, and private fish culturists and fish health professionals legal access to 19 aquaculture drugs currently in the drug approval process and conducts studies to evaluate the safety and efficacy of aquaculture drugs critical to the health and fitness of captive and wild fish populations. AADAP assists drug sponsors in navigating the new animal drug approval process, and provide fisheries professionals with up-to-date information about existing and pending drug approvals as well as extensive drug use guidance information. By helping to ensure the health and survival of fish introduced to the wild for restoration, recovery, and recreational purposes and increasing production and economic returns of fish reared in industry aquaculture, AADAP supports the implementation of America the Beautiful, Build Back Better, Climate Change, and Goals 1 and 2 of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan Framework.

Recreation and Education

Hatcheries are integral parts of the communities in which they are located, providing opportunities for the public to visit hatcheries to learn about the Service's work to propagate and conserve fish and their habitats through collaborative conservation. For generations, the Service has engaged families and local communities to instill a love of the outdoors and a strong conservation ethic in tomorrow's leaders. Through the National Fish Hatchery Volunteer Act of 2006, Service hatcheries offer volunteer opportunities and education programs that provide hands-on experiences and opportunities for discovery to enhance the public's understanding of America's unique and diverse aquatic species and habitats. In 2021, despite the severe impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, 734 youth and adults still managed to contribute 57,000 volunteer hours (the equivalent of 25 FTEs), assisting biologists in a variety of hands-on resource management activities. Twenty-two Friends Groups, composed of local volunteers, organized to support the NFHS in the Regions and helped coordinate volunteers and businesses in local communities to assist with NFHS facility operations, special events, and outdoor classrooms for youth.

The Service works to promote equity and justice by building the next generation of conservation and community leaders through youth engagement activities, exposing youth to conservation careers, and targeting under-represented groups in urban centers, minorities and women. This is accomplished through various programs, including Pathways and the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). Youth engagement and introductions to FAC careers also include educational programs that connect youth

directly with FAC staff on and off site. This includes school and community career days, Fish in the Classroom lessons, and hatchery tours to encourage the public to take advantage of recreational activities on hatchery grounds.

Mitigation

The Service conducts mitigation programs under the broad authorities of the *Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956*, the *Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act*, as well as authorities for specific Federal water development projects to promote the sustainable use of natural resources while also supporting local communities and economies. The Service propagates fish at its hatcheries to mitigate the impacts of Federal water development projects on fisheries that are important for recreation and Tribal sustenance. Water development agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tennessee Valley Authority, Bureau of Reclamation, National Marine Fisheries Service and the Bonneville Power Administration contribute funds towards these mitigation propagation programs.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Support work to propagate healthy, genetically diverse aquatic species to help sustain wild populations, fulfill Tribal trust responsibilities, and develop new scientific tools to advance conservation of threatened, endangered, and imperiled species; and
- Support the Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad to address climate change and its impacts to aquatic species.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for National Fish Hatcheries Operations is \$83,470,000 and 380 FTE, a net program change of +\$16,223,000 and +48 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Hatchery System Operations Activities (+\$12,898,000/ +38 FTE) – This request will focus on propagating fish and other aquatic species to carry out Tribal trust responsibilities and sustain wild populations, many of which are increasingly threatened by climate change. Funding will enable the Service to implement additional actions to help prevent the further decline of at-risk species and reduce the need for Endangered Species Act listings. In addition, these funds will help further refine hatchery propagation methods. The America the Beautiful initiative calls for a decade-long effort to support locally led and voluntary conservation and restoration efforts across public, private, and Tribal lands and waters in order to create jobs and strengthen the economy's foundation; tackle the climate and nature crises; and address inequitable access to the outdoors. These increases support this effort and contribute to the America the Beautiful effort by supporting tribally led conservation and restoration priorities and expanding collaborative conservation of fish and wildlife habitats and corridors.

Fish Health and Technology Centers (+\$5,000,000/ +10 FTE) – This request will enhance our ability to perform scientific research and analysis by increasing staffing. This will allow for increased services and applied research to mitigate disease-causing pathogens that threaten aquatic species, evaluate the impacts of climate change on the Nation's aquatic ecosystems, and improve the effectiveness of our conservation efforts in response to climate change and other threats facing our native species.

Baseline Capacity (+\$1,225,000/ +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$1,225,000 in this

program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership (-\$400,000/ -0 FTE) – The Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership will prioritize work with other Federal agencies, along with State and industry partners, to pursue U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval of safe and effective new drugs needed for aquaculture and fisheries management.

Yukon River Salmon Agreement (-\$1,000,000/ -0 FTE) – The budget includes a reduction in funding for this agreement, which is a pass-through to the State of Alaska. The Service will use funds to address other priority hatchery projects.

Pacific Salmon Treaty (-\$1,500,000/ -0 FTE) – The budget reduced funding for Pacific Salmon Treaty to preserve funding for higher priority work within Hatchery Operations.

Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation
Subactivity: Maintenance and Equipment

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Maintenance and Equipment	(\$000)	25,822	25,822	289	0	+23,724	49,835	+24,013
	FTE	64	64	0	0	+20	84	+20

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Maintenance and Equipment

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Deferred Maintenance	+15,000	+0
• Annual Maintenance	+7,885	+20
• Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions	+615	+0
• Baseline Capacity	+224	+0
Program Changes	+23,724	+20

Program Overview

The Service’s National Fish Hatcheries produce fish and other aquatic species to meet recovery and restoration goals for threatened and imperiled species, enhance recreational angling access and opportunities through collaborative conservation, and provide equitable public access to hatchery facilities for recreation and education. Properly functioning infrastructure is essential to fish production and to the safety of Service employees and visitors. The propagation process requires a complex life-sustaining system of wells, pumps, pipelines, filters, and heating/cooling equipment to deliver a consistent, well-oxygenated water supply; tanks, ponds, and raceways to grow fish; and boats and trucks to transport this valuable cargo to its destination. While every piece of this infrastructure must be well maintained to prevent mortality and meet production goals, a comprehensive asset management system prioritizes adequate water flow and quality to sustain captive aquatic populations to meet recovery, restoration, and Tribal trust responsibilities.

National Fish Hatchery System Maintenance and Equipment

The NFHS’s unique ability to promote collaborative conservation, balance resource use and local economies, and contribute to building and fueling a better future is dependent on operational facilities. Maintenance and equipment funds allow the Service to provide timely upkeep of hatchery property and equipment; purchase maintenance-related supplies; and repair, rehabilitate, or replace constructed assets. The Service’s ability to accomplish its mission is largely determined by the condition of key assets associated with water delivery, aquatic species culture, and effluent management. These assets deliver, treat, and discharge water from hatcheries and regulate the environment to maximize and optimize survival of aquatic organism to promote ecosystem health, and sustainable use of resources. The reliability of all these assets is critically important with respect to threatened and endangered species, with three-fourths of the NFHS’ \$3.5 billion of real property assets considered as mission-critical water management assets.

Since deferred maintenance needs of the FAC program are not eligible to receive funding under Great American Outdoors Act, maintenance needs for the aging hatchery system remain reliant on

discretionary funding. The application of this discretionary funding to NFHS projects positions the system to build back better in communities across the country, in both nature-rich and nature-deprived areas.

The Service has developed asset performance measures and a strategy to ensure effective operations and service delivery. The Department measures real property asset conditions using a Facility Condition Index (FCI), a ratio of repair cost to replacement cost. A rigorous condition assessment process ensures objectively determined repair needs, and appropriately estimated associated costs using industry standards. The Service's Asset Management Plan and Regional Asset Business Plans are used to manage assets, address repair needs, and dispose of assets that are low in priority or excess to the Government's needs.

Annual Maintenance

Annual maintenance funds ensure timely upkeep of NFHS real property and equipment. In addition to employee's salaries, these funds purchase maintenance-related supplies (e.g., lumber, pipe, paint, tools and filters) and replace small equipment costing less than \$5,000. Current annual maintenance funding expenditures focus on priority preventive maintenance needs. Through the Service Asset Maintenance Management System (SAMMS) and condition assessments, the Service can plan recurring maintenance to reduce long-term costs, and foster successful operations and mission delivery.

Deferred Maintenance

Functional properties and equipment are essential to the long-term success of the NFHS. Deferred maintenance projects are directed at the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of constructed assets, and encompass assets used for propagation of threatened, endangered and imperiled species, fulfilling Tribal trust and Federal mitigation responsibilities, and enhancing outdoor recreational access and opportunities. Deferred maintenance funds are directed at the highest priority assets in greatest need of repair across the NFHS based on a combination of FCI and Asset Priority Index scores. The Service has \$393 million in current deferred maintenance needs for the NFHS, of which \$318 million are maintained with Service funds and \$75 million maintained with non- Service funds.



Genoa National Fish Hatchery, Wisconsin, replacing the old fiberglass indoor fish production raceways with long lasting concrete raceways. Photo credit: USFWS

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Maintenance and Equipment

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office maintenance and equipment funds purchase and maintain over \$34 million in assets such as boats, vehicles, and specialized fisheries equipment. This equipment is essential for inventory and monitoring of aquatic species and is critical to the Service’s mission to restore native aquatic populations to self-sustaining levels.

Service Asset Maintenance Management System (SAMMS)

Under the auspices of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and DOI standards, the Service developed an Asset Management Plan that guides management of the NFHS’ \$3.5 billion in essential real and personal property inventories, including systematic and objective tracking, evaluation, reporting of asset condition, and prioritization of asset management. Using the Service Asset Maintenance Management System (SAMMS), an integrated web-based information system, the Service standardizes asset management, corroborates deferred maintenance needs with objective condition assessment data, identifies short- and long-term maintenance needs, and analyzes annual operating and maintenance expenditures.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Support maintenance of property and equipment, including the repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of constructed assets, for 85 Hatchery System facilities and 51 FOs;
- Maintain key assets associated with water delivery, aquatic species culture, and effluent management; and
- Prioritize energy efficiency and climate resilience investments in construction and therehabilitation of facilities.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Maintenance and Equipment is \$49,835,000 and 84 FTE, a net program change of +\$23,724,000 and +20 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Deferred Maintenance (+\$15,000,000/ +0 FTE) – This request will be used to maintain, modernize, renew, and repair the Hatchery System’s aging real property assets, which includes critical water management and effluent control equipment. Where appropriate, projects will incorporate green infrastructure and energy efficient systems such as solar photovoltaic systems, new HVAC systems, and replace old pumping systems to reduce energy demands. These projects will allow the Service to sustain operations of its 71 propagation fish hatcheries, which essential to the production of a wide range of aquatic species threatened by climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation, and invasive species.

Annual Maintenance (+\$7,885,000/ +20 FTE) – This request will focus on energy efficiency improvements in Hatchery Systems while maintaining complex water system capabilities for production of fish and other aquatic species. Funding will also provide for additional staff and resources to increase preventative measures and better maintain assets. These changes will allow the Service to avoid more costly deferred maintenance repairs, and keep hatcheries operating to fulfill their vital role in conserving aquatic species and ecosystems and addressing the climate crisis.

Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions (+\$615,000/ +0 FTE) – The 2022 budget includes funding to accelerate conversion of the Service's sedan fleet to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and provide charging stations and hydrogen fueling stations to support those vehicles and future ZEVs. This conversion will reduce the Interior’s contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and dependence upon hydrocarbons. The investment in infrastructure will support these new vehicles and ensure charging infrastructure is available for subsequent ZEVs. This project is being coordinated across Interior and

with other agencies to maximize utility of charging and hydrogen fueling stations in areas where multiple agencies operate. The funding also supports a small planning and coordination function to effectively deploy the fleet and charging infrastructure.

Baseline Capacity (+\$224,000; +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$224,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation
Subactivity: Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Habitat Assessment and Restoration	(\$000)	42,289	42,289	+494	0	+1,537	44,320	+2,031
	FTE	87	87	0	0	0	87	0
Population Assessment and Cooperative Management	(\$000)	31,792	31,792	+956	0	+1,673	34,421	+2,629
	FTE	126	126	0	0	+2	128	+2
Aquatic Invasive Species	(\$000)	41,159	41,159	+457	0	+6,752	48,368	+7,209
	FTE	80	80	0	0	+20	100	+20
Total, Aquatic Habitat & Species Conservation	(\$000)	115,240	115,240	+1,907	0	+9,962	127,109	+11,869
	FTE	293	293	0	0	+14	315	+14

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Prevention	+4,048	+15
• Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Fund/Team	+2,600	+5
• Population Assessment and Cooperative Management	+2,218	+3
• Baseline Capacity	+1,314	+0
• National Fish Habitat Action Plan	+1,000	-8
• Truckee River Operating Agreement	+200	+0
• National Fish Passage Program Staffing (BIL support)	+0	+8
• Pacific Salmon Treaty	-150	-0
• Hydrilla, Eel and Milfoil Invasive Grasses	-200	-0
• Snakehead Eradication	-250	-0
• Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey	-818	-1
Program Changes	+10,362	+22

Program Overview

Fifty-one Fisheries Offices (FO) are strategically located across the Nation and play an important role in guiding, implementing, and evaluating the Service’s fish and aquatic resource conservation programs. Service staff work with a broad range of partners, and utilize a variety of non-regulatory conservation tools, to recover and restore some of the Nation’s most iconic fish and other aquatic species and their habitats, many of which are listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA or are at-risk of listing. These offices are the Service’s “boots on-the-ground” fisheries conservation capacity and are under increasing demand for their services. They are essential components of Service efforts, aligned with Administration priorities, to tackle climate change, deliver environmental justice, and build our economy back better. FO work supports the Department’s Strategic Goal to conserve, protect, manage, and restore natural resources.

The Service's support to partners to conserve aquatic species and their habitats is a key component of Administration efforts to pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation, as outlined in the America the Beautiful initiative. FOs work to restore degraded and fragmented habitats, organize and implement projects with partners, provide technical expertise, enlist voluntary efforts of landowners and local communities, and deliver cost-shared resources to complete projects. These efforts improve habitat for fish and aquatic resources, support local economies, reduce public safety hazards and help our communities become more resilient to climate change. FOs also provide important technical and biological information to partners on the condition of aquatic habitats and populations of fish and other species. This is increasingly important in the face of climate change to inform ESA decisions, guide hydropower license conditions under the Federal Power Act, and establish frameworks to manage recreational and commercial fisheries. It also informs resource management decisions that lead to on-the-ground conservation actions (e.g., habitat restoration) conducted by FOs in collaboration with private landowners, non-profit organizations, Tribes, and local, State, and Federal agencies. Other core functions include working closely with Tribes to fulfill trust responsibilities associated with fish and aquatic resources, preventing and controlling the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species, and monitoring and evaluating the survival of the more than one hundred million fish propagated and stocked each year by the Service's National Fish Hatcheries.

Habitat Assessment and Restoration Program Overview

Habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation is a primary factor in the decline of native aquatic species. Utilizing its network of FOs, the Service works with partners to restore aquatic habitats for the benefit of Federal trust species and local communities. Through this network, the Service works to restore natural flows to streams and rivers, restore riparian areas and wetlands, remove barriers to fish passage, and improve water quality. The Service enlists the voluntary efforts of landowners and local communities, provides technical expertise, delivers cost-shared resources to complete habitat conservation projects, and organizes habitat conservation projects with partners. Work to restore degraded habitats also benefits human communities through development of more resilient infrastructure, reduced public safety hazards, and improved recreational opportunities. The National Fish Passage Program (NFPP) and National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) are two of the tools used by the Service to restore aquatic habitats.

National Fish Passage Program

Millions of barriers, including dams, poorly-designed culverts, and water diversions fragment rivers and watersheds across the Nation. Barriers to fish passage have compromised the ability of the Nation's waterways to sustain healthy fish populations as many fish species and other

Over the past 20 years, the National Fish Passage Program has:

- Removed or bypassed over 3,400 barriers to fish passage
- Reopened access to over 61,000 miles of upstream habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms
- Worked with over 2,000 partners across the country

aquatic life require open, free flowing rivers and streams to complete their life cycle. In addition, barriers can lead to public safety hazards, water quality degradation, and higher water treatment costs. Undersized culverts in road crossings can cause water to back up behind the crossings during storms, often leading to culvert failure and severe road damage. Aging dams can fail, which can affect aquatic species and human health and safety. Recreational and commercial fishing and boating opportunities may be reduced due to impacts on habitat and fish populations. Climate change is exacerbating these impacts by further increasing the warming of our waters and changing flow regimes.

The NFPP is a cooperative conservation program that relies on a network of Service biologists and engineers stationed throughout the country to provide technical expertise, financial assistance, and coordinate with partners to complete aquatic ecosystem restoration projects. The NFPP is consistent with

the vision outlined in the America the Beautiful initiative to pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation as it is a voluntary conservation program that brings together diverse partners to achieve benefits for aquatic species and local communities. FOs work with Federal agencies, State governments, private landowners, Tribes, and community organizations to restore fish passage and aquatic connectivity by removing or bypassing barriers. Projects range in size from large-scale dam removals to the repair or removal of culverts at road-stream crossings, to the installation of fish screens at agricultural water diversions. The NFPP has reopened access to tens of thousands of miles of habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms.

It's Not Just for the Fish – NFPP's Multiple Benefits: In the early 1900s, four small dams were constructed on the West Fork River just south of Clarksburg, West Virginia for drinking water and irrigation. The dams blocked the river for more than a century, degrading the system and people's connection to the river for many small rural communities and the City of Clarksburg. By the late 1990's, the West Fork River and its 98 tributaries were on the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's list of impaired rivers. Three of the dams became obsolete after the construction of the Stonewall Jackson Dam in 1996. After a series of tragic public safety accidents, landowners, county officials, State and Federal agencies, and a community watershed group came together to develop a solution for repairing the broken river.

In 2016, the NFPP worked with partners to remove the series of three dams on the West Fork. The project reconnected over 491 miles of fish passage, restored 12.5 miles of instream habitat for federally listed freshwater mussels, and created a 60 mile unobstructed section of stream for safe paddling and recreation. The dam removal project has improved habitat quality and given many aquatic species the ability to move, find refuge and suitable habitat, and persist in the face of changing climate. It removed hazardous structures from the river that could fail in stronger storms, and reduced flood risk in areas that were previously flood prone.

Following the dam removals, project partners led volunteer stream cleanups that removed over 1,212 tires and 61,000 pounds of trash from the river. Perhaps, more importantly to local residents, the dam removals are helping the community build back better. With the dams removed, water quality has improved, and it is safe to go boating and swimming in the river. The Clarksburg Water Board reported a \$50,000 reduction in annual water treatment costs and also won the Rural Water Association Taste Test Competition just one year later. The river is becoming a tourist destination for anglers and boaters - improving the social and economic futures for the many rural communities living along the 103 miles of river as it meanders through the valleys of north-central West Virginia until it joins with the Monongahela River. The local watershed association, Guardians of the West Fork, now hosts an annual Float the Fork event that draws paddlers from over 6 states. With plans to add 10 new public access sites this year and state biologists reporting improvements to the recreational fish populations, recreational use of the river will be easier and more rewarding than ever.

The NFPP is also an essential element of Service efforts to tackle climate change, deliver environmental justice, and build our economy. In addition to providing benefits for fish and aquatic species, the NFPP's work to restore degraded and fragmented habitats creates construction, engineering, and other jobs, stimulating the local economy. Work to reconnect aquatic habitats also decreases public safety hazards and improves infrastructure resilience by reducing flood risks, removing obsolete dams, and improving water delivery for local agriculture irrigation districts. In addition, this work often occurs in underserved communities such as old industrial areas of the northeast, rural parts of the southeast and Great Plains, mining communities in Appalachia, and Tribal lands in the southwest. Fish passage projects provide quality-of-life benefits for local communities by providing new fishing and other outdoor recreational opportunities to include kayaking, canoeing, and rafting.

A key element of the NFPP is its comprehensive fish passage engineering and technical assistance capacity. Program engineers and technical specialists ensure that passage projects are strategically selected and structurally sound, meet conservation goals for Federal trust species, and provide benefits to surrounding communities. NFPP program staff assist Federal and State partners with design work for projects that affect the aquatic environment. The NFPP also develops training materials and guidance documents to assist others in minimizing impacts to fish passage and aquatic connectivity. In 2020, the program published design guidelines for culverts in fish

bearing streams in Alaska. In 2021, the Service finalized agency-wide policy and guidance on consideration of aquatic connectivity and fish passage in all Service actions. In the northeast, the NFPP is working with several States to develop guidelines for design of road-stream crossings that benefit

aquatic connectivity, stream health, and resilient infrastructure. These design standards can be incorporated into streamlined permitting processes, incentivizing fish-friendly crossing design and reducing the permitting timeline for infrastructure projects.

Investments in the NFPP through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) in FY 2023 will expand ongoing, collaborative work to remove or bypass in-stream barriers to fish passage and improve ecosystem and infrastructure resiliency. BIL funds will allow the Service to make additional headway to address the millions of barriers to fish passage that fragment rivers and watersheds across the Nation. The BIL funding will also provide the Service the opportunity to work with conservation partners to address projects at a scale and impact formerly unattainable with base program appropriations. This BIL funding is intended to be largely project dollars, so the program is rebalancing staffing to address the increased project work. In 2023, the Service intends to increase staff for NFPP by approximately 8 FTE.

The development and implementation of projects utilizing BIL funding will engage a diverse array of partners, including other Federal agencies, State governments, private landowners, Tribes, NGOs, and partnership groups such as the existing network of Fish Habitat Partnerships under the National Fish Habitat Partnership program. All projects selected for BIL funding through the NFPP will provide benefits for aquatic species and habitats with selection priority for projects that also provide benefits for climate change resilience, public safety, and disadvantaged communities, advancing Administration priorities. The Service will coordinate with other State and Federal agencies (e.g. NOAA Fisheries, Department of Transportation) to implement other BIL projects and funding aimed at improving fish passage. Coordinating implementation of this funding among Federal agencies, and ensuring collaboration with key stakeholders such as States and Tribes, will help maximize the effectiveness of this investment. Opportunities for improved coordination among Federal agencies and others include sharing scientific and technical expertise; working collaboratively to identify priority species, watersheds and projects; and utilizing existing partner networks to help develop, fund, and implement individual projects.



Perched culverts (top) are impassible by fish and other aquatic life. This newly constructed bridge (bottom) will allow aquatic life to reconnect with upstream habitats. Photo credit: USFWS

National Fish Habitat Action Plan

Developed in 2006 and updated in 2012, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) provides the framework for the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP). In October of 2020, Title II of America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act codified the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) and established a new 26-member National Fish Habitat Board (Board) to promote, oversee, and coordinate implementation of the program. The Service is leaning into the vision for program implementation established by Title II of the ACE Act. The Action Plan was highlighted in the Administration's initial steps to achieve the President's America the Beautiful initiative, which sets a goal of conserving 30 percent of the Nation's lands and waters by 2030.

There are 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) that leverage Federal, State, Tribal, and private funding to conserve fish habitat under NFHP. FHPs are formed around distinct geographic areas, important fish species, or ecosystems, and include representatives from Federal, State, and Non-Governmental entities. FHPs identify and prioritize fish habitat conservation projects for funding within their boundaries, guided by individual FHP strategic plans. FHPs work with States, other Federal agencies, Tribes, private

landowners, businesses, and others to restore stream banks, provide aquatic connectivity, plant vegetation, renovate oyster reefs, and to improve other habitat conditions.

The Service is a key partner in implementing NFHP with States, Tribes, other Federal agencies, conservation organizations and industry. Under this program, the Service has worked with the Board and FHPs to provide funding to hundreds of projects across the U.S. to protect, restore, and enhance priority habitats. Additionally, through appropriations from Congress, the Service has traditionally provided substantial support to FHPs to develop strategic plans, identify and develop fish habitat conservation projects, provide technical and engineering support, administer financial assistance agreements, and assist with required environmental compliance and permitting. The Service has also provided funding and staff to support operations of the Board and FHPs.

Fiscal Year 2022 marked the first year of program implementation under the vision established by Title II of the ACE Act. The ACE Act envisions significant changes to operations of the NFHP program relative to pre-enactment. This includes FHPs taking more active roles in implementing projects and the FHPs becoming formally designated by Congress. Under the ACE Act, the Board also holds the responsibility of making funding recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior for fish habitat conservation projects.

We anticipate Fiscal Year 2023 will be a transition year where important fish habitat conservation projects will continue to be implemented under NFHP as the structure of the program changes. The Service is committed to working with the Board and the FHPs to continue a transition to the new model of program implementation under the vision of the ACE Act. The Service will work with the FHPs and the Board to keep the program operational, while working collaboratively to develop plans for ACE Act implementation in future fiscal years. This will include continuing to administer funding for fish habitat conservation projects, maintaining a primary point of contact within the Service for each FHP to assist with the transition, and providing staff support to the Board.

Population Assessment and Cooperative Management Program Overview

The Service provides assistance to partners in efforts to maintain self-sustaining, healthy, and diverse populations of fish and other aquatic species. FOs assess the status and trends of aquatic species, evaluate the causes of species decline, determine the limiting factors for aquatic populations, work with partners to implement actions to restore populations across habitat types and jurisdictional boundaries, and evaluate the impacts of conservation activities. Population assessment and cooperative management are essential components of the Service's efforts to tackle the climate crisis and deliver environmental justice. Providing this assistance to partners also supports Administration efforts to pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation, as outlined in the America the Beautiful initiative. Further, this work aligns with the Department's Strategic Plan Framework Goals 1 and 2.

Making informed and appropriate decisions on the conservation and management of fish and other aquatic species is dependent on the availability of accurate and up to date information. A core function of FOs is collecting and evaluating population data and developing models to estimate population trends. This information is utilized by Tribes, and Federal and State natural resource agencies, to establish conservation and management strategies for a wide range of aquatic species and their habitats. This includes decisions under the Endangered Species Act, hydropower license conditions under the Federal Power Act, and frameworks to manage recreational and commercial fisheries.

In addition, FOs monitor and evaluate the survival of fish propagated and stocked each year by the Service's NFHS. Recent in-depth evaluations of NFHS species recovery and restoration propagation programs identified a need to prioritize expanding these efforts.

The Service's work in the Great Lakes area is an example of how FOs work closely with Tribal, State,

Provincial, and other partners to restore lake trout, a native species important to the ecosystem, a valuable recreational species, and a species harvested by Tribes. The Service monitors populations by marking all hatchery-produced fish with coded wire tags. Partners cooperate in this activity by recovering and returning tags to the Service for extraction and analysis. This data helps the Service and partners in the Great Lakes to understand lake trout population trends, assess program success, and inform management actions such as harvest limits. These efforts also help ensure the Service meets our Tribal trust responsibilities.

Service biologists also provide leadership to technical committees and aquatic resource management boards and participate in unique regional management initiatives to help recover and sustain fish and other aquatic species nationwide.

These collaborative efforts are improving the management of river herring and striped bass along the Atlantic coast and in the Chesapeake Bay, helping to ensure the sustainable harvest of Pacific salmon in Alaska, and recovering iconic species such as the Lahontan cutthroat trout in Nevada.

Tribal Trust Responsibilities

As part of the Service's Tribal trust responsibilities and an important element of our efforts to deliver environmental justice, FOs work with Tribal resource agencies to manage a diverse array of fish and wildlife on millions of acres of Tribal and Alaska Native lands. FOs provide technical assistance, training, financial support, and equipment. The Lander (WY) FO has provided support to Tribes on the Wind River Reservation since 1941 on the conservation and management of cutthroat trout, burbot, and saugeye. The Arizona FO works with Tribal partners on the recovery of ESA-listed Apache trout. The Green Bay (WI) FO works with multiple Tribes on the management of fishery resources in Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior. The Lahontan FO in Nevada is working with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe to recover the Lahontan cutthroat trout and the cui-ui sucker in Pyramid Lake and nearby waters, including the Truckee River. FOs in the Pacific NW work with Tribes in WA, OR, and ID to mitigate impacts of hydropower in the region. FOs in Alaska employ cutting-edge genetic techniques to monitor Pacific salmon stocks as they enter the Yukon River, information that is critical to inform in-season harvest limits and other actions necessary to maintain healthy, sustainable salmon stocks. Many of these efforts align with one of the key priorities of the America the Beautiful initiative to support Tribally-led



Biologists from the Ashland FO and the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa holding lake sturgeon from Bad River, Wisconsin.

FOs in Action – Fulfilling Tribal Trust Responsibilities: Past and Present. Native American Tribes have revered the lake sturgeon as an important part of their spiritual and cultural heritage, seasonally harvesting fish for ceremonial and subsistence uses. The Ashland FO in Wisconsin is working with the Grand Portage, Fond du Lac, Red Cliff, and Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, along with Keweenaw and Bay Mills Indian Communities to support self-sustaining populations of lake sturgeon for current and future generations. Through collaborative conservation efforts with Tribal and other partners, the Ashland FO is restoring connectivity in spawning tributaries, describing the genetic diversity of remnant lake sturgeon populations, reintroducing lake sturgeon into previously extirpated locations, and quantifying movement and behavior of juvenile and adult fish in support of minimizing the risk and buffering future climate change impacts. The Ashland FO and its Tribal partners assess and monitor the effectiveness of their collective conservation and management actions, as well as the status of lake sturgeon populations across the Lake Superior basin. Thanks to the FO's assessment and monitoring efforts, necessary data has been gathered to document that the population of lake sturgeon that utilizes the Bad River to spawn, and is of great significance to the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, has reached the rehabilitation goal of a self-sustaining population of 1,500 sexually mature adults.

conservation and restoration priorities. In addition, the support provided to Tribes aligns with the Department’s goal to promote well-being, equity, and justice for Tribes, Native Americans, and Alaska Natives.

Alaska Subsistence Management Program

Based on a 2010 economic assessment by the Service¹, over 135,000 people in over 270 communities in rural Alaska are entitled to subsistence fishing, hunting, and trapping on Federal lands. The average subsistence harvest in Alaska is approximately 375 pounds of food per person, or 50 million pounds of food per year. The Alaska Fisheries Subsistence Management Program manages fish and wildlife for subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska. The program provides a direct benefit to rural subsistence users on more than 237 million acres of Federal lands encompassing 66 percent of Alaska’s land area and 52 percent of Alaska’s rivers and lakes.



June Tracy, of Nondalton, Alaska, hangs salmon to dry prior to storage. NPS Photo

The Alaska Subsistence Management Program recognizes the importance of subsistence to rural Alaska residents. It also recognizes the importance of maintaining unspoiled ecosystems and healthy fish and wildlife populations.

The Road to Recovery for Okaloosa Darter

The Okaloosa darter occurs in just six stream systems in two counties in northern Florida. Over 90 percent of those stream systems are located entirely on land managed by the U.S. Air Force at Eglin Air Force Base (AFB). As required by the Sikes Act, Eglin AFB worked with the Service to develop an Integrated Natural Resources Management plan, which includes specific goals and objectives for improving Okaloosa darter habitat.

But Eglin AFB and the Service did not stop at mere planning. Eglin AFB used authorities and tools provided by the Sikes Act to partner with the Panama City FO to cooperatively reduce more than 480 acres of stream erosion, remove numerous barriers for fish migration, and restore stream habitat to improve conditions for the Okaloosa darter.



In 2018, the Service initiated a five-year review that determined that this small fish no longer faces the threat of extinction and does not warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act. On November 18, 2021, U.S. Department of the Interior leadership gathered with dignitaries from the Department of Defense and United States Air Force to announce the proposed delisting of the Okaloosa darter.

The Service is the lead Federal agency in administering this program for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. Since 1999, the Service’s Office of Subsistence Management has implemented an annual regulatory program and a fisheries monitoring program, supported 10 regional advisory councils, and has provided administrative and technical support to five Federal agencies and the Federal Subsistence Board. The Subsistence Management Program operates with strong stakeholder participation by rural residents and the State of Alaska.

Military Lands Conservation

The Service works with the Department of Defense (DOD), steward to millions of acres of land used for national defense purposes, to protect and enhance natural resources on military installations. Under the authority of the Sikes Act, the Service works with DOD, States and other Service programs to review and update Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans and implement conservation projects on military installations

¹ Charbonneau, Joseph John, Ph.D. and James Caudill, Ph.D, September 2010. *Conserving America’s Fisheries: An Assessment of Economic Contributions from Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation*. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

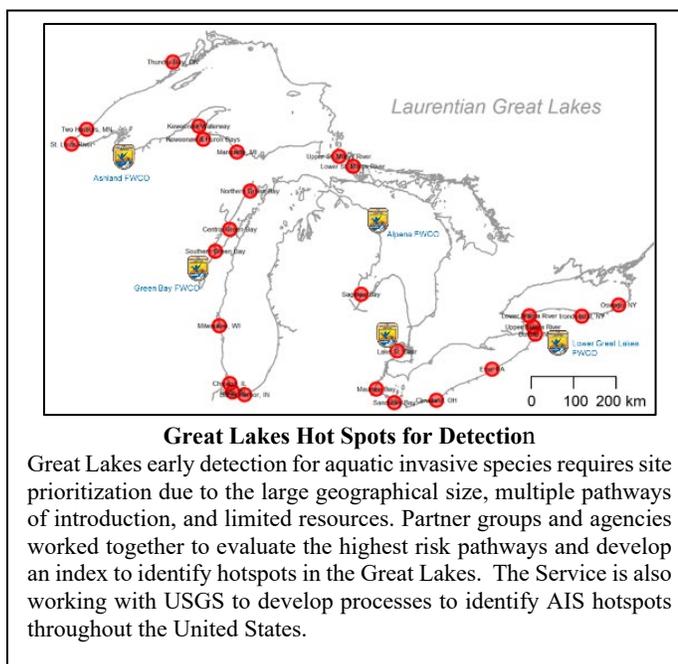
nationwide. Given the millions of acres of land under DOD stewardship, this provides an unprecedented opportunity to tackle climate change on a truly landscape scale.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Invasive species are a significant threat to natural resources, human and animal health, infrastructure, the economy, and cultural resources. Invasive species such as invasive carp, quagga and zebra mussels, Elodea, and lionfish cause tens of billions of dollars globally in economic and ecological impacts each year in diminished fish and wildlife resources, recreational opportunities, agricultural productivity, personal property values, human health and safety, and public utility capacity². These costs have increased each year since 1970 at a rate of more than threefold per decade. The threat of invasive species continues to grow as the globalization of trade and transport provide increased pathways for new species introduced into U.S. ecosystems. Climate change is expected to exacerbate these trends as melting glaciers and increased flooding create new pathways for invasion, and warming temperatures provide a longer growing season and make it possible for more non-native species to survive.

Invasive species are a leading cause of declining fish, wildlife, and habitat globally. They also reduce recreational opportunities and enjoyment by clogging waterways, encrusting boats, propellers and other equipment, and reducing native fish. Areas whose economies, traditions, and culture rely heavily on agriculture, forestry and fishing are particularly vulnerable to impacts from invasive species. Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are especially difficult to detect and to eradicate once they establish, as they can persist and spread widely even after their pathways of introduction are interrupted. In addition, natural areas already stressed by invasive species are more susceptible to harm from climate change than healthy ecosystems.

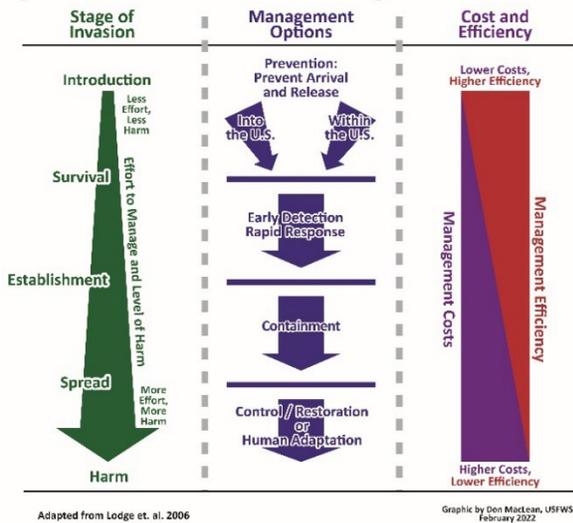
The Service plays a critical role in fighting the spread of AIS by preventing introduction, working to detect and respond to new invasions, and controlling invasive populations of plants and animals. These activities support Administration priorities by reducing a major stressor on native species and ecosystems. Reduced impacts from invasive species will help increase the climate resilience of our ecosystems while also conserving biodiversity and the health of our waters. When native species thrive, recreational opportunities are enhanced for users from all backgrounds, culturally significant resources will be available for Tribal members, and the economy will benefit from increased spending on recreational fishing and other water-based outdoor activities, supporting the America the Beautiful initiative. Stopping invasive species at our borders and educating the public on how to prevent invasive species from gaining a foothold in the United States will also reduce



² Diagne, C., Leroy, B., Vaissiere, A-C, Gozlan, R.E, Roiz, D., Jaric, I., Salles, J-M., Bradshaw, C.J.A., and Courchamp, R, 2021. High and rising economic costs of biological invasions worldwide. Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03405-6>.

opportunities for zoonotic pathogen spillover that can jeopardize human health.

Aspects of the Invasion Management Process



Adapted from Lodge et. al. 2006

Graphic by Don Maclean, USFWS February 2022

The Service has made significant strides in recent years to strengthen partnerships and modernize scientific and administrative approaches to more quickly identify and prevent invasive species threats before they become pervasive on the landscape. Preventing the arrival and release of a species is substantially more cost-effective than trying to manage a species after it is established. Once a species is established and its population begins to spread, the cost to contain and control the species substantially increases. A recent study³ concluded that proactively managing biological invasions can reduce future costs at the trillion-\$ scale and circumvent significant harm to the environment, economy or human health. The Service uses science to guide our priorities and management decisions, and where appropriate,

includes States, Tribes and stakeholders in prioritizing and responding to invasive species introductions.

Along with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Service co-chairs the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANS Task Force). The ANS Task Force was established by Congress with the passage of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (NANPCA) in 1990 and reauthorized with the passage of the National Invasive Species Act (NISA) in 1996 (collectively, the Act). Composed of 13 Federal and 13 ex-officio members, it is the only federally mandated intergovernmental organization solely dedicated to preventing and controlling AIS. The ANS Task Force recently completed a new Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 that establishes six goals, each with a targeted set of objectives and associated strategies. These six goals include Coordination, Prevention, Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR), Control and Restoration, Research, Outreach and Education.

Coordination

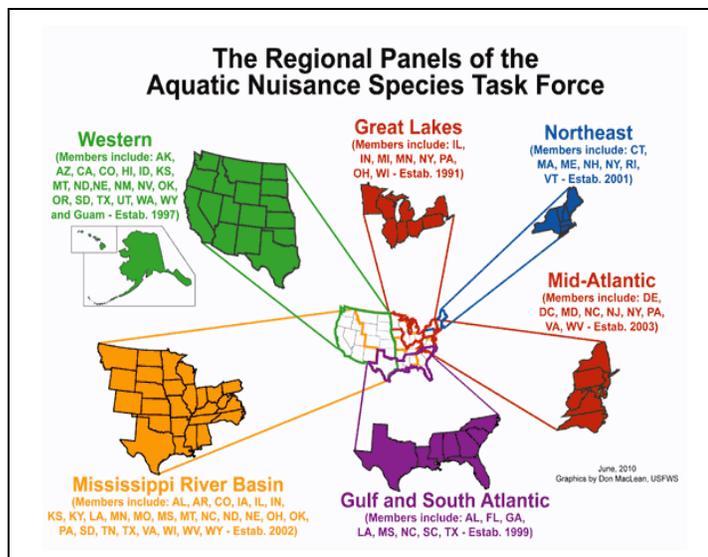
The ANS Task Force works in conjunction with Regional ANS Panels (Panels) and issue-specific committees to coordinate efforts among Federal and State agencies and the private sector. The six Panels are uniquely positioned to coordinate, prioritize, and implement regional invasive species management activities.

The ANS Task Force approves State and interstate management plans to detect and monitor ANS,

³ Cuthbert, Ross N., Christophe Diagne, Emma J. Hudgins, Anna Turbelin, Danish A. Ahmed, Céline Albert, Thomas W. Bodey et al. "Biological invasion costs reveal insufficient proactive management worldwide." *Science of The Total Environment* (2022): 153404.

prevent their establishment and spread, and control established species. The Service provides essential funding for 45 approved State and Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans that address State and Tribal priorities. State AIS programs use Service funds to work with their partners to plan, direct, and accomplish significant regional and landscape-level invasive species prevention and management resource outcomes.

The ANS Task Force also works with member organizations and subject matter experts to develop species management plans. There are currently nine Species Management and Control Plans, which can be downscaled to basin-specific operational plans, perhaps best exemplified by the Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States (Invasive Carp National Plan). The Service coordinates with State and Federal agency partners to develop and implement four Invasive Carp Control Strategy Frameworks under the auspices of the Invasive Carp National Plan and plays a lead role in coordinating, implementing, and funding this work.



Prevention

Prevention is the most cost-effective strategy to minimize the long-term risk and impacts of invasive species to the American people and trust resources. Prevention can be accomplished by efforts such as inspecting and decontaminating watercraft and gear that could transport AIS into new areas, restricting the importation and release of potentially harmful species, and enforcing current laws and regulations aimed at reducing the risk of introduction and spread of AINS. The Service is also developing and implementing new risk assessment and risk mitigation tools to target prevention efforts on invasive species that pose the greatest risk. The Service works with partners, such as the U.S. Geological Survey, to evaluate likely pathways for introduction of new invasive species into the United States. This information and the identification of geographical areas that are the most vulnerable to these species helps inform efforts to target early detection and response measures.



Pacific Lamprey-UFWS

To focus prevention actions, the Service uses horizon scans to identify non-native species that could become invasive, if established. Collaboration with partners, including the Burns Paiute Tribe and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, to conduct the Pacific Northwest horizon scan. Invasive species establishing in the region could impact native species such as Pacific lamprey (*Lampetra tridentata*) and wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), which are important to Tribes

Species designated as injurious wildlife under the Lacey Act are defined as species that are injurious to the interests of human beings, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, wildlife, or wildlife resources of the U.S. By promulgating rules to designate species as injurious, the Service can prohibit their importation into the U.S. and their subsequent shipment within the country among certain enumerated jurisdictions. Relying on the tools described above, the Service will continue to focus regulatory efforts on species that pose the greatest risk and are not yet introduced or widely established in the U.S. Previous proactive steps to list high-risk species as injurious wildlife have proven very successful in preventing these species

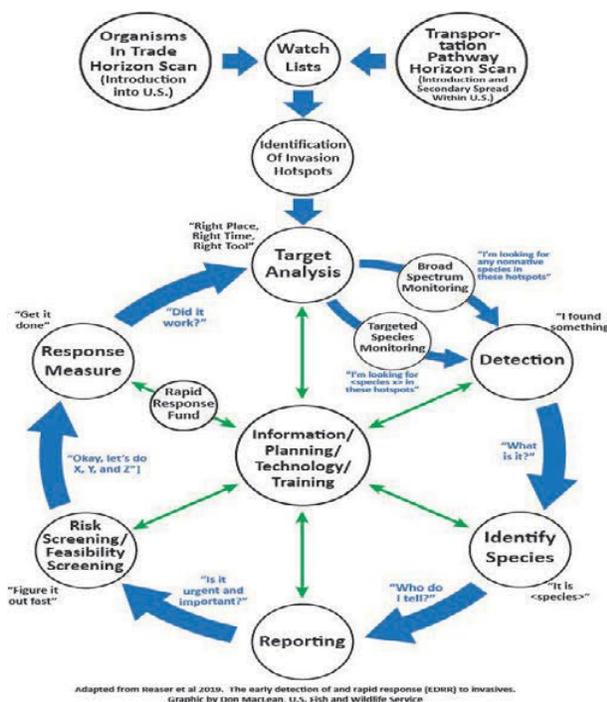
from becoming established.

Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Service will work with partners to initiate a global horizon scan and risk analysis to identify species at greatest risk of introducing zoonotic pathogens and parasites into the United States and causing harm to human health. The project will also identify management measures to reduce risk of such introductions and provide a foundation for evaluating species for listing as injurious under the Lacey Act. In addition, ARPA funds will improve the Service’s ability to compile data on wildlife species imported to the United States. This information will further help the Service identify species posing the highest risk and guide our future invasive species prevention work.

The Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act funding provides an opportunity to build an institutional architecture for coordinated invasive species management efforts that will have meaningful impacts across the nation and implement prevention, detection, and eradication projects that have a high likelihood for success. Programmatic priorities for these funds include: 1) preventing the introduction and spread of high-risk species into or within the United States; 2) investing in at-risk ecosystems and other priority areas; 3) supporting States, Tribes, Territories, and underserved communities to build capacity for prevention, detection, and eradication projects; and 4) building a nationally coordinated national Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) framework.

Early Detection and Rapid Response

EDRR is a comprehensive approach to defend the United States from newly arriving, establishing, and spreading invasive species. The approach uses a series of coordinated and integrated steps to stop the next invasion. These steps include: horizon scanning technologies to identify species and vectors that present the greatest risk to the United States; invasion hotspot analyses to identify areas most likely to be invaded; the deployment of genetic and traditional sampling tools to detect invading organisms at the earliest point possible; and interjurisdictional response processes to quickly eradicate new invaders. BIL invasive species funding will form the foundation of a national EDRR framework. These investments will be essential for future implementation of the framework, including the early detection surveillance, rapid response fund, and coordinated Interjurisdictional Rapid Response Team investments identified in this FY 2023 budget request.



Control and Restoration

Once an invasive species becomes established in the environment, multiple tools and significant resources are necessary to lessen the impacts to public interests, slow the rate of range expansion, and increase the likelihood of eradication. The Service uses risk analysis, benefit-cost analysis, and other tools to identify, select, and target high-priority AIS for control as well as the most appropriate and cost-effective mitigation measures. Once AIS are controlled, the Service may implement habitat restoration to ensure that native and managed ecosystems resiliency is restored once AIS are controlled. Adequate funding,

public awareness, and management expertise are critical to success, particularly because AIS can span geographic and jurisdictional boundaries.

Research

The Service promotes, funds, and develops applied technologies to assess and mitigate the environmental and economic risks and impacts associated with the introduction of AIS. The Service works to evaluate the principal pathways by which AIS are introduced and dispersed and to develop and assess the effectiveness of new methods, such as developing eDNA markers that can be used for early detection surveillance of high risk species at risk of invading the United States. This research is an essential part of our ongoing work to prevent, detect, respond to, and control AIS nationwide

Outreach and Education

To protect the waters of the United States, the public must also understand the wide-ranging impacts of AIS and actions necessary to prevent their introduction and spread. In many instances, the introduction of non-native species occurs due to the lack of public knowledge and understanding of the threats these species pose to the environment, recreation, and local communities. The Service and the ANS Task Force work alongside partners to implement national AIS awareness and education campaigns, such as Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!, Habitattitude™ and Don't Let It Loose. These campaigns empower recreational water users and pet owners to become environmental stewards by taking action to prevent the spread of AIS. These ongoing awareness efforts help the public understand the impacts caused by AIS so that they may be part of the solution and help facilitate on-the-ground action.



Photo: USFWS, Ashland FO.

EDM Sampling.

The USFWS works with the 1845 Treaty Authority (an inter-Tribal natural resource authority) to survey Duluth/Superior Harbors of Lake Superior for non-native, potentially invasive fishes. Early discovery increases effectiveness of measures to prevent the establishment and spread of non-native fish. Lake Superior is home to culturally significant and keystone fish species including cisco, lake trout, lake whitefish and walleye.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Utilize partnership programs such as the National Fish Passage Program and the National Fish Habitat Partnership to implement numerous local fish habitat restoration projects to improve riparian and aquatic habitats making them more resilient to the impacts of climate change;
- Work with partners to inventory, monitor, manage and restore fish and other aquatic species to maintain self-sustaining, healthy and diverse populations;
- Work to prevent the introduction and reduce the spread of AIS; a primary threat to the Nation's natural resources, infrastructure, economy and cultural resources;
- Establish a rapid response fund and coordinated Interjurisdictional Rapid Response Team for expedited management responses to new invasions; and
- Continue to target quagga and zebra mussels and invasive carp as high-priority species, leveraging prevention, control, and outreach resources among partners.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2022 budget request for Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation is \$127,509,000 and 307 FTE, a net program change of +\$10,362,000 and +14 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.⁴

National Fish Habitat Action Plan (+\$1,000,000/ -0 FTE) – Consistent with the vision established in Title II of America’s Conservation Enhancement Act, this request will significantly increase the amount of funding for fish habitat conservation projects while reducing Service staffing support for technical, scientific, and administrative assistance. This funding request will allow the Service to continue to work with the FHPs and the Board to keep a level of operational continuity during FY 2023, while we work collaboratively to develop plans for ACE Act implementation in future fiscal years.

For FY 2023, the Service is requesting \$6,323,000 for fish habitat conservation projects. An additional \$316,000 is requested for administrative and planning expenses, a portion of which will be provided to the Board to support required reporting requirements under the Act. This represents an amount equal to 5 percent of the amount requested for fish habitat conservation projects, as authorized under the Act. Additionally, as authorized under the Act, the Service is requesting \$400,000 in scientific and technical assistance. We anticipate this funding will be used primarily to support required environmental compliance and permitting for fish habitat conservation projects approved for funding by the Secretary of the Interior. Finally, the Service requests funding for the equivalent of five FTE to support the 20 FHPs to continue to provide a consistent point of contact and assistance during the transition to the new model of program implementation under the vision of the ACE Act.

Prevention (+\$4,048,000/ +15 FTE) – Invasive species are a risk to ecosystem resilience and by conducting public awareness and education campaigns, evaluating likely pathways for introduction of new invasive species, and developing and implementing new risk assessment and risk mitigation tools the Service can reduce risks posed by invasive species before they become established. Prevention funds will support work by the Service and its partners to prevent the introduction, establishment and spread of AIS, and to help avoid and minimize their ecological and economic impacts. This funding increase will develop a sustainable risk assessment capability that allows FAC to conduct and maintain rapid screening and assessment, horizon scanning, and feasibility screening results needed to identify and prioritize species and pathways at greatest risk of causing harm to wildlife, wildlife resources and human health. As part of a nationally coordinated EDRR framework and a failsafe to prevention, early detection surveillance will occur within invasion hotspots and at points of entry into the United States. This funding increase will leverage the institutional architecture for a coordinated EDRR framework developed under BIL. Building upon this foundation, Injurious Wildlife listings and other management actions will manage high-risk species and pathways in collaboration and consultation with partners and existing processes, such as the ANS Task Force.

Prevention-Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Fund (+\$2,600,000/ +5 FTE) – Funding will establish a pilot Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Fund within the existing authorities of the FAC program, to be coordinated through the ANS Task Force. Service will develop an Interjurisdictional Rapid Response Team to carry out expedited management responses to new AIS invasions in collaboration with State, Tribal, and Federal land management partners.

Population and Assessment and Cooperative Management Activities (+\$2,218,000/ +3 FTE) -- Funding at the requested level will provide for Service field staff, who will work in close cooperation with our Federal, Tribal, and State partners to analyze the status and trends of aquatic resources and conserve these complex ecosystems. Funding will increase staff’s ability to inventory, monitor, manage

⁴ Includes an increase of 8 FTE for the National Fish Passage Program to oversee projects funded by BIL.

and restore fish and other aquatic species to maintain self-sustaining, healthy, and diverse populations.

Baseline Capacity (+\$1,314,000/ +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$1,314,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Truckee River Operating Agreement (+\$200,000/ +0 FTE) – This request will fulfill Service’s obligation to efficiently manage the Truckee Basin reservoir and river system in coordination with Nevada, California, the Truckee River Water Authority, and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe.

Pacific Salmon Treaty (-\$150,000/ -0 FTE) – The 2023 budget submission does not request funding for Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Hydrilla, Eel and Milfoil Invasive Grasses (-\$200,000/ -0 FTE) – The 2023 budget submission does not request funding for Hydrilla, Eel and Milfoil Invasive Grasses control in the Southeast.

Snakehead Eradication (-\$250,000 / -0 FTE) – The 2023 budget submission does not request funding for Snakehead Eradication.

Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey (-\$818,000/ -1 FTE) – The 2023 budget submission does not request dedicated funding for Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey.

Science Applications

SCIENCE APPLICATIONS

Activity: Science Applications

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Cooperative Landscape Conservation	(\$000)	12,500	12,500	+411	0	+6,102	19,013	+6,513
	FTE	58	60	0	0	+25	85	+25
Science Support								
Adaptive Science	(\$000)	10,517	10,517	+35	0	+12,333	22,885	+12,368
	FTE	5	6	0	0	+9	15	+9
Service Science	(\$000)	6,750	6,750	+139	0	+8,708	15,597	+8,847
	FTE	17	17	0	0	+17	34	+17
Total, Science Support	(\$000)	17,267	17,267	+174	0	+21,041	38,482	+ 21,215
	FTE	23	23	0	0	+26	49	+26
Science Applications		29,767	29,767	585	0	21,651	57,495	+27,728
		80	83	0	0	+51	134	+51

Program Overview

The Science Applications program is the only non-regulatory, Federal program that addresses complex, multi-jurisdictional conservation challenges across large landscapes using a collaborative approach to develop shared conservation priorities, actions and outcomes. The program addresses science gaps related to landscape and species conservation and climate adaptation strategies. Science Applications also provides science support internally to Service programs, focusing our work on cross-cutting conservation science needs. A special emphasis in the program’s work is the distillation of climate science to help natural resource managers implement climate adaptation strategies.

Science Applications promotes an inclusive and participatory approach to landscape conservation; one that seeks to bring Service programs, States, Tribes, and partners together in pursuit of a shared conservation vision. Through the program’s leadership, the Service connects State and Tribal fish and wildlife agencies as well as stakeholders and facilitates a collaborative approach to fish and wildlife management, with accompanying shared goals, planning, strategic actions. The program strives to fill science needs, and develop the means to measure progress. Science Applications is the only entity that focuses on a nationwide, holistic ecosystem approach, weaving together other taxa-specific and local geographic and science priorities. The program’s work leads to durable conservation outcomes where partners implement proactive and voluntary actions to directly conserve at-risk species or reduce habitat stressors, often precluding regulatory interventions.

Program Elements

Two budget activities, one of which is comprised of two budget subactivities form the Science Applications Program:

- Cooperative Landscape Conservation Activity – The Science Applications program works with State fish and wildlife agencies and their regional associations, sovereign Tribal nations, territories, local officials, private landowners, non-governmental organizations and others in support of landscape conservation with the goal of creating a network of connected lands and waters for thriving ecosystems and communities.
- Science Support, Adaptive Science – Funds studies and the development of decision support tools essential to the success of our partnerships. Work seeks to identify and implement landscape-scale conservation solutions to address on-the-ground conservation management questions. Science Applications works with partners to identify gaps in knowledge around shared conservation priorities, and then works collaboratively to provide technical assistance, tools, and coordination support to inform conservation strategies and management actions.
- Science Support Service Science – Provides scientific support for Service programs by providing policy, guidance, information, and tools that inform decision-making for refuge management, at-risk and endangered species management including pollinators, data and evidence management, climate adaptation strategies, and other conservation priorities.

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

The Service has the statutory mandate and trust responsibility to fulfill its mission derived from various statutes and authorities. Through these operating authorities, the Service identifies potential impacts and provides solutions that prevent species and their habitats from becoming imperiled and support the Secretary's priorities. Brief descriptions of these various laws follow:

- *Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956*, as amended, (16 U.S.C 742(a)-754), establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.
- *Executive Order 13990*, "Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis" issued in January 2021, directs all executive departments and agencies to immediately review and, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law, take action to address the promulgation of Federal regulations and other actions during the last administration that conflict with national objectives, and to immediately commence work to confront the climate crisis.
- *Executive Order 14008*, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad" issued in January 2021, directs climate considerations be an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security. The United States will work with other countries and partner to put the world on a sustainable climate pathway and build resistance against the impacts of climate change.
- *Presidential Memorandum*, "Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking" issued in January 2021, emphasizes the Administration's commitment to making evidence-based decisions and developing policies and programs that are guided by the best available scientific data.

Activity: Cooperative Landscape Conservation

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Cooperative Landscape Conservation	(\$000)	12,500	12,500	+411	0	+6,102	19,013	+6,513
	FTE	58	60	0	0	+25	85	+25

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Cooperative Landscape Conservation

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
Cooperative Landscape Conservation	+5,800	+25
Baseline Capacity	+302	+0
Program Changes	+6,102	+25

Program Overview

Partnerships that Science Applications facilitates are tailored to the needs of the geographies found therein. Collaborative conservation is further strengthened by our work with other landscape partnerships, such as the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, National Fish Habitat Partnerships, and the Network for Landscape Conservation. This collaborative approach to conservation fosters agreement on priorities and leverages limited conservation dollars to efforts that are agreed to have the most important impacts at the state and local levels. Science Applications is meeting partners where they are and working closely with others to collectively meet shared science needs. The Service’s Landscape Conservation activity, and the partnerships it supports, directly contribute to the Administration’s priorities around climate adaptation, climate resilience and the Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful campaign, which sets a goal of conserving 30 percent of the nation’s lands and waters by 2030.

Conservation efforts that occur at large landscape scales are recognized to be a more effective and efficient approach to the stewardship of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. Addressing complex environmental issues such as climate change, habitat degradation and habitat fragmentation are challenges that must be addressed collectively, not by a single entity or regulatory mechanism. Using Landscape Conservation funding, the Service works with States, sovereign Tribal nations, other Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities and other invested partners to deliver conservation on a landscape scale beyond the scope of any one of these organizations. Science Applications also works with partners to identify biological and social science needs and provide science support that will inform conservation planning and catalyze coordinated management actions across multiple jurisdictions.

Capacity for coordination and collaboration is essential for maintaining these partnerships, yet is often difficult to obtain outside of this program. Building durable relationships requires years and is easily disrupted when momentum is not sustained. Over the past decade, the Service’s Science Applications program has fostered partnerships to identify shared conservation goals. With clear goals and understanding of shared outcomes established, the Service and partners work within their respective authorities and priorities to deliver conservation actions that are collectively greater than the sum of the parts.

Science Applications customizes its approach to the needs of each individual partnership and the resulting landscape conservation efforts take on a variety of organizational forms tailored to local needs. The program has formed collaborations developed around specific geographies, while other partnerships focus on a specific group of organisms, such as pollinators, or ecological challenges, such as sagebrush and the

interplay between invasive species and wildfires in the West. Working with several long-standing and new partners, Science Applications continues to build the next generation of collaborative conservation efforts, framed in part, around regional associations of State fish and wildlife agencies. A newly established Landscape Conservation Joint Task Force between states and the Service will provide a collaborative venue to develop shared priorities, foster communication, explore new opportunities, provide a forum for early problem-solving on issues to enhance landscape conservation progress, and develop relationships with and support the work of the regional State and Service collaboratives, such as the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS), Midwest Landscape Initiative, the committee working with Nature's Network in the northeast, and the evolving collaborative in the West. The program is working and supporting more than 90 collaborative landscape scale partnerships throughout North America. Examples include:

- Science Applications provides dedicated collaboration and technical capacity in support of the partnership implementing the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS). This State, Federal, and private partnership focuses collaborative conservation efforts on connecting a network of lands and waters that support healthy ecosystems, thriving fish and wildlife populations and vibrant communities. The manifestation of this is a Conservation Blueprint that encompasses 15 States across the southeastern United States, plus Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, to identify important areas for conservation and restoration.
- The Midwest Landscape Initiative (MLI) uses shared conservation and management priorities to guide scalable solutions to achieve healthy, functioning ecosystems. Working alongside 13 Midwest States, three Canadian Provinces, and other partners, Science Applications co-leads and supports the MLI via a full-time coordinator, shared technical support, and convenes all participants to identify and address the region's conservation challenges.
- Nature's Network, which is a collaborative effort facilitated by Science Applications to bring together partners from 13 States, Federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations and universities to identify the best opportunities for conserving and connecting intact habitats and ecosystems and support imperiled species to help ensure the future of fish and wildlife across the northeast United States. Science Applications convenes the partners, negotiates shared strategic conservation goals that transcend jurisdiction, acquires and manages data and models that support identified conservation targets, and interprets resulting scientific information that is then used to support project implementation and conservation actions.

Science Applications' role in landscape conservation is multifaceted. Convening partners and facilitating collaborations are often the most critical needs to foster landscape conservation, and at times the most difficult needs for partners to address. By serving as a convener and a facilitator of sustained collaboration, Science Applications continues to support large landscape collaboratives across the country. In January of 2022, Science Applications assembled more than 200 Federal, State and nonprofit partners, for a virtual Future of Conservation Forum. The forum brought together public and private thought leaders from across the country representing diverse groups with the goal of creating sustained and connected networks of lands, waters, and people that fosters healthy wildlife populations and vibrant communities. Through a participatory process, attendees worked on building actions that can lead to an actionable national framework for landscape conservation in the era of climate change. Science Applications took the lead on producing a report and amplified a call to action for further discussion. Science Applications is a nimble program with the large-scale view to transform how the Service plans, designs, and delivers conservation to best serve the disparate science needs of internal programs and provide the science to support shared conservation priorities with States and other key partners. Science Applications will continue to work at the field-level providing resources and technical capacity needed to address local collaborations and decision making, while also maintaining a national perspective that can weave together landscape conservation efforts across the country.

Examples and Accomplishments

Innovative Restoration: Partnerships and People Tackle Invasive Annual Grass and Wildfire in the Sage

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in partnership with Oregon State University, University of Idaho, Bureau of Land Management, USDA Agricultural Research Service, USDA Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, Joint Fire Science Program, Cooperative Weed Management Areas, and Sage-grouse Local Implementation Teams, is working to address the devastating impacts of wildfire and other ecosystem threats in sage-steppe habitat to support sage-grouse and other animals that depend on sagebrush to survive. With an emphasis on actionable science, Science Applications is supporting three projects within the sagebrush biome in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. This diverse group of partners are developing pioneering approaches to habitat restoration and invasive annual grass management to improve rangeland health for sagebrush-dependent species and people's livelihoods. This critical work aims to address the knowledge gap around best practices for restoring depleted forb and grass understories in sagebrush communities, and to aid in improving understanding of the trade-offs associated with the creation and maintenance of linear fuel breaks, which are stretches of land that are modified to help contain or control wildfires. By working with partners, this progressive group continues to develop and apply the best available science, innovative strategies, and improved technology to deliver meaningful conservation.



Field data collection in sagebrush steppe.
Photo courtesy of Tim Prather.

The Wildlife Conservation Initiative: A Collaborative Approach to At-Risk Species Conservation

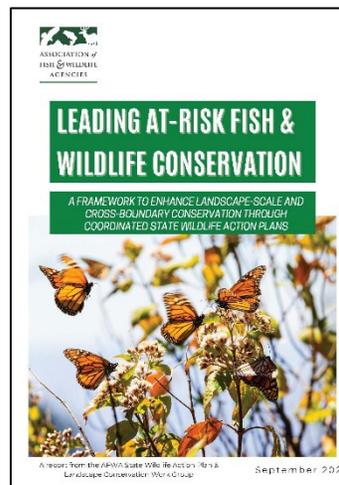
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Initiative (the Initiative) and the National Alliance of Forest Owners, have developed a collaborative approach to at-risk and forest-reliant species conservation. Technical and financial management support are also being provided by the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, Inc. and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. The Wildlife Conservation Initiative is an excellent model of how the Federal government and the private natural resource industry can work together to conserve at-risk species, such as the wood turtle or golden-winged warbler. Work includes nine on-the-ground projects located across the continental United States. In various stages of implementation, the projects are producing information to support proactive conservation of a diverse range of at-risk species and their habitats, including pollinators, mussels, turtles and songbirds with a goal of precluding the need for federal listing and associated regulations. Throughout this process, Science Applications has played a critical role in the overall management of the Initiative and regional projects, in funding project implementation, as well as in the development of the conceptual framework, and the criteria for project selection and performance metrics.



Wood turtle. Photo by USFWS.

State Wildlife Action Plans as Frameworks for Collaborative Landscape Conservation

Our commitment to building collaborative, peer-to-peer relationships with State partners has led to many proactive efforts to improve cross-jurisdictional management actions. In 2021, Science Applications was invited to cochair a State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and Landscape Working Group with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The goal of this working group was to better use the information in SWAPs for cross-jurisdictional decision making. The 56 SWAPs are foundational to conservation actions within all States, Territories, and the District of Columbia, focused within each State's geography. Because wildlife does not recognize State lines or borders, the lack of collaboration across State boundaries results in disconnected and potentially less efficient conservation efforts. This working group of 20 State, Federal, and NGO partners created five recommendations and five guiding principles to promote collaboration at meaningful scales across landscapes rather than within political boundaries. Those recommendations, unanimously adopted by State fish and wildlife agency directors in September of 2021, enhances the ability of the Service and its partners to collaboratively set and achieve shared conservation goals, uniting agencies, and diverse partners around shared, proactive conservation of native species, connecting habitats across the landscapes and increasing conservation efficiency and efficacy. Science Applications is providing resources that States would not otherwise have to work together, implement the recommendations of the working group, and regionalize their SWAPs.



2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Continue to work with peer fish and wildlife agencies, Tribes, and other conservation partners to support continuation of, expansion and adaptive changes to collaborative landscape conservation efforts including SECAS, MLI, Nature's Network, grasslands, and sage steppe.
- Support integration of State Wildlife Action Plans at regional levels as described in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies framework to enhance landscape-scale and cross-boundary conservation.
- Continue to work with stakeholders to identify and overcome barriers to creating a sustainable conservation and ecologically connected network of lands and waters across large landscapes.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Landscape Conservation is \$19,013,000 and 85 FTE, a program change of +\$6,102,000 and +25 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Landscape Conservation (+\$5,800,000/+25 FTE)—

The 2023 request increases Service capacity to effectively coordinate and support local, State, private, and Tribal conservation and restoration efforts that will advance collaborative landscape conservation by providing coordination and other user support, data management and spatial analysts, and social scientists. This support will be especially important as we promote environmental justice through conservation by working with underrepresented communities and underserved partners who have had limited opportunities to engage with landscape conservation efforts.

The increase in coordination and user support capacity will significantly enhance and accelerate working with willing partners toward building a durable conservation framework to promote biodiversity, climate adaptation and mitigation, and racial equity. Science Applications will continue to fill the important role of providing Federal support to local, State, and regional conservation efforts that contribute to creating a more inclusive and enduring conservation framework by bringing people and organizations together to accomplish shared conservation priorities.

Funding for coordination of landscape conservation will (1) enhance support for existing partnerships and develop new ones, particularly with Tribes and underrepresented communities (2) support the role of working lands in conservation (3) increase scientific and conservation activities in collaboration with Tribes and States and (4) weave together existing efforts across the country.

Paramount to the success of sustaining a connected network of lands and waters is a capacity to manage and make transparent information generated by partners about the landscape and a technical ability to provide geospatial tools to make better decisions at local, regional, and national scales. There is a significant need to improve data management in the US Fish and Wildlife Service and to enhance geospatial mapping capability to help translate the science and information developed at the regional scale to address local interest and needs. A funding increase allows for Science Applications to invest in data managers and geospatial mapping capacity who will work with States, Tribes, and local partners to better incorporate new and ongoing efforts that often are unaccounted for in national databases.

Meeting people where they are, which includes earning trust and respecting cultural norms, is key to building successful partnerships. The funding increase will allow Science Applications to improve its conservation efforts by incorporating critical social science knowledge and approaches to inform a better understanding of (1) the types of conservation planning and strategies that are relevant, beneficial, and accepted by the citizens we serve; (2) how conservation impacts people; and (3) how the work that the Service does contributes to the well-being of local communities. Developing the strategic priority of understanding the human dimensions of wildlife and other natural resource conservation efforts will enhance the collaborative work of the Service.

Baseline Capacity (+\$302,000/ +0 FTE) – The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$302,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: Science Support
Subactivity: Adaptive Science

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change from 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Adaptive Science	(\$000)	10,517	10,517	+35	0	+12,333	22,885	+12,368
	FTE	6	6	0	0	+9	15	+9

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Adaptive Science

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Climate Science	+7,000	+3
• Conservation-Pollinators	+5,000	+6
• Engaging Students in Conservation Science	+300	+0
• Baseline Capacity	+33	+0
Program Changes	+12,333	+9

Program Overview

Science Applications is committed to providing critical science support to inform planning, monitoring, and evaluation work. Under the Adaptive Science subactivity, we work collaboratively with Tribes, Federal agencies, States, non-governmental organizations, and other partners to accomplish the shared goal of connecting the lands and waters of this Nation, and to address climate change and other landscape-scale threats. This subactivity provides for the development of scientific information, indigenous knowledge, tools, and techniques that stakeholders can apply to anticipate, monitor, and adapt to environmental changes and their effects on fish, wildlife, plants and cultural resources.

The program’s non-regulatory nature allows it to be nimble, and therefore well-suited to assisting with both longstanding and emerging complex conservation issues. Through the Adaptive Science subactivity, the Service plays a national leadership role in the coordination and development of shared conservation priorities among partners by connecting lands and waters in support of species conservation, climate resiliency, and outdoor recreation. Local and grassroots efforts are often overlooked in their contribution to conservation. The Adaptive Science subactivity enables us to focus across different scales and tailor our approach to meet the needs of our partners.

Adaptive Science supports the work with partners to design, identify, and deliver an ecologically connected network of landscapes and seascapes resilient to environmental threats, such as climate change. The output and subsequent outcomes of this work reflect the needs of the partners and the Service in a particular geography. Work often takes the form of landscape conservation designs (LCDs), which serve as blueprints that guide partners in targeting their management efforts to areas they collectively identify as having high conservation value. Development of LCDs under this subactivity underpins the program’s overall collaborative landscape conservation efforts. LCDs are a partner-driven proactive approach that requires flexibility and adaptive management to achieve a sustainable, resilient landscape to meet the ecological needs of fish, wildlife and plants, and the social and economic needs of current and future generations. It is an iterative, collaborative, and holistic process resulting in spatially explicit products and adaptation strategies that provide information, analytical and decision support tools, maps, and strategies to achieve conservation goals collectively held among partners. In other instances, work takes the form of decision support tools tailored to the needs of partners to aid in the proactive decision making that leads to desired conservation outcomes.

Science Applications continues to work in close collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey Climate Adaptation Science Centers to share and translate Service and partners' climate science and training needs and integrate cutting-edge climate data and adaptation approaches to landscape conservation designs and at-risk species status assessments.

Key Examples and Accomplishments

North American Pollinator Conservation

North America faces a pollinator crisis that impacts natural landscapes, agricultural systems and the economy. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through the work of the Science Applications program, is aligning internal capacity and providing leadership and coordination across Service programs, and with partners, to advance conservation science and action for monarch butterfly and at-risk pollinator species across the American landscape. In 2021, Science Applications staff led national and international efforts to advance pollinator conservation including (1) producing a geospatial decision support tool that assembles native bee data across the United States, Mexico, and Canada, (2) co-leading the development of a draft tri-national pollinator conservation framework, and (3) working alongside partners, advanced a national-scale monitoring strategy for native bees and other pollinators. Staff, in collaboration with the US Geological Survey, also completed a seven-part pollinator science webinar series focused on broadening the Service's pollinator knowledge and skills. In 2022, the Science Applications program worked to develop and implement new ways the Service can address pollinator conservation to better serve employees, partners, and American public in addressing the decline of pollinators and their habitats. Efforts are underway to catalyze innovative science projects for at-risk pollinator species, to apply geospatial tools to prioritize biological inventory and monitoring efforts, and to guide strategic habitat delivery. The investments made by the Science Applications program in monarch butterfly and pollinator conservation can be seen in strategic actions taken across landscapes guided by interagency coordination and state fish and wildlife agency planning efforts, including the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Mid-America Monarch Conservation Strategy and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Monarch Conservation Plan.



Service employee and volunteer planting pollinator habitat. Photo by USFWS.

The Cascades to Coast Landscape Collaborative

The Cascades to Coast Landscape Collaborative (Collaborative) seeks to achieve a connected network of functioning ecosystems and working lands through their user-friendly decision support tools that make complex datasets more accessible for on-the-ground conservation projects. The group is partnered with over 40 organizations from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean in Oregon and Washington to address common environmental challenges, such as climate change and other large-scale stressors. Key partners include small farm and private forest owners as well as government agencies (U.S. Geological Survey and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), non-governmental organizations (Conservation Northwest), tribes (Yakama Nation), and industry (GreenWood Resources). Science Applications has supported the Collaborative via funding, overall co-development, leadership team participation, and technical and communications assistance. Specifically, Science Applications developed geospatial decision-support tools that advise local management plans and conservation priorities supporting a resilient landscape. Progress is measured by the number of engaged partners, as well as the conservation tools created and utilized. In 2021, the Collaborative developed and launched two new



Working lands and forest in southwest Washington. Photo courtesy of John Mankowski.

conservation tools: the Coastal Northwest Landscape Conservation Mapper (Mapper) and the Conservation Program Explorer (Explorer). The Mapper is an interactive web-based spatial tool that allows users to learn more about the landscape before planning on-the-ground projects through applying data layers. The Explorer is a web-based tool that increases private landowner access to incentive programs and associated agencies/organizations. Future work includes the expanded use of the Mapper by incorporating data from other ongoing work in Oregon and Washington, increased use of the Explorer tool and private landowner incentive programs, and a Pacific Northwest Landscape Conservation Forum.

Supporting connected lands and waters across the United States

Science Applications supports regional, State-led landscape partnerships and associated landscape conservation designs with agencies who hold trust responsibilities for fish and wildlife management within the United States. Work is currently centered on the following landscape partnerships: Northeast Landscape Conservation Partnership and Nature's Network; Midwest Landscape Initiative; Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy; and various partnerships in the western United States. The program plays important roles in each of these State-led partnerships. Science provides essential coordination to bring partners together to identify shared priorities. In addition the program will help people access, understand, and use landscape conservation designs (LCDs) and other decision support tools. Funding supports other decision support products, together with consistent data-management and data-quality assurance practices to ensure scientific integrity. By enabling key partners to join together to conserve the Nation's wildlife, Nature's Network, the Midwest Landscape Initiative, the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy and the forming coordination effort in the west embody the Service's commitment to working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance, fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats.



Conservation professionals review a draft of the Conservation Blueprint in the Southeast Region. Photo by USFWS.

Leading and Responding to Change in the Delaware River Watershed

The Delaware River Basin Restoration Program (Delaware Program) was authorized by Congress in 2016 in response to the need for collaborative partner conservation to support the river and its watershed. The Delaware Program focuses on reducing flooding and runoff, restoring fish and wildlife habitats, improving water quality, and enhancing public recreational access. Partners within the Delaware Program include Federal and State agencies, local, regional, and national non-governmental organizations, as well as landowners, hunting groups, municipalities, businesses, and foundations. There is also active relationship building with Tribal nations to find mutually beneficial opportunities for them to engage in watershed conservation priorities. As the lead Federal agency, the Service's Science Applications program guides the development of the conservation and restoration shared framework, facilitates the Delaware River Watershed Conservation Collaborative and a landscape conservation design effort, and oversees the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund and Request for Proposals. Since 2018, there has been a total conservation impact of \$72.6 million across the watershed-including funding 123 projects through a combination of Federal awards and matching funds. These grant opportunities have allowed the Delaware Program to restore more than 100 miles of streams and nearly 900 acres of wetlands and provided new or improved public access to nearly 5,000 acres of land. Furthermore, as a pilot for increasing equity, the FY 2021 funding prioritized projects that address racial and economic disparities in access to nature and conservation outcomes. As a result, 47 percent of these projects will impact a community in which residents have been denied access to natural resources in the past. In just five years, the Delaware Program has become a model for voluntary, incentive-driven approaches to landscape conservation that builds upon and strengthens existing partnerships. The Service also received



Penrose Swamp property in Weiser State Forest. Photo courtesy of Wildlands Conservancy.

funding in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the Delaware River program.

Wildlife Migration Corridors

In 2018, the Department of the Interior issued Secretarial Order 3362, “Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors” (Order). The Order recognized that big game species such as elk, mule deer, and pronghorn are ecologically, culturally, and economically important to western states. Science Applications provides fulltime staff support to coordinate collaborative effort among 11 western State fish and wildlife agencies, Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private landowners. Conservation focus and action is facilitated through individual State SO3362 Action Plans created by each respective State. The Action Plans also include State identified research priorities. Since the inception of the Secretarial Order, Science Applications has supported 38 priority research projects identified in the 11 respective SO3362 Action Plans. Research funding assisted the States in developing the robust science necessary to identify priority corridors, support data analysis and mapping, and to identify movement corridors that either cross or are impeded by highways. This work has resulted in the creation of highly detailed corridor maps that inform land management actions for the benefit of big game species, sage grouse, migratory birds, and other wildlife on Federal, State, and private land across the West. Recently, this information was also used to show where wildlife crossings occurred, allowing western States to seek funding made available through the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 to build crossing structures for wildlife. In future years, Science Applications seeks to add additional western States to the collaborative and take steps to more fully engage Tribes given the cultural significance of big game and the importance of Tribal lands across the West.



Pronghorns cross a highway in Wyoming. Photo by USFWS.

2023 Program Activities:

The 2023 budget will:

- Support innovation in and monitoring of critical pollinator populations
- Continue addressing science needs and LCD development to assist partners in creating a connected network of lands and waters.
- Share, translate, and integrate climate science and data from the Climate Adaptation Science into integrate cutting-edge adaptation approaches

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Adaptive Science is \$22,885,000 and 15 FTE, a program change of +\$12,368,000 and +9 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Climate Science (+\$7,000,000/+3 FTE)

This increase funds additional Science Applications work with partners to identify climate science and spatial planning needs and gaps, as well as develop climate adaptation strategies and support of climate research. Science Applications will revitalize and expand collaborative efforts with external partners to address climate change impacts at the landscape-level, with an emphasis on environmental justice. The program will work closely with State and Tribal wildlife managers, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and communities adjacent to National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, National Conservation Lands, National Forests, and other lands managed by the Federal government, as well as States, Tribes, and municipalities. The program will support these partnerships in identifying shared climate science priority needs, and developing and updating high impact climate adaptation strategies such as the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy, a national, government-wide strategy to safeguard fish, wildlife, plants,

and the natural systems upon which they depend. Science Applications will work with partners in a science support role to identify, revise, or develop tools for collaborative Landscape Conservation Designs (LCD) planning and delivery, including the consistent incorporation of climate and ecological trajectory data to inform shared goal setting across geographic and political boundaries. LCDs will also identify critical areas for management under the Administration's America the Beautiful initiative to ensure the conservation of wildlife corridors and the connectivity of habitat under conditions of a changing climate. Additional funding will allow for more climate research that focuses on identification of possible regional ecological trajectories under various climate change scenarios and will address key climate stressors including sea level rise and storm surge, drought, heat waves, wildfire, and flooding. Science Applications will focus on the most significant social-ecological issues raised by our partners to better integrate people, especially underrepresented communities, into climate adaptation efforts to conserve species and habitats.

Conservation-Pollinators (+\$5,000,000/+6FTE)

North America faces a pollinator crisis that impacts our natural ecosystems, our agricultural security, and the Nation's economy. The list of at-risk pollinator species continues to grow, including iconic species, such as monarch butterfly and American bumblebee. The nationwide nature of the crisis requires coordinated action and focused capacity working across Service regions and programs. Therefore, the Service will use additional funding to (1) advance pollinator science including species range and distribution, population status and trends, and threats assessments, (2) coordinate restoration efforts across the Service with key partners, including States and Tribes, and (3) engage a variety of sectors to help amplify conservation efforts. Results will benefit a broad array of other trust resources, most notably declining migratory birds. The work will include dedicated capacity for western monarch butterfly coordination, pollinator science, communications, taxonomy, ecotoxicology expertise as well as field crews for habitat restoration and data collection. Throughout, the Service will engage new partners, including underrepresented communities, to bring fresh perspective and ideas to the mission pursuit and to mobilize the next generation of conservationists and scientists. This investment will complement the inventory and monitoring work on federal lands by the National Refuge System.

Engaging Students in Conservation Science (+\$300,000/0 FTE)

To mobilize the next generation of conservation professionals the Service will recruit college students and recent graduates to fill internship opportunities that will help rebuild the Service workforce and create clear pathways to careers in conservation, and provide a living wage to high-performing students interested in careers in conservation. Interns will work with Service employees and leaders on landscape conservation projects that connect with or spark community actions that ultimately contribute to America the Beautiful efforts. This opportunity will provide interns with paid experience in conservation and help them explore potential careers in public service.

Baseline Capacity (+\$33,000/ +0 FTE)

The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$33,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: Science Support
Subactivity: Service Science

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Service Science	(\$000)	6,750	6,750	+139	0	+8,708	15,597	+8,847
	FTE	17	17	0	0	+17	34	+17

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Service Science

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Conservation Science	+4,471	+9
• Climate Science	+4,000	+8
• Zero Emission Vehicles	+154	+0
• Baseline Capacity	+83	+0
Program Changes	+8,708	+17

Program Overview

Science and indigenous traditional ecological knowledge are fundamental to the delivery of the bureau’s mission. Many of the threats to fish and wildlife resources that the agency works to manage or mitigate to maintain species at healthy, sustainable and desired levels come with gaps in knowledge that must be filled. Science Applications provides science support to ensure that Service programs are able to make informed decisions based on the best available science to support regulatory decisions, biological opinions, LCDs, and species and habitat conservation recommendations to land managers. Service Science provides Service programs with critical information that can improve decision-making for refuge management, endangered species listing and recovery, data management, and other activities that promote science excellence.

Science Applications coordinates work with the U.S. Geological Survey, such as the Climate Adaptation Science Centers and the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units Program, providing them with the science needs identified by our partners to obtain relevant, timely, best available science upon which to make decisions, and to ensure data and analyses are non-duplicative and accessible, as appropriate. The Service partners with the U.S. Geological Survey, other Federal and State agencies, Tribes, universities, and scientific institutions for acquiring scientific knowledge to answer imminent and important natural resource management questions and provide near-term solutions to address urgent and emerging issues. Service Science funding is used to advance research, develop models, and secure scientific expertise to help managers interpret and apply the best science available. Priorities in this area include:

- North American pollinator conservation
- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Emerging wildlife health issues
- Data management
- At-Risk and Endangered Species recovery
- Pre-listing conservation partnerships with States
- Prevention and mitigation of invasive grasses and wildfires in the sagebrush ecosystem
- White-Nose Syndrome research, monitoring and outreach to save imperiled bats

Additionally, the Service’s ability to provide rigorous scientific evidence for making critical conservation

decisions rests on the quality and availability of our data and that of our partners. Statutory requirements for responsible data management include the Geospatial Data Act of 2018 and the Open, Public, Electronic, and Necessary (OPEN) Government Data Act of 2019 (also known as the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policy Making Act). These acts address the importance of sharing data, making it openly available and usable, and applying it to inform decision-making. Science Applications also coordinates critical underlying aspects of Service work relating to scientific integrity policies and a robust data management and science approach. The Science Support activity buttresses the Service's work of improving all aspects of data management to ensure the reliability, availability, and transparency of the agency's scientific information. Data stewardship and the monitoring of outcomes advances scientific understanding, helps adjust policies or operations, and ensures future decisions are evidence-based and made using the best available science.

2023 Program Activities:

The 2023 budget will:

- Support specific resource management decision-making of Service programs (e.g., listing under the Endangered Species Act, National Wildlife Refuge land acquisition, and climate adaptation best management practices);
- Continue linking and integrating independent management actions into a coordinated whole for species and ecosystem sustainability;
- Establish science-based tools for at-risk species conservation and their habitats in a non-regulatory context;
- Provide coordination and support for data management; and
- Build a workforce for the future.

Key Examples and Accomplishments

Climate Change Action Program

Successfully addressing climate change and other stressors that are transforming the nation's lands and waters is the defining conservation challenge of the 21st Century. The Climate Change Action Program (CCAP) sets the high-level priorities and objectives for the Service to manage and direct the effects of climate change across the country guided by innovative conservation practices and sound science. Science Applications leads CCAP implementation, ensuring that efforts to address climate change across the Service are organized and focused on top priorities. Science Applications provides the support that programs need to collectively identify and address top challenges, whether that is determining how to mitigate sea level rise at a national wildlife refuge, identify how climate change will affect an at-risk species, or assess the vulnerability of Service operated facilities. Science Applications also provides an important link to other partners, such as the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy Network, ensuring the agency's work is participatory and meets the needs of on-the-ground users.



Sea ice in Alaska. Photo by USFWS.

In FY 2021, the CCAP achieved several key accomplishments, including reigniting a Climate Change Community of Practice; partnering with the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Park Service, and others to publish the Resist-Accept-Direct (RAD) Framework, a decision-making tool that helps resource managers make informed strategies for responding to ecological changes resulting from climate change; implementing a number of actions to reduce the Service's fleet, energy, and water use, and publishing a monthly update of peer-reviewed research that reaches several hundred stakeholders. Work in FY 2022 and FY 2023 builds off of first-year successes. Efforts included finalizing criteria for selecting Nature-based Solutions (NbS) adaptation projects and providing funding for that work; completing a Climate Adaptation Toolkit that can be used as a one-stop shop to obtain relevant climate and climate-related spatial information

via readily-available publications, web portals, interactive maps, and online tools that require no specific modeling/programming expertise; working with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and other partners to revise voluntary guidance for incorporating climate change considerations into State Wildlife Action Plans; developing a white paper with recommendations on how to use relevant provisions of the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy to help the America the Beautiful campaign to be climate-informed; and developing a plan and recommendations on how the Service can work cooperatively with Tribes and indigenous groups to address climate change impacts to key natural resources. Concurrently, the Service will continue to review and update policies that better address the needs of climate adaptation and mitigation.

American Rescue Plan Zoonotic Disease Initiative

Authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the Zoonotic Disease Initiative is a new Federal financial assistance program to fund wildlife health projects for Tribes, States, and Territorial governments. The grant program was developed by Wildlife Health Partnership, a group of veterinarians and biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Geological Survey, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Funding will be used to establish and enhance Tribal, State, and Territorial fish and wildlife agencies' capability to effectively address health issues involving free-ranging terrestrial, avian, and aquatic wildlife and minimize the negative impacts of health issues affecting free-ranging wildlife through surveillance, management, and research to protect the public against zoonotic disease outbreaks. Science Applications is facilitating the team developing the program and is responsible for managing the grant program. In FY 2022, the Initiative worked to release \$9 million in grant funds to Tribes, States, and Territories. Another \$9 million will be released in FY 2023.



Adult deer tick. Photo courtesy of Creative Commons.

Data Management Transformation in Alaska

Since 2018, the Science Applications program has supported cross-programmatic collaboration to develop and implement the use of data management best practices in the Service's Alaska Region. Improved data management will allow Service staff to provide easy public access to data and more effectively reuse data across programs to answer complex questions about the Service's trust resources, resulting in better decisions. Science Applications has provided financial support, technical expertise through data managers, and leadership to assist with the transformation of how data is managed in the Alaska Region. Data managers provide essential technical expertise that are critical to identifying data management needs and solutions to meet those needs. Program leadership has communicated data management needs to other regional leaders and subsequently gained broad cross-programmatic support for regional data management efforts. During FY 2021, Science Applications completed the Alaska Region Data Management System Requirements Analysis Needs Assessment and System Suitability, and updated data management guidance documents. Science Applications' efforts catalyzed the creation of three new data management positions in other regional programs. Started in FY 2022 and continuing in FY 2023, programmatic data managers in Alaska will work to implement a formal regional metadata standard and begin the implementation of recommendations from the regional data management needs assessment.



Data collection at Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by USFWS.

Building an Inclusive Workforce for the Future

Science Applications is working across the country to provide opportunities for minority students to explore careers in conservation. In 2021, the Pacific Southwest Region and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) launched a new internship program for students from historically underrepresented groups. Science Applications provided coordination and funding that are critical to supporting the HACU internship program in the region. In addition to coordinating with HACU to administer the internship program, the program leads a regional working group that matches prospective interns with priority science projects. In FY 2022, Science Applications continued to build upon the success of the inaugural year by supporting five interns. In the Southeast Region, Science Applications is establishing closer relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Science Applications worked to encourage participation in regional student programs, as well as streamlining and assisting students in navigating the application process. The program is committed to ensuring welcoming environments for position placement and continued mentoring during internships and full-time positions. In FY 2022, the program worked closely with Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama; Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Alabama; and Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida. Science Applications is working to institute in-person liaisons with a regular presence on the three campuses to assist and inform students and professors about the Service. In the Midwest Region, Science Applications and the University of Texas-San Antonio launched a new internship program to provide training and career opportunities in conservation for students from historically underrepresented groups. In partnership with the Field Museum of Chicago, the interns worked in local communities implementing conservation measures for the monarch butterfly. This experience gave the interns a chance to learn about the Service's mission, gain career experience and, receive mentoring while contributing towards high priority conservation needs. In FY 2021, Science Application also worked with Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever's Education and Outreach team to co-create a new program called *Journey to Conservation Careers*. The on-line certification program for high school students introduces them to wildlife conservation. Following a pilot with student participants, *Journey to Conservation Careers* publicly launched in FY 2022. Collectively, these efforts also coordinate with Service hiring managers and supervisors to promote the abilities of students and interns to identify opportunities for them to transition to full time Service employees.



HACU intern at Los Padres National Forest. Image courtesy of Liz Menchaca.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Service Science is \$15,597,000 and 34 FTE, a program change of +\$8,708,000 and +17 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Conservation Science (+\$4,471,000/+9 FTE)

Science Applications will develop or refine LCDs that: 1) support the revision of the Refuge System's Comprehensive Conservation Plans, and 2) provide scientific support for improved integration of Service lands and programs into shared landscape conservation priorities. Science Applications will provide science, geospatial technical capacity, and perform surveys to quantify abundance and distribution for at-risk species conservation efforts. This includes providing biological and data assistance for Species Status Assessments and convening innovative partnerships to address shared management challenges. Working with the Migratory Birds Program and external partners, Science Applications will support grassland conservation efforts and identify priority science and conservation needs to support the collaborative effort to bring back the 3 billion birds lost over the last half century. Working collaboratively within Service programs, Science Applications will weave together efforts with external partners and continue to build on collaborative conservation successes. Science Applications will also continue to model data excellence for the Service by improving our Science Catalog to provide collaborative conservation project and product data in a form that is discoverable, accessible, interoperable, and re-useable for all users. This

includes developing a centralized, secure, metadata file storage system.

Climate Science (+\$4,000,000/+8 FTE)

With an increase in funding, Science Applications will work with Service programs to develop climate change science that will be incorporated into management decisions to achieve long-term conservation objectives for ESA-listed and at-risk species and their habitats. The Program will work closely with the National Wildlife Refuge System and Fish Hatchery Program to assess the climate vulnerability and risk associated with Service infrastructure and habitat management.

In this science support role, Science Applications will continue to work seamlessly with the U.S. Geological Survey's Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs) and other Interior and science agencies to ensure climate science needs are addressed. Science Applications will distill climate research produced by the CASCs and others for natural resource managers to ensure the latest science and decision support tools are incorporated into Service management and conservation decisions. Additional funding will allow Science Applications to continue working with other Service programs to use the Resist-Accept-Direct framework that incorporates consideration of future climate and social drivers. In partnership with others, Science Applications will develop and deliver training and technical assistance for climate adaptation and resilience projects. Additional funding allows the Service to develop crucial climate science communications capacity. In coordination with External Affairs, Science Applications will co-lead related strategic climate change communication efforts to (1) identify current and emerging climate change communication needs and opportunities across the Service, (2) provide Service staff and partners with tangible information about their role in addressing climate change, (3) create and implement a proactive national climate change communications strategy for the Service and a corresponding toolkit for Service partners usage, and (4) coordinate climate change communication efforts with other bureaus and partners, as appropriate.

Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions (+\$154,000/ +0 FTE) – The 2022 budget includes funding to accelerate the conversion of the Service's fleet to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and provide charging stations and hydrogen fueling stations to support those vehicles and future ZEVs. This conversion will immediately reduce the Interior's contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and dependence upon hydrocarbons. The investment in infrastructure will support these new vehicles and ensure charging infrastructure is available for subsequent ZEVs. This project is being coordinated across Interior and with other agencies to maximize utility of charging and hydrogen fueling stations in areas where multiple agencies operate. The funding also supports a small planning and coordination function to effectively deploy the fleet and charging infrastructure.

Baseline Capacity (+\$83,000/ +0 FTE)

The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$83,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

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General Operations

General Operations

Activity: General Operations

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Budget Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Central Office Operations	(\$000) FTE	25,758 195	25,758 195	+1,380 0	0 0	+7,233 +25	34,371 220	+8,613 +25
Management and Administration	(\$000) FTE	44,166 612	44,166 612	+3,973 0	+144 +1	+16,151 +52	64,434 665	+20,268 +53
Servicewide Bill Paying	(\$000) FTE	35,748 0	35,748 0	+1,501 0	0 0	+8,975 +0	46,224 0	+10,476 0
Aviation	(\$000) FTE	3,237 8	3,237 8	+45 0	0 0	+18 +0	3,300 8	+63 +0
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	(\$000) FTE	7,022 1	7,022 1	+10 0	0 0	+2,000 +0	9,032 1	+2,010 +0
National Conservation Training Center	(\$000) FTE	26,014 100	26,014 100	+605 0	0 0	+4,441 +6	31,060 106	+5,046 +6
Total, General Operations	(\$000) FTE	141,945 916	141,945 916	+7,514 0	+144 +1	+38,818 +83	+188,421 1000	+38,658 +84

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for General Operations

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Baseline Capacity	+4,627	+0
• Office of Communications	+2,000	+15
• Native American Programs Coordination	+2,000	+7
• Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management and Justice40 Coordination	+1,625	+3
• Regional Directors	+1,000	+0
• Joint Administrative Operations	+6,697	+40
• Information Resources and Technology Management	+6,000	+10
• Zero Emission Vehicle Management	+150	+1
• HR Capacity	+160	+1
• Servicewide Bill Paying	+8,559	+0
• National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	+2,000	+0
• NCTC Operations	+2,000	+4
• NCTC Annual Maintenance	+2,000	+2
Program Changes	+38,818	+83

Program Mission

The General Operations Program provides the management and support that allows the Service’s programmatic activities and organizations to accomplish their mission. Primarily, it provides headquarters, regions, and field offices with the resources and support services (e.g., human resources, finance, leadership, information management, etc.) needed to carry out the work of the Service to benefit the

American people. General Operations also ensures that the Service is in compliance with legal, regulatory, and Departmental policies for all administrative functions.

Program Elements

Five subactivities comprise the General Operations Program:

Central Office Operations – Headquarters offices provide the Service with the leadership, strategic direction, and necessary resources to accomplish mission priorities and goals. The offices included in this sub-activity include the following: Office of Communications, Native American Coordination Office; Regional Directors Offices; and Document Tracking/Controlled Correspondence. In addition, the Service funds diversity functions through this subactivity. The Service is proposing to create a new Assistant Director for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, who will oversee Diversity issues. This proposal also includes moving the existing diversity office out of the Director’s office and updating its title.

Management and Administration –The Assistant Director for Management and Administration is responsible for the Joint Administrative Operations function which oversees Budget and Performance; Human Resources; Acquisition and Property Management, Safety; and Risk Management and Analytics. The Service recently restructured such that functions that require extensive training, certification (e.g., contracting warrants), or specialized knowledge (e.g., personnel policies and authorities) are centralized for cost and operational efficiencies. Also funded in this subactivity, the Agency Chief Information Officer (ACIO) supervises Information Resources and Technology Management and cybersecurity.

Servicewide Bill Paying – This subactivity provides a means to centrally budget and pay for nationwide operational support and infrastructure costs that the Service incurs in the course of accomplishing its mission. A non-exhaustive list of expenses paid from this subactivity include Information Technology (IT) and communication needs, payments to the DOI Working Capital Fund (WCF), mail delivery and distribution, and some printing.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) – NFWF runs a competitive challenge grant program with a statutory non-Federal matching requirement of 1:1 for all awards of federally appropriated funds. However, in recent years the non-Federal match has been closer to 3:1, multiplying the impact of the Service’s funding for on-the-ground conservation projects.

National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) – Opened in 1997 and located on 533 acres along the Potomac River in Shepherdstown, WV, the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) is the Service’s primary training facility and the “Home” of the Service. In addition to training Service employees, NCTC provides training on a reimbursable basis to conservation professionals from DOI, other Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, not-for-profit conservation organizations, private landowners, and the business community. NCTC is a state-of-the-art training facility with multiple classroom buildings, a wage grade training facility, auditorium, the USFWS Museum and Archive, and a high-definition studio for video and broadcasting services.

Activity: General Operations
Subactivity: Central Office Operations

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Budget Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Central Office (\$000)		25,758	25,758	+1,380	0	+7,233	34,371	+8,613
Operations FTE		195	195	0	0	+25	220	+25

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Central Office Operations

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Office of Communications	+2,000	+15
• Native American Programs Coordination	+2,000	+7
• Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management and Justice40 Coordination	+1,625	+3
• Regional Directors	+1,000	+0
• Baseline Capacity	+608	+0
Program Changes	+7,233	+25

Note: *The Service is proposing to change the name of the External Affairs program to the Office of Communications to better reflect that program’s mission and area of responsibility, particularly regarding coordination of internal communications and information sharing within the Service.*

Additionally, the Service is proposing to move the Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management from under the Director’s office to a standalone office with an Assistant Director, and change its name to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

Program Overview

The Service’s Central Office Operations provide leadership, strategic direction, and organizational management required to accomplish mission priorities and goals. These functions include policy provision from Administration-appointed officials, implementation of equal employment opportunity, coordination of Service contact with Native American Tribes, and communications and outreach.

Office of the Director, which includes the Director, Deputy Director, and staff specialists, provides policy direction and support for program and management activities of the Service. Goals for this office include promoting a national network of lands and waters for conserving fish and wildlife; protecting endangered species, migratory birds and inter-jurisdictional fish; and facilitating partnerships to conserve fish and wildlife for present and future generations.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility delivers required equal employment opportunity (EEO) programs to include EEO complaints, diversity and inclusion, recruitment and outreach, affirmative employment, public civil rights, and special emphasis program management, along with programs and services to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Service. The Service Diversity office is a part of the Department Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility effort to address high-priority needs in support of nine recently published Executive Orders to ensure programs, policies, activities, facilities, and

services administered by the Service meets to needs of the American public to include ensuring accessibility for all, and barrier removal in recruitment, employment, training, development, promotion, and retention.

Office of Communications oversees and coordinates the communications activities of the Service, including internal communications, public affairs, media services, congressional and legislative affairs, partnerships, webpage development, policy and compliance, printing and publishing, and multimedia communications.

Native American Programs Coordination serves as a key point of contact for Native American Tribes and works to expand the Service's capacity to work cooperatively with Tribes to further the Service's conservation mission.

Regional Directors (RDs) advise the Service Director, lead the Service's field staff, manage the conservation of our lands and the administration of our programs in the field, and develop recommendations on national and regional policies, plans, and procedures. In addition, the RDs serve as liaisons to State, local and Tribal governments, civic and interest groups, and the public within their geographic jurisdictions.

Correspondence/Document Tracking. The Department uses DTS to assign correspondence for action, route correspondence to officials for their review and concurrence, and track correspondence and other packages. Developed by the Service, DTS is used across all bureaus of the Department.

2023 Program Activities

- Provide the Service with the leadership, strategic direction, and technical expertise to accomplish mission priorities and goals.
- Provide policy direction and implementation guidance for the entire Service.
- Support the Administration's priorities for public civil rights, diversity, equity, and inclusion and implementing equal employment opportunity laws and directives; and the implementation of the Service's Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan.
- Coordinate Service consultation with Native American Tribes.
- Coordinate communications and outreach efforts across the organization, highlighting Administrative priorities.
- Develop and implement communications policies and guidelines for Service employees.
- Provide strategic direction on significant, complex, and controversial issues.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Central Office Operations is \$34,371,000 and 220 FTE, a program change of +\$7,233,000 and +25 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR Level.

Office of Communications (+\$2,000,000/+15 FTE)— The program is requesting additional funding to make critical investments, particularly in internal and digital communications. This will allow the Service to better coordinate communications across a number of social media and traditional platforms, which will result in better responsiveness to public inquiries and improved customer service. It also will allow the Service to engage a variety of partner organizations, particularly underserved and urban communities, in the Service’s conservation work and programs. In FY 2023, the Office of Communications anticipates continuing to prioritize communications on Administration priorities such as America the Beautiful, Climate Change, investment in infrastructure, including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, improved access on public lands, and addressing racial equity and environmental justice issues.

Native American Coordination Office (+\$2,000,000/+7 FTE) — On January 26, 2021, as one of his first executive actions, President Biden issued a *Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships*. In it, President Biden established an Administration priority to respect Tribal sovereignty and self-governance; commit to fulfilling Federal trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations; and engage in regular, meaningful, and robust consultation with Tribal Nations, which are cornerstones of Federal Indian policy. The Service ardently supports that priority. Regular, meaningful, and robust consultation is an expression of respect for Tribal sovereignty and self-governance, and is both necessitated by and integral to fulfilling Federal trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes. The program increases will provide an ability to hire two new staff, who will support the National Native American Coordination Office. In addition to establishing greater internal support, the Program intends to use most of the increased funding for regional work with Tribes, enhancing government-to-government interactions. Three additional employees will be located in regional offices in areas with a large Tribal presence, and funding will also support four half-FTE positions to be cost shared with other headquarters program offices. This will establish cumulatively four Tribal Liaison positions within program-specific offices who will support the overall Native American Coordination Office.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (+1,625,000/+3 FTE) —The budget includes an additional \$1.7 million as part of a Department wide Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility budget initiative to address identified high-priority needs. These needs support a number of Executive Orders, including:

- Executive Orders 14050 and 14041, Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans – Through Historically Black Colleges and Universities;
- EO 14049 Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities;
- EO 14045, Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics; 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce;
- EO 14031, Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders; 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government;

- EO 13988, Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation; and supporting the Department on EO 14020, advancing gender equity and equality in the workplace.

Supported by \$400,000 of this request, the Department, bureaus, and offices will jointly conduct a review of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility program across Interior to identify gaps, challenges, and best practices and to examine Department and bureau roles, responsibilities, and governance. These funds will also bolster the Service's ability to support the planning, delivery, and oversight of strategic and measurable actions under the agency's Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan. The plan is focused on employee engagement, barrier analysis and removal, and targeted recruitment. The investment in the Diversity Program will help strengthen partnerships, enhance data analytics and barrier removal, and improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the Service, building a workforce that fully represents the people and communities we serve, and creating work environments where all employees feel empowered and inspired to succeed. The request also includes \$225,000 for one FTE to manage the Service's Justice40 responsibilities.

Regional Directors Offices (+1,000,000/+0 FTE) —The Service's eight Regional Directors oversee the day-to-day field operations of the Service, leading more than 7,000 highly-skilled biologists, maintenance workers, law enforcement officers, and an array of additional talented personnel. They are the means through which the Service advances conservation and engages the public and partners, and implements the Administration's priorities. This increase will provide \$125,000 per region to cover additional costs of leading a workforce with almost 1,000 new members, and increased challenges presented by increasing threats to our resources from climate change and other factors.

Baseline Capacity (+608,000/+0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$608,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: General Operations

Subactivity: Management and Administration

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Budget Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Management and Administration	(\$000)	44,166	44,166	+3,973	+144	+16,151	64,434	+20,268
	FTE	612	612	0	+1	+52	665	+53

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Management and Administration

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Joint Administrative Operations	+6,697	+40
• Information Resources and Technology Management	+6,000	+10
• Zero Emission Vehicle Management	+150	+1
• HR Capacity	+160	+1
• Baseline Capacity	+3,144	+0
Program Changes	+16,151	+52

Program Overview

Joint Administrative Operations

The JAO provides administrative support to Service programs, providing services essential to achieving conservation outcomes on the ground. JAO includes:

- Budget and Performance, which formulates, justifies, coordinates and executes the over \$3.6 billion budget for the Service.
- Acquisition Management covers contracting, personal property and fleet and space management.
- Economics, Analytics, and Risk Management coordinates OIG/GAO audits, Federal Register notices, and information collection; enterprise risk management; economic analysis; and enterprise analytics.
- Finance covers travel and charge card oversight; payments & collections; financial statements and real property.
- Human Resources covers hiring, compensation and benefits, employee relations, and personnel security.
- The Safety Office covers safety and occupational health, workers compensation and tort claims.

Information Resources and Technology Management

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS or Service), Assistant Director for IRTM (AD-IRTM) is responsible for partnering with all parts of the Service to ensure that the technology requirements of the FWS conservation program are met. To that end, IRTM is responsible for the development of policy and Service-wide guidance on information management and information technology practices impacting a myriad of business management and operational activities within the Service. IRTM develops, plans, and manages Service-wide Information Management and Technology (IMT) functions and resources that enable all programs and regions in the Service to perform their mission.

The AD-IRTM also serves as the Bureau Associate Chief Information (ACIO) and represents the Service as an active member of the DOI Chief Information Officer's Information Management and Technology Leadership Team (IMTLT). The components of IRTM include Operations, Policy/Planning, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Data Management, Cybersecurity and Privacy. These components cut across the full spectrum of information management and technology services to include customer support, infrastructure management, requirements processing, governance, strategic planning, geospatial services, application development and records management. The ACIO also manages the IT Investment Portfolio on behalf of the Service and oversees all IT acquisitions and complies with the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA).

2023 Program Activities

- Provide human resources support for headquarters and regional offices.
- Provide safety and occupational health support for the entire Service.
- Coordinate budget formulation, presentation, and execution.
- Provide finance, acquisition, and contracting management.
- Provide IT leadership, resources, and support for Headquarters and the regions.
- Coordinate IT policy development, capital planning, records management, and FOIA responsibilities.
- Provide technological infrastructure to support the Service's mission goals related to conservation, climate change, America the Beautiful, and promoting equity and diversity
- Strengthen cybersecurity operations, risk management, and compliance
- Provide management of IT operations throughout the Service.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Management and Administration is \$64,274,000 and 702 FTE, a program change of +\$16,151,000 and +52 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Joint Administrative Operations (+\$6,697,000/+40 FTE) — The Assistant Director for Management and Administration (M&A) leads the Joint Administrative Operations (JAO), a national organization that provides standardized administrative support services for the Service. Increases for M&A will support expedited services by our human resources, contracting and safety divisions, to allow for timelier provision of assistance to programs. Providing personnel to programs through the HR function, and letting contracts for priority conservation projects through the acquisition program contribute directly to meeting the Service's mission. With the growth of Service function and responsibilities over the years, the administrative functions have lagged behind, causing backlogs in contracting, hiring and other functions essential to mission success. This increase recognizes that the Service needs the behind-the-scenes support of staff in these essential functions to effectively deliver conservation, customer service, and collaborate with partners around the country. The substantial increases in the Service's request this year will allow almost 1,000 staff to be hired Service-wide, a significantly greater amount to be awarded in grants, and increases in construction and maintenance funds to be awarded to contractors. To successfully achieve the Administration goals to address climate change and create good-paying jobs in conservation, accompanying increases to necessary administrative functions are also requested. With additional resources across the

Service, ensuring there is adequate support to meet mission needs is critical and will ensure success in delivering the Administration's priorities.

Information Resources and Technology Management (+\$6,000,000/ +10 FTE) Effectively achieving the mission of the Service requires a foundational, state-of-the-art information technology and telecommunications infrastructure. This foundation consists of hardware, software, networks, cybersecurity, and a well-trained array of specialists to effectively meet the mission requirements of the Service. This infrastructure includes up-to-date servers, specialized software, network connectivity, fiber optics, switches, and cybersecurity tools that enable scientists, analysts, and supporting personnel to communicate effectively with each other, exchange data, and use computational resources. A modern, well-maintained information technology foundation also enables collaboration and outreach with peers and the public, domestically and worldwide, through virtual meetings, collaborative workspaces, and shared data. This technological foundation serves an integral role in enabling the success of the Service in meeting its mission.

We continue to make significant advances in the development and deployment of technological needs, including infrastructure, that allows Service employees and the public we serve to create, process, store, access, and utilize data in a way that is both secure, user friendly, and available. Our intent is to identify technology gaps and data needs, develop new data management systems, and provide secure and reliable connections for Service employees and the public in support of the FWS conservation mission priorities. Principal objectives include:

- Leverage the new Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS) to enhance and improve the connectivity across Service facilities and obtain the minimum connectivity thresholds for all Service locations.
- Provide efficiency and enhancements for data management and for the consumption and storage of data through identifying cloud service providers as priority locations for the storage of our data.
- Investment in the technological infrastructure, such as network and data storage, at levels adequate to support and enhance the Service's mission.
- Provide an information technology foundation to support priorities including climate change, America the Beautiful, and conservation initiatives throughout the Service

HR Capacity (+\$160,000/ +1 FTE) - The increases in the Service's request this year will allow almost 1,000 staff to be hired Service-wide to undertake the action described in this budget. This support for human resources recruitment and hiring efforts, such as new tools and capabilities, is needed to effectively support mission needs including talent teams to improve hiring assessment tools and processes and strengthening intern hiring including support for talent pipelines, improvements to paid internship programs, and longer-term goals for improving internship programs that include outreach to, and recruitment of, individuals from underserved communities.

Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Conversions (+\$150,000 / +1 FTE)— The 2023 budget includes funding to accelerate conversion of the Service's fleet to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and provide charging stations and hydrogen fueling stations to support those vehicles and future ZEVs. This conversion will immediately reduce the Interior's contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and dependence upon hydrocarbons. The investment in infrastructure will support these new vehicles and ensure charging infrastructure is available for subsequent ZEVs. This project is being coordinated across Interior and with other agencies to maximize utility of charging and hydrogen fueling stations in areas where multiple agencies operate. The funding also supports a small planning and coordination function to effectively deploy the fleet and charging infrastructure. Funding in this subactivity would fund a position to support ZEV Charging and Infrastructure Management Integration.

Baseline Capacity (+\$3,144,000/+0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$3.1 million in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: General Operations
Subactivity: Servicewide Bill Paying

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Servicewide (\$000)		35,748	35,748	+1,501	0	+8,975	46,224	+10,476
Bill Paying FTE		0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Servicewide Bill Paying

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Communications, Information Technology and Security	+4,939	+0
• Working Capital Fund	+2,303	+0
• Miscellaneous Reimbursable Support Agreements	+566	+0
• Workers Compensation	+280	+0
• Baseline Capacity	+416	+0
Program Changes	+8,975	+0

Program Overview

The Servicewide Bill Paying subactivity covers bills received by the Service for charges by the Department or other outside entities. These are fixed costs that the Service must cover.

Communications, Information Technology, and Security

Expenses in this category include payments for domestic and international network services; costs associated with land, wireless, radio, and satellite communications; Certification and Accreditation (C&A) costs for IT systems; providing security for IT systems; and improving compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The funds in this subactivity are exclusively for bills required to keep our IT operations secure and modern.

DOI Working Capital Fund (WCF)

The Department of the Interior provides centralized administrative and business services and systems to Interior bureaus and offices and to other customers. The Service request includes funding for its portion of the WCF bill.

Servicewide Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Compensation Costs

Workers' compensation includes costs of compensating injured employees and dependents of employees who suffer accidental deaths while on duty. Unemployment compensation costs represent the estimated annual costs of paying unemployment compensation claims.

Postage

Expenses in this category include contract charges for intra-agency and Departmental courier and mailroom services.

Printing

Despite having reduced printing costs through the use of electronic media over printed publications, the Service still incurs costs for printing copies of certain documents.

Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks (AS-FWP)

The Service contributes funding to cover costs of salary, benefits, and travel for certain personnel under the Assistant Secretary for activities directly related to the Service.

Reimbursable Support Agreements

Expenses in this category relate to support services provided by the Department and external agencies. Examples include the Employee Assistance Program, administration of the Flexible Spending Plan, and storage services provided by the National Archives and Records Administration.

Memberships

This funds the Service's memberships and participation in professional, scientific, conservation, and other organizations that share the Service's priorities.

2023 Program Activities

- Provide IT leadership, resources, and to support FWS program priorities.
- Maintain effective cybersecurity operations, risk management, and compliance.
- Provide effective and efficient management of IT operations throughout the Service.
- Support worker's compensation and unemployment compensation payments.
- Manage payments for DOI Working Capital Fund and other DOI bills.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Servicewide Bill Paying is \$46,224,000 and 0 FTE, a program change of +\$8,975,000 and +0 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Communications, Information Technology and Security (+\$4,939,000 / +0 FTE)—As a geographically distributed organization of over 600 networked locations, FWS relies heavily on a dependable, secure, and a flexible network to ensure robust agency communications and that data-intensive program requirements are supported by state-of-the-art data transfer, cloud computing, and storage technologies. This investment includes funding to meet increased demands for network bandwidth to support operational activities and program efficiency while serving as a catalyst for collection, storage, analysis, transfer, and archiving of mission-critical scientific data. By leveraging cloud computing, FWS can better support diverse scientific computing, storage, workflow, analytical, and data sharing requirements of scientific and administrative activities. Such capabilities directly support program requirements noted above through enhanced capabilities for Geospatial data creation, acquisition, and analysis that is a critical component of the FWS mission.

Cybersecurity funding will enhance FWS capabilities for network security detection and monitoring systems and strengthen the ability to respond to network activity. This investment will advance the capability of FWS to proactively catch initial intrusions rather than allow them to fester and grow in capability on our systems over months without being noticed. This increase in capability will reduce risk

for all of our systems and increase the ability of IRTM to offer unique services our customers need without greatly increasing risk due to lack of resources to support unique needs. Specifically, this will allow FWS to increase monitoring, threat hunting, system documentation and risk management capability while also adding additional security protection capabilities to our systems. Adding these capabilities for improved network visibility and ability to detect and respond to malicious actors will provide necessary capacity to detect and respond to potential actions by well-funded threat actors.

Working Capital Fund (+\$2,303,000 / +0 FTE) —This funding accounts for differences between FY 2022 annualized CR amounts and actual requirements to ensure the Service can fund necessary bills without assessments to programs.

Miscellaneous Reimbursable Support Agreements (+\$566,000 / +0 FTE)—This increase provides full funding for other RSAs to support the Employee Assistance Program, administration of the Flexible Spending Plan, and storage services provided by the National Archives and Records Administration.

Worker's Compensation (+\$280,000 / +0 FTE) —This funding accounts for differences between FY 2022 annualized CR amounts and actual requirements to ensure the Service can pay its obligations for workers compensation.

Baseline Capacity (+\$416,000 / +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$416,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: General Operations
Subactivity: Aviation Management

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change from 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Aviation Management	(\$000)	3,237	3,237	+45	0	+18	3,300	+63
	FTE	5	5	0	0	0	5	0

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Aviation

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Baseline Capacity	+18	+0
Program Changes	+18	+0

Program Overview

The safety and training oversight of the Fish and Wildlife Service's fleet of planes and pilots is the responsibility of the National Aviation Management Branch, previously managed within the Migratory Bird program. The Assistant Director of the Migratory Bird Program serves the agency's Aviation Executive overseeing this Branch and represents the Service as a voting member of the DOI's Executive Aviation Committee, which is responsible for developing the aviation policy. Additionally, the Branch is responsible for the Service's Aviation Fire program, Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) program development within DOI, and the Service's Emergency Management for aviation incidents.

The Branch administers all Service aircraft acquisitions and vendor contracts. The Service has identified and is implementing six priorities that will immediately improve the Service's Aviation Enterprise: Automated Flight Following, Crew Resource Management, Improved Pilot Training Program, Standardized Risk Assessment Processes, Aviation Management Communications, and a Kodiak Aircraft Training Plan.

2023 Program Activities

Aviation Management – The 2023 request for the Service-wide Aviation Management Program supports the Service's continued efforts to improve aviation safety, training for pilots and aerial observers, and provide critical oversight of aviation operations at the national level. Funding enables Service Fleet Pilots to transport staff and materials to remote sites in the National Wildlife Refuge System, conduct biological monitoring and surveys critical to informing conservation efforts, and participate in prescribed fires that help prevent or mitigate wildland fires on Federal land. The Aviation Management Program is also the Service's lead on developing policy and procedures on the use of UAS.

Justification of 2023 Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Aviation is \$3,300,000 and 5 FTE, a program change of +\$18,000 and 0 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Baseline Capacity (+\$18,000 / +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$18,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Activity: General Operations**Subactivity: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change from 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	(\$000)	7,022	7,022	+10	0	+2,000	9,032	+2,010
	FTE	1	1	0	0	0	1	0

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	+2,000	0
Program Changes	+2,000	0

Program Overview

The NFWF runs a competitive challenge grant program with a statutory non-Federal matching requirement of 1:1 for all federally-appropriated dollars that NFWF awards. In recent years NFWF has averaged a 3:1 match. All grantee matching funds are non-Federal funds provided in cash or as in-kind services. NFWF uses the funding to leverage additional commitments of resources from corporations, foundations, and conservation partners. The funds are invested through outcome-focused grant programs guided by conservation business plans developed in partnership with the Service. Individual projects are reviewed by diverse outside reviewers (e.g., Federal, State, non-profit, educational and private sector), NFWF, and the Service.

2023 Program Activities

- Provide funding to State, local, non-profit, and private organizations for conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and plant resources through the grant process.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is \$9,032,000 and 1 FTE, a program change of +\$2,000,000 and 0 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (+\$2,000,000/ +0 FTE)—The requested funding will provide additional competitive grants to State, local, non-profit, and private organizations. NFWF will use this funding to leverage additional resources from corporations, foundations, and conservation partners. The funds will be invested in outcome-focused grant programs guided by conservation business plans developed in partnership with the Service. These projects will be focused on conservation efforts supporting the America the Beautiful Initiative.

Activity: General Operations
Subactivity: National Conservation Training Center

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
National Conservation Training Center	(\$000)	26,014	26,014	+605	0	+4,441	31,060	+5,046
	FTE	100	100	0	0	+6	106	+6

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for National Conservation Training Center

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• NCTC Operations	+2,000	+4
• NCTC Annual Maintenance	+2,000	+2
• Baseline Capacity	+441	+0
Program Changes	+4,441	+6

Program Overview

Opened in 1997 and located on 533 acres along the Potomac River in Shepherdstown, WV, the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) is the Service’s primary training facility and the “Home” of the Service. In addition to training Service employees, NCTC provides training on a reimbursable basis to conservation professionals from DOI, other Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, not-for-profit conservation organizations, private landowners, and the business community. NCTC is a state-of-the-art training facility with multiple classroom buildings, a wage grade training facility, auditorium, the USFWS Museum and Archive, and a high-definition studio for video and broadcasting services.

NCTC delivers training in person and in virtual environments year-round, along with outdoor safety courses that reach 3,900 course students and 13,800 webinar participants through more than 350 programs. Course are presented over a wide-range of mission-critical topics including leadership, program academies, biology, climate change, conservation policy, safety, and wage-grade topics. NCTC's innovative training is also adapted from classroom sessions for remote learning training videos and webinars to support in-classroom courses. NCTC also presents training delivered in collaboration with other Federal and state agencies and other partners to ensure students learn from a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives and thus expand collaborative partnerships for conservation. The USFWS Library supports this training through its literature search services and 10,000-volume physical collection.

NCTC is currently working both internally and with State, Federal, and NGO partners to provide training opportunities such as the Director’s Fellows Program, sponsoring over 100 students yearly and the Native Youth Community Adaption and Leadership Congress reaching both Native high school and college students representing well over twenty tribes a year.

NCTC collaborates with State, Federal and NGO partners to implement and support targeted recruitment programs for youth and young adults, such as the Directorate Fellows Program (DFP) and the Native Youth Climate Adaption and Leadership Congress (NYCALC). Annually, DFP provides 100+ training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students that focus on conservation and climate science

projects that lead to a direct hire authority and placement into 50-60 permanent Service positions annually. NYCALC reaches Native high school and college students representing over twenty tribes a year and serves as a targeted recruitment program for the Indian Youth Service Corps hiring authority and broadly, the DFP and NYCALC programs support the Civilian Climate Corps.

NCTC works to incorporate inclusion into all our training curriculum. The Service is committed to developing and providing science-based curriculum in support of a diverse and inclusive workforce that supports our conservation mission, addresses climate change, and supports cultural differences, generational changes, and racial

2023 Program Activities

- Provides training opportunities for the Service, DOI and other Federal and non-Federal partners in conservation policies and regulations, applied landscape conservation, climate science, leadership and management, partnerships and communications.
- Advances climate change partnerships, recruitment strategies, training programs, and career pathways to green jobs supporting the Administration's goals to address climate change and Build Back Better (i.e. through the Civilian Climate Corps).
- Provides leadership development and training in Diversity and Inclusion in support of cultural differences, generational changes, and racial equity aligned with the Administration's priority to advance racial equity.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the National Conservation Training Center is \$31,060,000 and 106 FTE, a program change of +\$4,441,000 and +6 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Operations – Youth and Careers in Nature (+\$2,000,000/+4 FTE)—This funding will allow the Service to continue to provide training opportunities to internal as well as external partner audiences. NCTC will expand the infrastructure necessary to implement the Civilian Climate Corps (CCC) and the Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC) training programs. Staffing, direct partnership support, as well as, reporting and tracking systems will be developed. The CCC and IYSC will leverage existing partnerships and be coordinated at the highest level to build back communities better by providing participants with a livable wage and practice targeted recruitment strategies to advance racial equality to build the next generation of conservation stewards.

Annual Maintenance (+\$2,000,000/+2 FTE) —The request will allow the Service to maintain and expand day-to-day operational maintenance at the 533-acre campus. Funding would allow the NCTC to implement a life-cycle maintenance strategy to eliminate the maintenance project backlog, increase the level of preventive and restorative maintenance work, and allow for important upgrades to campus energy, mechanical, control systems and classroom technology on our 400,000 square foot campus.

Baseline Capacity (+\$441,000 / 0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$441,000 in this program which reflects

the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

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Construction

CONSTRUCTION

Appropriations Language

For construction, improvement, acquisition, or removal of buildings and other facilities required in the conservation, management, investigation, protection, and utilization of fish and wildlife resources, and the acquisition of lands and interests therein; [\$39,620,000]\$46,418,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That such amounts are available for the modernization of field communication capabilities, in addition to amounts otherwise made available for such purpose.

Note.—A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution. CONSTRUCTION [For an additional amount for "Construction", \$58,227,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of calendar year 2019, 2020, and 2021 wildfires, hurricanes and other natural disasters.] (Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022.)

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

The Service has the legal mandate and responsibility to ensure its inventory of assets, facilities, and infrastructure is safe and adequate to accomplish its conservation mission and that operations are conducted in compliance with applicable regulations. More than 19 laws, statutes, and executive orders govern what the Construction program must do with the funding it receives from Congress. Governing authorities are discussed below.

Refuge Recreation Act (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4). Authorizes development of fish and wildlife areas for recreational use, including land acquisition and facilities construction and management.

National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award contracts for the provision of public accommodations of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715-715d, 715e, 715f-715r). Provides for land acquisition, construction, maintenance, development, and administration for migratory bird reservations.

Fish and Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. 742a-742f). Authorizes the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources, including the acquisition and development of existing facilities.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 9601-9675). Authorizes Federal agencies to conduct cleanup and/or recover costs associated with releases of hazardous substances on or from land under our jurisdiction, custody, or control.

Federal Facilities Compliance Act (42 U.S.C. 6961). Requires Federal agencies to comply with Federal, State, and local solid and hazardous waste laws in the same manner as any private party.

Pollution Prevention Act, (42 U.S.C. 13101, 13101 note, 13102-13109), as amended by P.L. 101-508. Requires pollution that cannot be prevented at the source to be recycled in an environmentally sound manner and disposal as a last resort.

Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act (42 U.S.C. 7701 -7706). Establishes an earthquake hazards reduction program.

National Dam Safety Program Act (33 U.S.C. 467). Provides for Federal agencies to implement the Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety, which established management practices for dam safety at all Federal agencies.

National Energy Conservation Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 8152-8259). Establishes an energy management program in the Federal government and directs Federal agencies to perform energy surveys and implement energy conservation opportunities to reduce consumption of nonrenewable energy resources in buildings, vehicles, equipment, and general operations.

Energy Policy Act (EPAct) (P.L. 109-58). Extends previous Congressional direction to Federal facility managers with even greater goals of energy efficiency improvements in existing and new facilities, mandates increased use of renewable energy sources, sustainable building design and construction, metering of all Federal buildings, and procurement of Energy Star equipment. This legislation contains energy efficiency tax credits and new ways to retain energy savings.

Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) (P.L. 110-140). Intends to move the United States toward greater energy independence and security; increase production of clean renewable fuels; protect consumers; increase the efficiency of products, buildings, and vehicles; promote research on and deploy greenhouse gas capture and storage options; and improve the energy performance of the Federal Government.

Energy Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-260) – Expands energy and water investment requirements; expands energy auditing and reporting requirements; adds water metering to covered facilities; authorizes the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) and establishes program goals around energy and water resilience and environmental stewardship.

(16 U.S.C. 695k-695r). Provides for limitations on reduction of areas by diking or other construction in California and Oregon in the case of migratory waterfowl and other refuges, as well as other construction provisions.

(16 U.S.C. 760-760-12). Provides for the construction, equipping, maintenance, and operation of several named fish hatcheries.

(23 U.S.C. 144 and 151). Requires bridges on public highways and roads to be inspected.

Executive Orders

Presidential Memorandum of October 4, 1979. Directs all Federal agencies to adopt and implement the Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety as prepared by the Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology. (Secretary of the Interior Order No. 3048, implements and assigns responsibility for a Department-wide dam safety program in accordance with the President’s memorandum.)

Executive Order 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards (October 13, 1978). Requires agencies to ensure that facilities comply with applicable pollution control standards; ensure that sufficient funds for environmental compliance are requested in their budgets; and include pollution control projects in an annual pollution abatement budget plan.

Executive Order 13717, Establishing a Federal Earthquake Risk Management Standard (February 2016). Updates performance goals to strengthen the security and resilience of the Nation against earthquakes, to promote public safety, economic strength, and national security. New Implementation Guidelines (January 2017) provide Federal agencies with clarifying guidance for implementing Executive Order 13717.

Executive Order 13834, Efficient Federal Operations (May 17, 2018). This EO was revoked by EO 13990 *Executive Order on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis* (January 20, 2021), except for sections 6, 7, and 11, which address the roles and responsibilities of the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Executive Order 14008 *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. Directs Federal agencies to have a whole of government approach to combat climate change, to achieve or facilitate a carbon pollution-free electricity sector no later than 2035 and procure and integrate clean and zero-emission vehicles into the fleet.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Construction Justification of Fixed Costs and Internal Realignments <i>(Dollars In Thousands)</i>		
Fixed Cost Changes and Projections	2022 Total or Change	2022 to 2023 Change
Change in Number of Paid Days Total paid days for FY 2023 is 260 (2080 hours) which is one day less than FY 2022. This information is validated in the published OMB Circular A-11.	+0	-30
Pay Raise The President's Budget for FY2023 includes one quarter of a planned 2.7% pay raise and three quarters of a planned 4.6%.	+125	+314
Employer Share of Federal Employee Retirement System The change reflects a 1.1% (and 1.8% for Law Enforcement) increase in the employer contribution to the Federal Employee Retirement System.	+44	+0

Appropriation: Construction

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Nationwide Engineering Services	(\$000) FTE	5,368 46	5,538 48	+284 0	0 0	404 +3	6,056 51	+688 +3
Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety	(\$000)	2,427	2,427	0	0	0	2,427	0
Line-Item Construction Projects	(\$000)	10,398	10,398	0	0	+27,537	37,935	+27,537
Total, Construction	(\$000) FTE	18,193 46	18,193 48	+284 0	0 0	+27,941 0	46,418 51	+28,225 +3

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Construction

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Core Engineering Services	+235	+3
• Line-Item Construction Projects	+11,258	0
• Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	+10,867	0
• DIFCOM-Radio Modernization and DM	+5,412	0
• Baseline Capacity	+169	0
Program Changes	+27,941	+3

Program Overview

The Service’s Construction program accomplishes its mission in accordance with applicable laws, statutes, and executive orders, directly supports the Administration’s priorities by increasing the resilience of ecosystems and communities across the Nation and reduces racial inequities to the access of public lands and facilities by investing in the implementation of climate resilient and nature-based engineering solutions and enhancing and improving access to facilities.

The Service’s lifecycle management approach to facilities and infrastructure management will allow the Service to pursue these opportunities as well as deliver high quality, timely, cost-effective, and code-compliant construction projects in support of the operations and maintenance of Service facilities. Construction funding supports engineering and technical program management for the Service’s entire inventory of assets, including 568 National Wildlife Refuges, 70 National Fish Hatcheries and one historic fish hatchery, and 51 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices. The Service’s infrastructure projects support the Administration’s goals to build back better, increasing resiliency in facilities and operations by pursuing energy efficiencies or alternative energy in new construction and rehabilitation projects, using American made materials. The Construction program delivers exceptional engineering design and construction, facility maintenance, and regulatory compliance to provide these benefits and deliver the Service mission to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The Construction program provides for the major maintenance, modernization and renewal of Service facilities and is an integral to the overall management of the Service’s portfolio.

Program Elements

The Construction appropriations consists of the following activities and program elements:

- Nationwide Engineering Services (NES) – This activity manages the numerous construction and maintenance projects undertaken each year; protects employees, visitors, and volunteers by ensuring that operations comply with safety and environmental laws and regulations; supports access to Service lands; and guides energy conservation.
- Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety – This activity supports the safety and security of the Service’s dams, bridges, and buildings. This primarily is accomplished for the most critical structures through inspections, assessments, and monitoring. Many of the functions carried out in this activity are prescribed by law.
- Line-Item Construction – This activity contains the specific construction projects requesting funding each year. These projects reconstruct, repair, rehabilitate, and replace existing buildings or other structures/facilities, including dams and bridges. Projects for modernization, alteration, and new buildings and structures/facilities also may be included. Funding may be used for project-specific planning, design, and construction management; construction, demolition, site work, and land acquisition; and the purchase of associated furniture, fixtures, and equipment. Completed individual projects from Line-Item Construction with authority remaining may transfer unspent balances of less than \$1,000,000 for unforeseen reconstruction, replacement, or repair of facilities or equipment damaged or destroyed by storms, floods, fires, and similarly unanticipated events.

Appropriation: Construction
Activity: Nationwide Engineering Services

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022(+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Core Engineering Services	(\$000)	4,681	4,681	+284	0	+404	5,369	+688
	FTE	46	48			+3	51	+3
Waste Prevention and Recycling	(\$000)	63	63	0	0	0	63	0
Environmental Compliance	(\$000)	624	624	0		0	624	0
Total, Nationwide Engineering Services	(\$000)	5,368	5,368	+284	0	+404	6,056	+688
	FTE	46	48	0	0	0	51	+3

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Construction

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Core Engineering Services	+235	+3
• Baseline Capacity	+169	+0
Program Changes	+404	+3

Program Overview

The Nationwide Engineering Services activity supports the implementation of safe construction and maintenance projects, regardless of funding source, and provides the guidance needed to comply with environmental and energy laws. The three program elements that comprise this activity are discussed below.

Core Engineering Services – Funding in this program element provides technical oversight for construction and maintenance projects throughout the Service, regardless of funding source. Engineers provide technical expertise and assistance to the field for the entire construction life cycle for Line-Item projects, Deferred Maintenance, and Federal Highways projects. Accomplishing these varied projects requires Headquarters’ policy development, budget formulation and execution, coordination for efficiency, and national technical consistency, as well as day-to-day supervision and technical guidance from regional managers.

Environmental Compliance – This program supports natural resource conservation and protects the health and safety of employees, visitors, and volunteers. On-site environmental compliance audits protect our natural resources by ensuring proper management of hazardous wastes and hazardous materials and by making certain that wastewater discharges entering rivers and streams are below EPA thresholds. Audits also ensure that drinking water provided by on-site systems is safe and in compliance with monitoring requirements. The program provides oversight, technical assistance, and training for more than 700 field stations to help ensure compliance with complex environmental laws and regulations at federal, state, local, and tribal levels. The program also restores natural resources by providing project oversight and technical assistance for the clean-up of large-scale environmental contamination of air, water and soil pollution that may adversely affect human health and the environment. Recently completed clean-ups demonstrate the positive impact on wildlife

and benefit to the local community associated with beneficial reuse of formerly contaminated areas.

Waste Prevention, Recycling and Environmental Management Systems –This program mitigates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with Service operations by supporting implementation of Service-wide sustainability practices. Examples include identifying and implementing energy and water conservation measures, initiating and completing renewable energy projects, improving efficiencies in fleet management, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, adopting sustainable operations and work practices, planning and reducing the use of toxic/hazardous chemicals and materials, and decreasing wastes that can leach into the environment. This program is the Service’s mechanism for accomplishing two of the Administration’s key priorities: (1) reducing the Service’s overall carbon footprint, and (2) increasing energy and water conservation. While these goals will be accomplished by implementing energy and water conservation measures at our facilities, ensuring facilities meet sustainable building standards, and implementing renewable energy projects, additional resources of approximately 0.25% of the Current Replacement Value (CRV) for 5 years are required to meet the Administration’s priorities.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the Nationwide Engineering Services activity is \$6,056,000 and 48 FTE; an increase of \$688,000 over the 2022 Annualized CR.

Core Engineering Services (+\$235,000/ +3 FTE): This increase enhances the Service’s ability to provide technical expertise and assistance for projects across the entire infrastructure portfolio. This support ensures safe, welcoming, and accessible facilities for staff and visitors and will also support building clean energy projects, remediation of abandoned mines and wells, and improvement of critical water infrastructure. This funding also enables the Service to strengthen its ability to support proactive maintenance of its assets by investing in performance-based requirements, design templates, and management tools that evaluate investments and remove nonessential costs.

Base Capacity (+\$169,000/ +0 FTE) The 2023 budget includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill the FWS mission. The budget includes \$169,000 in this program which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2022. This request in combination with the FY 2023 fixed costs amounts will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without impacting program activities.

Appropriation: Construction
Activity: Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change from 2022(+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
Dam Safety and Security	(\$000)	1,113	1,113	0	0	0	1,113	0
Bridge Safety	(\$000)	1,239	1,239	0	0	0	1,239	0
Seismic Safety	(\$000)	75	75	0	0	0	75	0
Total, Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety	(\$000)	2,427	2,427	0	0	0	2,427	0
	FT E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Program Overview

The Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety activity provides information needed for engineers to assess the safety and security of the Service’s dams, bridges, and buildings. The three program elements that comprise this activity are discussed below.

Dam Safety and Security – This program element supports the safety and security of 18 high hazard dams, part of the Service’s inventory of 300 dams. Located on refuges and hatcheries for the purpose of resource or facility management, these dams provide vital benefits such as recreation, habitat, flood risk reduction, irrigation, wetland creation, water supply for hatcheries, nesting habitat for waterfowl, and fishing. Funding supports the most critical activities to ensure existing dams are maintained, identified for rehabilitation, and properly operated to protect human life, property, and the valuable natural resources on Service lands.

Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) provide site-specific guidance for on-site detection and mitigation of conditions that may cause dam failures and communication protocols for notifying and evacuating downstream populations. Periodic Safety Evaluation of Existing Dams (SEED) inspections identify dam deficiencies at the earliest stages that when addressed, may stave off more serious repairs, consequences, or interventions, and avoid increasing the maintenance backlog.

SEED inspections include performing and reassessing hazard classifications, which are based upon estimates of loss of life and property damage should a dam fail. This program element also funds engineering analyses of the response and safety impacts of a dam because of increased magnitude of flood and earthquake predictions. The Service uses the hazard classification, a risk assessment, and the overall condition of the dam to identify and prioritize dam repair and rehabilitation projects.

Management of major rehabilitation or construction work is accomplished under the supervision of the Service’s Dam Safety Officer. Consistent with practice from past years, unobligated funds from dam safety projects may be used to address ongoing Dam Safety and Security needs (e.g., additional SEED inspections, minor dam safety repairs, low hazard dam inspections) or used for emergency construction projects. The inspection of low hazard dams is the lowest priority, though conducting these inspections would help ensure compliance with state dam safety programs.

Bridge Safety – This funding supports work to improve the safety and integrity of the Service’s approximately 700 bridges that serve essential administrative functions or provide primary public access. The Service accomplishes this work through the application of technically current design guidelines and a comprehensive inspection, appraisal, and inventory program. Bridge inspections are conducted at time intervals required by statute. During bridge inspections, Service staff determine and verify safe load-carrying capacity; identify and recommend mitigation of unsafe conditions; and identify maintenance, rehabilitation, or reconstruction needs. Like dam safety projects, funding for bridge safety projects is requested as part of the Line-Item Construction activity.

During FY 2023, the Bridge Safety Program will pursue completion of bridge inspections required by law. The inspections will prioritize in the following order: public use bridges in less than satisfactory condition; non-public use bridges in less than satisfactory condition; public use bridges in satisfactory condition or better; and non-public use bridges in satisfactory condition or better. Consideration also will be given, on a case-by-case basis, to approximately 30 bridges recommended for scour inspection, because of a 2015 Program Review recommendation.

By prioritizing inspections as described, the Service will maximize staff and public safety and access. Safety remains the top priority for the Service; if safe conditions cannot be verified, the Service will remove a bridge from service to preserve safety.

Seismic Safety – This program element funds planning and analysis of the seismic safety of the Service’s approximately 6,500 buildings. The work fulfills the requirements of Executive Order 13717 (Establishing a Federal Earthquake Risk Management Standard, February 2016) and allows the Service to identify buildings that present a substantial risk to the safety of Service personnel, volunteers, and visitors in the event of a significant earthquake. Program staff screen Service-owned buildings to identify those that are *exceptionally high risk* (EHR). Any building found to meet EHR criteria undergoes a rigorous engineering analysis, which includes development of a cost estimate to mitigate seismic deficiencies. Engineering analysis and mitigation projects are funded via the Line-Item Construction activity.

Justification of 2023 Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety activity is \$2,427,000 and 0 FTE, level with the 2022 Annualized CR.

Appropriation: Construction
Activity: Line-Item Construction

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022(+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers(+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Line-Item Construction	(\$000)	10,398	10,398	0	0	+11,258	21,656	+11,258
Zero-Emission Vehicle Charging Stations	(\$000)	0	0	0	0	+10,867	10,867	+10,867
DIFCOM-Radio Modernization & DM	(\$000)	0	0	0	0	+5,412	5,412	+5,412
Total, Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety	(\$000) FTE	10,398 0	10,398 0	0 0	0 0	+27,537 0	37,935 0	+27,537 0

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Construction

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Line-Item Construction Projects	+11,258	0
• Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	+10,867	0
• DIFCOM-Radio Modernization and DM	+5,412	0
Program Changes	+27,537	0

Program Overview

The Service is requesting a total of \$37,935,000 in FY 2023, an increase of \$27,537,000 over the 2022 Annualized CR.

A list of the proposed Line-Item projects for FY 2023 is provided below. A Project Data Sheet (PDS) for each project is included and provides key information about the project description, justification, cost, and schedule. Additionally, after the individual PDSs, a Summary PDS for FYs 2023-2027 presents the Service’s five-year construction plan and reflects funding directed to the most critical needs (i.e., health, safety, natural resources, and access). The Service selects and ranks projects in accordance with Department of Interior and Service guidance and priorities.

Justification of 2023 Program Changes

This funding will allow the Service to further the work needed at Yukon Delta NWR, continue to reduce the footprint by collocating offices at the E. B. Forsythe NWR and construct a new Community Nature Center at Ridgefield NWR. The Yukon Delta NWR project is working to remove older buildings and remediate the land in partnership with the Air Force to prepare for final transfer to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, land to be used for housing for the tribal health center personnel. The line-item construction projects are critical to preserving species, lands and tribal agreements, part of the core mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

DIFCOM- DOI Field Communication Modernization (+\$5,412,000/+0 FTE)

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will deploy mobile broadband connectivity and provide employees working in the field with voice, video, and data capabilities across a broader set of missions. In many locations, this deployment will enhance or replace a voice-only, mid-20th century land mobile radio technology with technology that is cheaper to operate and maintain. As

part of the broader modernization initiative across Interior in 2023, this funding will transition users in the Great Lakes (Region 3), Mississippi Basin (Region 4), the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. FWS will execute projects coordinated by the DOI governance body with project management, engineering support and IT security requirements managed by OCIO.

Solutions will be enterprise in nature and focus on leveraging existing government systems supporting Federal, State, local, Tribal and territorial users, commercial services such as public safety broadband (e.g., FirstNet), and satellite capabilities while strategically reducing infrastructure and the operations and maintenance costs associated with that infrastructure. DOI has existing field communications contracts to quickly begin and successfully execute this project.

For FWS, improved field communications will support resource management and researchers in the field, allowing remote data collection, as well as providing emergency services needed by law enforcement, improving public safety and emergency response. Consideration will also be made to help improve rural and Tribal broadband where feasible.

Zero Emission Vehicle Charging Stations (+\$10,867,000/+0 FTE)

The 2023 budget includes funding to construct Electric Vehicle (EV) Supply Equipment or EV Chargers nationally at selected Service stations. Actual cost of purchase and installation of EV Chargers will vary based on location, infrastructure needs, State/local incentive programs and other factors. This investment will support the national effort to expand EV Charger network, support Federal sustainably and emission-reduction goals and will increase accessibility to EV Chargers in urban and rural communities.

Line-Item Construction (+\$11,258,000/+0 FTE)

At the requested funding level, the Service will fund the projects shown in the project list below.

2023 Construction Project Listing by Program					
DOI Rank Score	Interior Region	Station	State	Project Title/Description	Request (\$000)
National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS)					
100	North Atlantic-Appalachian	E.B Forsythe NWR	NJ	Replace Co-located Field Office Building [cc]	5,326
70	Alaska	Yukon Delta NWR	AK	Remediate and Demolish Bureau of Indian Affairs Infrastructure Phase III of VI	3,341
62	Great Lakes	Minnesota Valley NWR	MN	Visitor Center/ES Colocation	1,000
51	Columbia-Pacific Northwest	Ridgefield NWR	WA	Construct Community Nature Center and Public Recreational Facilities Phase II [cc]	5,960
Subtotal, NWRS					15,627
National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS)					
90	South Atlantic-Gulf	Bears Bluff NFH	SC	Replace and Relocate Laboratory	1,404
90	Mountain Prairie	Baldhill Dam NFH	ND	Rehabilitate Ponds Kettles and Drainage (Ponds 1 to 10) (cc)	3,625
Subtotal, NFHS					5,029
Other					
70	Headquarters	Information Resources & Technology Management	N/A	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Investigations Phase V of V	250
70	Headquarters	Branch of Dam Safety	N/A	Nationwide Seismic Safety Investigations Phase IV of V	200
	Headquarters	Nationwide	N/A	Construct EV Charging Stations	10,867
	Headquarters	Information Resources & Technology Management	N/A	DIFCOM -Field Communications Modernization	5,412
52	Headquarters	Office of Law Enforcement	AK	Rehabilitate Sand Lake Warehouse	550
Subtotal, Other					17,279
TOTAL, CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS					\$37,935

Notes: p = planning, d = design, ic = initiate construction, cc = complete construction

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 100
 Planned Funding FY 2023 \$5,326,000
 Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

Project Identification

Project Title: Replace Co-located Field Office Building [cc]
 Project No: 2017291156
 Unit/Facility Name: Edwin B. Forsythe NWR
 Region: NORTHEAST
 Congressional District: 02
 State: NJ
 IR: 1 NORTH ATLANTIC-APPALACHIAN

Project Justification

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
35800400	10068036	BLDG MULTI-PURPOSE, EB FORSYTHE ADMIN FACILITY	100	1.0

Project Description (PD):

Replace Co-Located Field Office Building (cc) by constructing a 7,244 SF Phase 2 addition to the administrative headquarters for co-located Service staff in New Jersey. The existing administrative facility at the refuge was replaced in Phase 1 and was completed in February, 2017. The new addition will meet future needs for the 19 employees from the New Jersey Field Office (NJFO), 2 officers from the Service's South New Jersey Division, Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), and one member of the friends group. New Jersey's 46,000 acre Edwin B. Forsythe NWR is located in one of the Atlantic Flyway's most active flight paths, a spectacular place to view large concentrations of migratory water birds. This facility will allow staff to effectively promote the mission of the Service and educate the public about the importance of protecting wetlands and managing trust resources for the benefit of present and future generations. Sustainable and energy efficient features will be incorporated where possible and will lower operational costs and maintenance costs over time. The new addition will consist of office facilities and laboratory space, and eliminate leased space rental cost of \$164,000/yr. (7,500SF for NJFO staff), and \$46,562 (2,070SF for OLE staff), for an estimated payback period of 15 years. The new addition will include shared conference room, break room, restrooms, and law enforcement storage/evidence/ and interview rooms. The overall building footprint will use less space than the previous leased space, meeting the requirement of 180 SF/person.

Phased Project? Y Number of Phases: 2 0

Scope of Benefits (SB):

A replacement facility will meet current and future needs for the Refuge, NJFO and OLE staff while eliminating GSA leases for Service personnel in the State of New Jersey. Management efficiencies will be gained through a shared fleet, shared expenses, and by distributing duties more evenly and to more staff (i.e. program staff will share responsibilities for emergency plowing, shoveling sidewalks and O&M); an elimination of duplication of effort on management documents (i.e. outreach, reduction of administrative redundancies such as hurricane plans, safety plans, emergency action plans, etc.).

Investment Strategy (IS):

Construction of a replacement energy efficient sustainable facility supports Executive Order 13693, the Energy Independence and Security Act and the Energy Policy Act. Sustainable and energy efficient features will be incorporated into standard designs where possible, resulting in lower operational costs and maintenance costs will become over time. This project supports the goals of the DOI Real Property Cost Savings and Innovation Plan by designing our administrative wing to replace a high-cost lease for New Jersey Field Office and the South New Jersey Division of Law Enforcement staff.

Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):

If this project is not completed, the Service will continue to incur GSA lease costs for office space for the persons listed above. Additionally, the management efficiency of the Refuge will be decreased due to a lack of these persons being co-located with other Refuge staff.

Ranking Categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating:	N/A	1
API Rating:	N/A	TBD
API/FCI Score:	40%	40
SB Score:	20%	20
IS Score:	20%	20
CFA Score:	20%	20
Total Score:	(100%)	100

Combined ranking factors = (.040 x API/FCI score) + (.020 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

Capital Asset Planning

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No

VE Study: Scheduled TBD Completed TBD

Project Costs and Status

Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance/Repair Work:	\$0	0
Capital Improvement Work:	\$5,326	100
Total:	\$5,326	100

Project Funding History (entire project):

<u>History</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>
Funded to Date:	\$0
FY2023-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$5,326
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$0
Total:	\$5,326

Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D C
 Estimate Escalated to FY: 09/20

Planning and Design Funds:

Planning Funds Received in FY \$0
 Design Funds Received in FY \$0

*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2020 budget on this project data sheet.

Major Milestones

Construction Award/Start
 - Scheduled: 1/23
 - Actual: TBD
 Project Complete:
 - Scheduled: 04/24
 - Actual: TBD

Project Data Sheet

Prepared/Last Updated: 06/21
 DOI Approved: No

Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$

Current: 3,697
 Projected: 0
 Net Change: -3,697

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 70
 Planned Funding FY 2023 | \$3,341,000
 Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

Project Identification

Project Title: R7 Remove Old BIA Building #413
 Project No: 2017291111
 Unit/Facility Name: Yukon Delta NWR
 Region: ALASKA
 Congressional District: 00
 State: AK
 IR: 11 ALASKA

Project Justification

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
	74540	Yukon Delta NWR	100	

Project Description (PD):

This is Phase 4 of the demolition of Building 413 of the Bethel BIA Infrastructure in Bethel, Alaska. This phase will complete the demolition of all seven buildings within the complex. Once all phases of the project are completed, these vintage 1957 abandoned buildings, which currently pose a life-safety hazard will be safely removed. The facilities are not currently maintained, their structural integrity is compromised, and they contain friable asbestos.

The City of Bethel has indicated that solid waste from this project will not be allowed in the community landfill which is almost full. This limitation will significantly increase demolition costs if a landfill has to be developed or solid waste must be barged to another site. Addressing this limitation will comprise a major component of the site investigation plan, which is to develop an economically feasible disposal method including cost estimates with calculated alternatives. This effort will help ensure the best value for the dollar to the U.S. taxpayer. The completed project will enable the refuge to transfer critically-needed lands to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) in order to build hospital housing for that entity. The land was due to be transferred to this organization since the 1990s, but YKHC refuses to accept the land until the buildings are demolished.

Public Law 102-497 Sec 13.(b)(1) holds that the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Air Force will equally share the cost of the environmental response. The total project without overhead is expected to cost \$26 million. These removed assets will demonstrate over 70,000 square feet of real property inventory reduction.

Phased Project? Y Number of Phases 6

Scope of Benefits (SB):

Most importantly, this project will meet the federal government's legal responsibility under H.R. 5676 Sec.13.(b) to clean up the site before conveying the land to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation for the construction of a much-needed healthcare facility in this region. This project will make a major contribution to DOI and USFWS goals and objectives by removing a total of seven asbestos contaminated buildings that pose a serious health and safety risk to the community. This project will also reduce the building footprint by more than 76,711 square feet, including 60,072 square feet of office space and 2,930 square feet of warehouse space. The 27-acre site will be restored and remediated, benefiting wildlife and habitat near the 19-million acre Yukon Delta National Wildlife.

Investment Strategy (IS):

No operations and maintenance costs are being captured for these abandoned buildings. After completion of the project, a minor reduction in program costs is expected overall because the current assets will no longer be inspected and repair costs.

Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):

From a health and safety standpoint, these building demolitions will prevent unauthorized access to the buildings, one of which has already been vandalized, and will clean-up a potentially massive amount of friable asbestos- containing material, ensuring that staff and the public safety is safeguarded at all times.

Ranking Categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating:	N/A	
API Rating:	N/A	TBD
API/FCI Score:	40%	30
SB Score:	20%	20
IS Score:	20%	0
CFA Score:	20%	20
Total Score:	(100%)	70

Combined ranking factors = (.040 x API/FCI score) + (.020 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

Capital Asset Planning

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No

VE Study: Scheduled TBD Completed TBD

Project Costs and Status

Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance/Repair Work:	\$0	0
Capital Improvement Work:	\$3,600	100
Total:	\$3,600	100

Project Funding History (entire project):

<u>History</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>
Funded to Date:	\$4,075
FY2023-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$3,600
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$0
Total:	\$7,675

Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D C

Estimate Escalated to FY:

Planning and Design Funds:

Planning Funds Received in FY 2019 \$4,075,000

Design Funds Received in FY \$0

*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2023 budget on this project data sheet.

Major Milestones

Construction Award/Start

- Scheduled: 1/23
- Actual: TBD

Project Complete:

- Scheduled: 04/25
- Actual: TBD

Project Data Sheet

Prepared/Last Updated: 06/21
 DOI Approved: No

Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$

Current: 0
 Projected: 0
 Net Change: 0

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 62
 Planned Funding FY 2023 | \$1,000,000
 Funding Source: RESOURCE

Project Identification

Project Title: Replace Field office with visitor center expansion Phase 2
 Project No: 2022426123
 Unit/Facility Name: Minnesota Valley NWR
 Region: MIDWEST
 Congressional District: 03
 State: MN
 IR: 3 GREAT LAKES

Project Justification

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
35290700	10012328	BLDG VC VC/HQ - LML	65	0

Project Description (PD):

This project is to replace the Minnesota and Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office (ESFO) headquarters building with an addition to the existing Minnesota Valley NWR Visitor center. Phase I was the initial construction of the Visitor Center and Phase II is the construction of the ESFO addition. The addition will include office space for up to 18 employees and include a 25-person conference room that would serve multiple programs including Ecological Services, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge staff, and nearby Regional Office programs. The current ESFO facility was constructed in the 1940s and is located in a former residence on the Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge. Based on the most recent facility condition assessment, the current facility has significant deficiencies, and was determined to be beyond its serviceable life and will be demolished upon completion of this addition

Phased Project? N Number of Phases 0

Scope of Benefits (SB):

Construction of the addition will co-locate two programs into one space while reducing the overall amount of office square footage in the region.

Investment Strategy (IS):

The addition will be constructed using current FWS energy standards. Replacement of the old office with this addition will reduce the overall O&M as well by having less square footage.

Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):

The old office has issues with rodents and mold. Continued exposure of employees to the environment could be hazardous to their health

Ranking Categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating::	N/A	0
API Rating:	N/A	TBD
API/FCI Score:	40%	12
SB Score:	20%	20
IS Score:	20%	10
CFA Score:	20%	20
Total Score:	(100%)	62

Combined ranking factors = (.040 x API/FCI score) + (.020 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

Capital Asset Planning

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No

VE Study: Scheduled TBD Completed TBD

Project Costs and Status

Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance/Repair Work:	\$0	0
Capital Improvement Work:	\$1,000	100
Total:	\$1,000	100

Project Funding History (entire project):

<u>History</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>
Funded to Date:	\$3,000
FY2023-RESOURCE Funding (this PDS):	\$1,000
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$0
Total:	\$4,000

Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D C

Estimate Escalated to FY: 2021

Planning and Design Funds:

Planning Funds Received in FY	\$0
Design Funds Received in FY	\$0

*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2023 budget on this project data sheet.

Major Milestones

Construction Award/Start

- Scheduled: 1/23
- Actual: TBD

Project Complete:

- Scheduled: 04/25
- Actual: TBD

Project Data Sheet

Prepared/Last Updated: 02/22

DOI Approved: No

Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$

Current:	6,845
Projected:	0
Net Change:	-6,845

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 51
 Planned Funding FY 2023 \$5,960,000
 Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

Project Identification

Project Title: Construct Community Nature Center and Public Recreational Facilities Phase II of II
 Project No: 2017297493
 Unit/Facility Name: Ridgefield NWR
 Region: PACIFIC
 Congressional District: 03
 State: WA
 IR: 9 COLUMBIA-PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Project Justification

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
35100000	10055506	BLDG OFFICE COMPLEX MODULAR W/ AUC 12X16 SHED (CARTY)	65	0.54

Project Description (PD):

This project is a Phase II construction project to construct a 6,192-square-foot, one-story nature center to inform and engage an increasing number of refuge visitors about refuge management, wildlife resources, and Native American culture. Facilities will include an exhibit hall with video capability, a multi-purpose room, and a dedicated 1,189 square foot environmental education classroom. Project costs include construction of the building and surrounding landscaping and drainage, utilities, 0.5 miles of roadway, sidewalks, parking for 79 cars and 4 buses, and directional/interpretive signs. Outdoor visitor features on a 4-acre site include 4,300 feet of trails/sidewalks, kiosks, outdoor restrooms, a nature exploration area, an amphitheater, and observation decks. The Center has been authorized by Congress (Public Law 102-570), but not funded.

Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is an urban refuge located in the Portland-Vancouver area. The refuge receives over 120,000 annual visits, and as the area's population continues to grow, we expect visitation and the demand for environmental education to escalate. The refuge has no facility for its visitor interpretation and environmental education (EE) programs, which provide nature and cultural experiences for up to 5,000 student participants, plus 13,000 participants in special events/programming. These programs are currently highly seasonal due to lack of facilities to avoid inclement weather. An environmental education classroom will enable the program to grow to its fullest potential. The new facility will also provide fuller public access to refuge staff and services. The Center will also serve goals of the Service's Urban Wildlife Conservation Program creating a focal point for connecting a growing urban population to nature, wildlife, and resource conservation.

Project will be executed in two phases: Phase 1 will complete planning and design.

Phased Project? Y Number of Phases II

Scope of Benefits (SB):

This project will make a major contribution to DOI, FWS, and refuge visitor services goals for over 120,000 annual visits, including up to 5,000 environmental education participants and 13,000 participants in special events and programs. Bordering on Ridgefield, Washington, the refuge is 10 miles from Vancouver, Washington, and 15 miles from Portland, Oregon. As of April 2010, U.S. Census Bureau estimated the population of the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Statistical Area at 2,226,009, the 23rd largest Metropolitan Area within the United States. Portland has a very active construction market and so this construction will benefit the local economy directly.

Investment Strategy (IS):

This project will slightly increase annual operation and maintenance costs. The increase will be will largely be offset by administrative cost savings in vehicle fuel and drive time saved by consolidating refuge office space at this site.

Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):

Failure to complete this project would have a major impact on employee and public safety. Employee health and safety concerns with the existing trailer/office include air quality, crowded offices, seismic integrity, limited external lighting, interrupted communication systems, rodents, fire safety, physical security, and a problematic sewage system that needs frequent pumping and occasionally backs up. Other safety concerns are associated with visitor and employee access across multi-track at-grade railroad crossings over the main north/south line for commuter and freight traffic in the Pacific Northwest.

Ranking Categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating:	N/A	0.54
API Rating:	N/A	TBD
API/FCI Score:	40%	16
SB Score:	20%	20
IS Score:	20%	-5
CFA Score:	20%	20
Total Score:	(100%)	51

Combined ranking factors = (.040 x API/FCI score) + (.020 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

Capital Asset Planning

Capital Plan Business Case Required: Yes

VE Study: Scheduled 2021 Completed TBD

Project Costs and Status

Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance/Repair Work:	\$0	0
Capital Improvement Work:	\$5,960	100
Total:	\$5,960	100

Project Funding History (entire project):

<u>History</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>
Funded to Date:	\$400
FY2023-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$5,960
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$0
Total:	\$6,360

Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D C

Estimate Escalated to FY:

Planning and Design Funds:

Planning Funds Received in FY 2021 \$400,000
 Design Funds Received in FY \$0

*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2023 budget on this project data sheet.

Major Milestones

Construction Award/Start
 - Scheduled: 1/23
 - Actual: TBD
 Project Complete:
 - Scheduled: 04/25
 - Actual: TBD

Project Data Sheet

Prepared/Last Updated: 06/21
DOI Approved: No

Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$

Current: \$10,762
Projected: \$12,575
Net Change: \$ 1,813

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 90
 Planned Funding FY 2023 \$1,404,000
 Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

Project Identification

Project Title: Replace and Relocate Laboratory [cc]
 Project No: 2018307268
 Unit/Facility Name: Bears Bluff NFH
 Region: SOUTHEAST
 Congressional District: 06
 State: SC
 IR: 2 SOUTH ATLANTIC-GULF

Project Justification

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
35740100	10014324	BLDG LAB, LABORATORY & DORMITORY (IQMIS #2)	100	1.0

Project Description (PD):

Replace and relocate 3,432 sqft storm damaged fish laboratory to higher elevation to avoid loss of irreplaceable scientific samples and expensive lab equipment. Current building is located in coastal flood zone immediately adjacent to coastal river and exposed to frequent hurricane and flooding conditions. Additionally, the building is located in a moderate seismic zone, but the unsupported masonry cannot be efficiently rehabbed to protect the building and employees. Walls are already substantially cracked from settlement and other environmental forces such as hurricanes. The building is also very energy inefficient.

Total Project cost is \$2,404,000. Phase I is planned for 2021 at \$1,000,000 (WO 04135407), and Phase II is planned for 2023 at \$1,404,000 (WO 2018307268).
 Phased Project? Y Number of Phases: 2

Scope of Benefits (SB):

This project will make a significant contribution to reducing the FCI of NFHS mission critical water management assets. Completion of this project will retire the deferred maintenance for this asset and ensure appropriate science can be conducted to support recovery and restoration activities for Atlantic coast species.

Investment Strategy (IS):

There are currently no partners contributing to this project. The replacement of the fish laboratory building will reduce current corrective maintenance needs, but the new asset is not expected to have a major reduced overall O&M. However, energy efficiencies will be gained with a new asset.

Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):

Failure to act will allow further deterioration of the asset and expose staff to unstable structures during extreme weather events and will potentially require frequent replacement of laboratory equipment due to vulnerability to weather events. Exposure to salt water greatly deteriorate building components. This building exhibits seismic impacts as outer walls show cracks and separation in the cinder blocks. The potential loss of scientific samples due to flooding erodes the Hatchery's ability to fulfill the conservation mission around preserving these species of fish.

Ranking Categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating:	N/A	1.00
API Rating:	N/A	TBD
API/FCI Score:	40%	40
SB Score:	20%	20
IS Score:	20%	10
CFA Score:	20%	20
Total Score:	(100%)	90

Combined ranking factors = (.040 x API/FCI score) + (.020 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

Capital Asset Planning

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No

VE Study: Scheduled TBD Completed TBD

Project Costs and Status

Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance/Repair Work:	\$912.6	65
Capital Improvement Work:	\$491.4	35
Total:	\$1,404	100

Project Funding History (entire project):

<u>History</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>
Funded to Date:	\$1,000
FY2023-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$1,404
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$0
Total:	2,404

Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D C

Estimate Escalated to FY:

Planning and Design Funds:

Planning Funds Received in FY \$0
 Design Funds Received in FY \$0

*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2023 budget on this project data sheet.

Major Milestones

Construction Award/Start
 - Scheduled: 1/23
 - Actual: TBD
 Project Complete:
 - Scheduled: 04/25
 - Actual: TBD

Project Data Sheet

Prepared/Last Updated: 06/21
 DOI Approved: No

Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$

Current: 1,630
 Projected: 1,400
 Net Change: -230

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 90
 Planned Funding FY 2023 \$3,625,000
 Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

Project Identification

Project Title: Rehabilitate Ponds Kettles and Drainage (Ponds 1 to 10) (cc)
 Project No: 2020334424
 Unit/Facility Name: Baldhill Dam NFH
 Region: MOUNTAIN PRAIRIE
 Congressional District: 00
 State: ND
 IR: 5 MISSOURI BASIN

Project Justification

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
40710400	10027108	REARING PONDS WATER SUPPLY/DRAIN DISTRIBUTION LINES SERVICING PONDS 1-20	100	0.7

Project Description (PD):

This project consists of the third phase of this overall project and will consist of the replacement of the Rearing Ponds Water Supply/Drain Distribution Lines servicing ponds 1-20 and corrections to settlement issues on the associated fish kettles. The kettles were constructed in 1951 and perform two functions, pond drainage and fish collection for distribution. Currently the kettles, drain lines, and supply lines are settling due to water that has infiltrated into the soil via gaps in the pond liners and deterioration. As more water permeates into the soil, the greater the settlement. The settlement of the kettles also affects the adjoining drain lines. The associated pond liners will be replaced since they have reached their useful life expectancy and will be damaged throughout the repair process.
 Phased Project? Y Number of Phases 3

Scope of Benefits (SB):

Baldhill Dam NFH is part of the Valley City NFH. The Baldhill Unit consists of 20 earthen ponds totaling 15.2 surface acres of extensive fish culture as well as an intensive fish production building designed for egg incubation, early life stage rearing of native and endangered fish and freshwater mussel propagation. Valley City National Fish Hatchery (NFH) along with the Baldhill Dam Rearing Unit plays an important role in providing quality fishing opportunities throughout the Great Plains Region and in restoring Lake Sturgeon and Freshwater Mussel populations within the Hudson Bay Drainage. This project will insure that the water supply and drainage is strategically managed for fish production.

Investment Strategy (IS):

This project is critical to the overall capacity of the Baldhill Dam NFH and is required in order to meet fish production requirements. There will be a decrease in O&M costs through this project.

Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):

Failure to complete this project would allow the kettles to continue settling and vital production water to escape out of the degrading supply and drainage pipes. This water infiltration decreases the available water for production and promotes erosion, which compounds the issue. Over time the kettles and drain lines will fail, ultimately causing the ponds to fail and/or water loss. Failure of these structures would ensure mission failure for several growing seasons.

Ranking Categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating:	N/A	0.7
API Rating:	N/A	TBD
API/FCI Score:	40%	40
SB Score:	20%	20
IS Score:	20%	20
CFA Score:	20%	10
Total Score:	(100%)	90

Combined ranking factors = (.040 x API/FCI score) + (.020 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

Capital Asset Planning

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No

VE Study: Scheduled TBD Completed TBD

Project Costs and Status

Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance/Repair Work:	\$0	0
Capital Improvement Work:	\$3,625	100
Total:	\$3,625	100

Project Funding History (entire project):

<u>History</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>
Funded to Date:	\$0
FY2023-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$3,625
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$0
Total:	\$3,625

Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D C

Estimate Escalated to FY:

Planning and Design Funds:

Planning Funds Received in FY \$0
 Design Funds Received in FY \$0

*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2023 budget on this project data sheet.

Major Milestones

Construction Award/Start
 - Scheduled: 1/23
 - Actual: TBD
 Project Complete:
 - Scheduled: 04/25
 - Actual: TBD

Project Data Sheet

Prepared/Last Updated: 06/21
 DOI Approved: No

Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$

Current: 3,163
 Projected: 1,000
 Net Change: -2,163

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 52
 Planned Funding: FY2023 \$550,000
 Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

Project Identification

Project Title: Rehabilitate Sand Lake Warehouse
 Project No: 2022429449
 Unit/Facility Name: Aviation-R7
 Region: ALASKA
 Congressional District: 00
 State: AK
 IR: 11 ALASKA

Project Justification

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
35410300	10067504	BLDG WH EQUIP VEHICLE SAND LAKE WAREHOUSE	55	0

Project Description (PD):

This facility is located in Anchorage, AK and is a stand alone Service facility. It is used by multiple Offices of the US Fish and Wildlife Service located in Alaska. The equipment that is stored at this location is used to conduct field studies, employee training and law enforcement on our Refuges throughout our Region. The current security level of this facility is very poor and has been compromised in the past. Equipment has been stolen and/or vandalized. The work needed to bring this facility to a more secure level includes replacement of the existing fence and gate with a much more aggressive type fence to include barbed wire and the new security gate will be electronic and connected to a card reader. The lighting in the area will be upgraded and added to include stand alone light poles around the perimeter and replace the poor lighting that is on the existing building with brighter LED lights.

Phased Project? N Number of Phases 0

Scope of Benefits (SB):

This project contributes to the goals and objectives of the Department of Interior and the US Fish and Wildlife Service by offering a secured outside storage area for multiple watercraft, atv's, snowmobiles and trailers. The secured 4 bay garage offers warm storage for equipment for various programs like Office of Law Enforcement, Fisheries, Refuges and Ecological Services. Without this equipment our goals and objectives could not be met.

Investment Strategy (IS):

Operations and maintenance costs were not captured for this asset however the estimated costs are \$21,379 per year. These costs are expected to increase slightly. In an effort to keep the additional lighting that is needed for our security needs to a minimum we will use the latest energy saving fixtures and light bulbs available. This project will upgrade the security aspects for this facility to current Physical Security Standards.

Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):

This building and storage area has assets and equipment valued over a million dollars. There have been multiple break ins over the past few years and property has been stolen and or damaged. There is no reason to believe that these were isolated incidences. If this area is not brought up to a higher level of security we could continue to lose US Fish and Wildlife Service owned assets belonging to the Office of Law Enforcement, Refuge System and Office of Aviation Management.

Ranking Categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating:	N/A	0
API Rating:	N/A	TBD
API/FCI Score:	40%	22
SB Score:	20%	20
IS Score:	20%	0
CFA Score:	20%	10
Total Score:	(100%)	52

Combined ranking factors = (.040 x API/FCI score) + (.020 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

Capital Asset Planning

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No

VE Study: Scheduled TBD Completed TBD

Project Costs and Status

Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance/Repair Work:	\$0	0
Capital Improvement Work:	\$550	0
Total:	\$550	0

Project Funding History (entire project):

<u>History</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>
Funded to Date:	\$0
FY2023-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$550
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2023-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$550
Total:	\$550

Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D C

Estimate Escalated to FY: 2021

Planning and Design Funds:

Planning Funds Received in FY \$0
 Design Funds Received in FY \$0

*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2023 budget on this project data sheet.

Major Milestones

Construction Award/Start
 - Scheduled: 1/23
 - Actual: TBD
 Project Complete:
 - Scheduled: 04/24
 - Actual: TBD

Project Data Sheet

Prepared/Last Updated: 02/22
DOI Approved: No

Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$

Current: 0
Projected: 0
Net Change: 0

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Construction FIVE YEAR PLAN – FY 2023-2027

Plan Fund Year	Priority	Facility or Unit Name	Project Title	State	Cong. District	DOI Score	Project Cost Information (\$000)					Remaining to be Funded	Future Years of Funding for Other Phases	Change in Annual O&M (actual \$/yr)
							Total Project	Funded to Date	Budget Year Funding					
									DM	CI	Total			
2023	1	E.B Forsythe NWR	Replace Co-located Field Office Building [cc]	NJ	02	100	\$5,326	\$0	\$0	\$5,326	\$5,326	\$0		\$0
2023	2	Bears Bluff NFH	Replace and Relocate Laboratory [cc]	SC	06	90	\$2,404	\$1,000	\$913	\$491	\$1,404	\$0		\$5,170
2023	3	Baldhill Dam NFH	Rehabilitate Ponds Kettles and Drainage (Ponds 1 to 20) [cc]	ND	AL	90	\$3,625	\$0	\$3,625	\$0	\$3,625	\$0		\$1,365
2023	4	Yukon Delta NWR	Remediate and Demolish Bureau of Indian Affairs Infrastructure Phase III of VI	AK	AL	70	\$30,000	\$780	\$3,341	\$0	\$3,341	\$25,879		\$0
2023	5	Branch of Dam Safety	Nationwide Seismic Safety Investigations and Mitigation Phase IV of V	*	*	70	\$1,000	\$600	\$200	\$0	\$200	\$200	2024	\$0
2023	6	Nationwide	Construct EV Charging Stations	*	*	70	\$10,867	\$0	\$0	\$10,867	\$10,867	\$0		\$0
2023	7	Information Resources & Technology Management	DIFCOM -Field Communications Modernization	*	*	70	\$5,412	\$0	\$0	\$5,412	\$5,412	\$0		\$0
2023	8	Minnesota Valley NWR	Visitor Center/ES Colocation	MN	3	62	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0		\$0
2023	9	Office Of Law Enforcement	Rehabilitate Sand Lake Warehouse	AK	AL	52	\$550	\$0	\$0	\$550	\$550	\$0		\$0
2023	10	Ridgefield NWR	Construct Community Nature Center and Public Recreational Facilities Phase II [cc]	WA	3	51	\$6,360	\$400	\$0	\$5,960	\$5,960	\$0		\$1,813
2023	11	Information Resources & Technology Management	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Investigations	*	*	40	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$250	\$0	\$250	\$750	2024-2026	\$0
Total for Fiscal Year 2023											\$37,935			

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Construction FIVE YEAR PLAN – FY 2023-2027**

Plan Fund Year	Priority	Facility or Unit Name	Project Title	State	Cong. District	DOI Score	Project Cost Information (\$000)					Remaining to be Funded	Future Years of Funding for Other Phases	Change in Annual O&M (actual \$/yr)
							Total Project	Funded to Date	Budget Year Funding					
									DM	CI	Total			
2024	12	Sherburne NWR	Completion of Visitor Center and HQ	MN	06	80	\$7,900	\$0	\$0	\$7,900	\$7,900	\$0		\$0
2024	13	Tiglax	Tiglax Vessel Rehabilitation	AK	AL	70	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0	\$3,000	\$0		\$0
2024	14	Branch of Dam Safety	Nationwide Seismic Safety Investigations and Mitigation Phase V of V	*	*	70	\$1,000	\$800	\$200	\$0	\$200	\$0		\$0
2024	17	Information Resources & Technology Management	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Remediation	*	*	70	\$1,600	\$0	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$1,200	2025-2027	\$0
2024	18	Erwin NFH	Construct Building Over Lower Raceways	TN	01	70	\$2,250	\$0	\$445	\$1,805	\$2,250	\$0		\$0
2024	19	Jordon River NFH	Construct 5-Bay Vehicle Storage Building	MI	01	62	\$750	\$0	\$0	\$750	\$750	\$0		\$0
2024	20	Pendills Creek NFH	Construct 5-Bay Vehicle Storage Building	MI	01	62	\$750	\$0	\$0	\$750	\$750	\$0		\$0
2024	21	D.D. Eisenhower NFH	Fish Rearing Infrastructure Upgrades([p,d,ic]	VT	AL	60	\$5,717	\$0	\$15	\$1,342	\$1,357	\$4,360		\$0
2024	22	Hotchkiss NFH	Construct Raceway Covers	CO	03	60	\$450	\$0	\$0	\$450	\$450	\$0		\$0
2024	23	Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR	Levee Repair	CA	17	51	\$2,939	\$0	\$2,939	\$0	\$2,939	\$0		\$1,813
2024	24	Great Swamp/Assabet	Replace Headquarters (CI Portion, rest through GAOA)	NJ	11	46	\$745	\$0	\$0	\$745	\$745	\$0		\$0
2024	25	Information Resources & Technology Management	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Investigations	*	*	40	\$2,000	\$1,250	\$250	\$0	\$250	\$500	2025-2026	\$0
2024	26	Patuxent NWR	Demolition 4 quarters, 2 offices and 2 storage facilities and 2 storage facilities	MD	5	32	\$675	\$0	\$675	\$0	\$665	\$0		\$0
Total for Fiscal Year 2024											\$21,656			

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Construction FIVE YEAR PLAN – FY 2023-2027**

Plan Fund Year	Priority	Facility or Unit Name	Project Title	State	Cong. District	DOI Score	Project Cost Information (\$000)					Remaining to be Funded	Future Years of Funding for Other Phases	Change in Annual O&M (actual \$/yr)
							Total Project	Funded to Date	Budget Year Funding					
									DM	CI	Total			
2025	27	Patuxent NWR	Chesapeake Bay colocation ES/LE/FWCO	MD	5	90	\$4,863	\$0	\$4,863	\$0	\$4,863	\$0		\$0
2025	28	Selawik NWR	(P/D) Replace the Bunkhouse	AK	00	70	\$2,088	\$0	\$2,088	\$0	\$2,088	\$0		\$0
2025	31	Information Resources & Technology Management	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Remediation	*	*	70	\$1,600	\$400	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$800	2026-2027	\$0
2025	32	Abemathy FTC	Construction of Fish & Egg Isolation/Quarantine Building	WA	3	70	\$1,800	\$0	\$1,000	\$800	\$1,800	\$0		\$0
2025	33	National Black-Footed Ferret Conservation Center	Expand Operational and Rearing Facility Infrastructure.	CO	07	70	\$3,495	\$0	\$0	\$3,495	\$3,495	\$0		\$0
2025	34	D.D. Eisenhower NFH	Fish Rearing Infrastructure Upgrades [c]	VT	AL	60	\$5,717	\$1,357	\$15	\$2,959	\$2,974	\$1,386		\$0
2025	35	Wertheim NWR, Silvio Conte NWR, Ninigret NWR, Eastern Massachusetts NWR	Demolish Bunkhouse and Construct Safer, Energy Efficient New Bunkhouse at each station	*	*	52	\$5,126	\$0	\$5,126	\$0	\$5,126	\$0		\$0
2025	36	Long Island NWR	Demolition 4 quarters, 1 office and 4 storage facilities	NY	1	42	\$660	\$0	\$660	\$0	\$660	\$0		\$0
2025	37	Information Resources & Technology Management	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Investigations	*	*	40	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$250	\$0	\$250	\$250	2026	\$0
Total for Fiscal Year 2025											\$21,656			
2026	38	Gavins Point NFH	Replace Office Building	SD	AL	100	\$1,918	\$0	\$1,918	\$0	\$1,918	\$0		\$0
2026	39	Eagle Creek NFH	Electric Weir Replacement	OR	05	80	\$2,767	\$0	\$1,400	\$1,367	\$2,767	\$0		\$2,000
2026	40	Silvio Conte NFWR	Administration/Visitor Facility - (Co-Location at Ft. River)	MA	01	70	\$5,300	\$0	\$0	\$5,300	\$5,300	\$0		\$0
2026	43	Information Resources & Technology Management	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Remediation	*	*	70	\$1,600	\$800	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$400	2027	\$0
2026	44	Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR	Replace and Relocate Environmental Education Center due to USACE flood protection levee construction project	CA	17	65	\$19,500	\$0	\$0	\$11,021	\$11,021	\$8,479	2027	\$0
2026	45	Information Resources & Technology Management	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Investigations	*	*	40	\$2,000	\$1,750	\$250	\$0	\$250	\$0		\$0
Total for Fiscal Year 2026											\$21,656			

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Construction FIVE YEAR PLAN – FY 2023-2027

Plan Fund Year	Priority	Facility or Unit Name	Project Title	State	Cong. District	DOI Score	Project Cost Information (\$000)					Remaining to be Funded	Future Years of Funding for Other Phases	Change in Annual O&M (actual \$/yr)	
							Total Project	Funded to Date	Budget Year Funding						
									DM	CI	Total				
2027	46	Information Resources & Technology Management	Nationwide Radio Site Safety Remediation	*	*	70	\$1,600	\$1,200	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$0		\$0	
2027	49	Lahontan NFH	Replace Main Water Supply Lines from Wells (p/d, cc)	NV	01	70	\$2,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000		\$2,000	
2027	50	Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR	Replace and Relocate Environmental Education Center due to USACE flood protection levee construction project	CA	17	65	\$19,500	\$11,021	\$0	\$8,479	\$8,479	\$0		\$0	
2027	51	San Marcos FTC	San Marcos Co-Location ES	TX	25	65	\$5,100	\$0	\$0	\$5,100	\$5,100	\$0		\$0	
2027	52	D.D. Eisenhower NFH	Fish Rearing Infrastructure Upgrades [cc]	VT	AL	60	\$5,717	\$4,331	\$0	\$1,386	\$1,386	\$0		\$0	
2027	53	E.B Forsythe NWR	Rehabilitate/Replace East Pool Water Control Structures and Culverts including Dike and Salt Marsh for aquatic connectivity improvements	NJ	02	60	\$1,330	\$0	\$1,330	\$0	\$1,330	\$0		\$0	
2027	54	Leadville NFH	Construct Tank Building with Circular Tanks	CO	03	60	\$614	\$0	\$100	\$514	\$614	\$0		\$0	
2027	55	Tishomingo NFH	Replace Administration Building and Visitors Center	OK	03	55	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0		\$0	
2027	56	Gavins Point NFH	Replace Hatchery Building/Tank Room and Demo Existing Hatchery Building	SD	AL	40	\$116	\$0	\$116	\$0	\$116	\$0		\$2,000	
2027	57	Kern NWR	Quarters Rehab	CA	20	30	\$1,231	\$0	\$1,231	\$0	\$1,231	\$0		\$0	
Total for Fiscal Year 2027															\$21,656

Land Acquisition

LAND ACQUISITION

Appropriations Language

This account does not require appropriation language due to permanent appropriation authorized by the Great American Outdoors Act, P.L. 116-152 (GAOA). However, Section 200303(c)(1) of GAOA includes a statutory requirement for the Department to submit a proposed allocation of Land and Water Conservation Fund funding to Congress as part of the annual budget process.

Authorizing Statutes

The Fish and Wildlife Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j). Authorizes acquisition of additions to the National Wildlife Refuge System for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources by purchase or exchange of land and water or interests therein.

Refuge Recreation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460-460k-4). Authorizes acquisition of areas that are adjacent to or within existing fish and wildlife Conservation Areas administered by the Department of the Interior, and suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreation development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of listed, threatened, or endangered species, or (4) carrying out two or more of the above.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601-4608). Authorizes appropriations to the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire land for National Wildlife Refuges as otherwise authorized by law.

National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee). Establishes overall policy guidance, places restrictions on the transfer, exchange, or other disposal of refuge lands, and authorizes the Secretary to accept donations of land.

Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1534-1544). Authorizes the acquisition of land, waters, or interests therein for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, including those that are listed as endangered or threatened species, with Land and Water Conservation Fund Act appropriations.

Emergency Wetlands Resources Act (P.L. 99-645; 100 Stat. 3582). Authorizes the purchase of wetlands, or interests in wetlands, consistent with the wetlands priority conservation plan established under the Act.

Highlands Conservation Act (P.L. 108-421). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to work in partnership with the Secretary of Agriculture to provide financial assistance to the Highlands States to preserve and protect high priority conservation land in the Highland region.

John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9). Permanently authorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Great American Outdoors Act, National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (P.L. 116-152). Authorizes a permanent appropriation of \$900,000,000 per year from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The LWCF funds the four main Federal land acquisition programs (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management) and provides grants to State and local governments to acquire land for recreation and conservation. Funding is subject to Congressional allocation; the Act also mandated that account allocations and detailed project information be proposed by the Administration each year through the President's annual budget submission, and that such allocations, following review by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees may be modified through an alternate allocation.

<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>	<i>PY Amount</i>	<i>CY Amount</i>	<i>BY Amount</i>	<i>Change from CY (+/-)</i>	<i>Estimated Sequester Adjustments (4)</i>			<i>CY Amount</i>	<i>BY Amount</i>	<i>Change from CY (+/-)</i>
					<i>2023 Sequester Reduction</i>	<i>2022 Est. "Pop-Up" Sequester Funding</i>	<i>Est Amnt Available at the 2023 Request Request</i>			
Account	2021 Enacted (1)	2022 CR at Annual Rate (2)	2023 Request (3)	2023 vs. 2022	2023 Sequester Reduction	2022 Est. "Pop-Up" Sequester Funding	Est Amnt Available at the 2023 Request Request	2022 FTE	2023 FTE	2023 v. 2022 FTE
Grants to States										
Highlands Conservation Act	-	-	10,000	10,000	(570)		9,430	-	-	-
Subtotal Activity 1	-	-	10,000	10,000	(570)		9,430	1	1	-
FWS Land Acquisition										
Projects	54,875	54,875	58,329	3,454	(3,324)	3,127	58,132	-	-	-
Sportsmen/Recreation Access	15,500	15,500	15,376	(124)	(876)	884	15,384	-	-	-
Land Protection Planning	465	465	493	28	(28)	27	492	-	-	-
Acquisition Management	17,000	17,000	18,028	1,028	(1,028)	968	17,968	-	-	-
Inholdings/Emergencies/Hardships	12,500	12,500	11,135	(1,365)	(635)	713	11,213	-	-	-
Exchanges	1,500	1,500	1,591	91	(91)	86	1,586	-	-	-
Subtotal FWS Land Acquisition	101,840	101,840	104,952	3,112	(5,982)		104,775	69	69	-
Total, LWCF Funding	101,840	101,840	114,952	13,112	(6,552)		114,205	70	70	-

- (1) Starting in FY 2021, LWCF funding became available as mandatory funding. FY 2021 LWCF funding was not subject to sequester due to the timing of when the Great American Outdoors Act was enacted.
- (2) All FY 2022 and FY 2023 LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of -5.7% which by law, is applied during the year of execution uniformly across all programs. Amounts in the FY 2022 column do not include a sequester reduction.
- (3) The amounts reflect the proposed budget authority before sequester adjustments.
- (4) FY 2023 LWCF funding is subject to a -5.7% sequester reduction which will be applied during the year of execution. These columns reflect the estimated sequester adjustments associated with the FY 2023 Request. The actual amounts sequestered in FY 2023 will depend on the final allocation of funding provided in an enacted full year appropriation. Amounts sequestered from FY 2022 LWCF programs become available for obligation ("Pop-Up") in FY 2023. The previously sequestered amounts which will become available in FY 2023 will be determined in the final allocation of LWCF funding in an enacted FY 2022 full year appropriation. A revised set of tables will be provided after enactment of a full year enacted appropriation showing the actual "pop-up" amounts anticipated in FY 2023 for each bureau.

Appropriation: Land Acquisition

LWCF category/budget activity	2021 Actual ¹	2022 Annualized CR ¹	2023 Request				Change from 2022 (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Allocation Request ¹	
Federal Land Acquisition							
Land Acquisition Management (\$000)	17,000	17,000	0	0	+1,028	18,028	+1,028
Land Protection Planning (\$000)	465	465	0	0	+28	493	+28
Exchanges (\$000)	1,500	1,500	0	0	+91	1,591	+91
Inholdings, Emergencies, and Hardships (\$000)	12,500	12,500	0	0	-1,365	11,135	-1,365
Recreational Access (\$000)	15,500	15,500	0	0	-124	15,376	-124
Line-Item Projects (\$000)	54,875	54,875	0	0	+3,454	58,329	+3,454
Subtotal, Federal Land Acquisition (\$000)	101,840	101,840	0	0	+3,112	104,952	+3,112
Grants to States							
Highlands Conservation Act (\$000)	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	10,000	0
Total, Land Acquisition (\$000) FTE	111,840 62	111,840 70	0	0	+3,112 0	114,952 70	+3,112 0

1 Starting in FY 2021, LWCF funding became available as mandatory funding. FY 2021 LWCF funding was not subject to sequester due to the timing of when the Great American Outdoors Act was enacted. All FY 2022 and 2023 LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of -5.7% which by law, is applied during the year of execution uniformly across all programs.

Program Overview

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to support the protection of Federal public lands and waters – including national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and public lands recreation areas – and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. The LWCF also provides for grants to State and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

Through a variety of programs, LWCF supports our nationwide legacy of high-quality recreation and conservation areas. The Fund receives revenue from offshore oil and gas leasing to support outdoor recreation and conservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources across the country. Every State and county in the Nation has benefited from the LWCF since its establishment.

The 2023 budget submission for LWCF directly supports the Administration’s America the Beautiful conservation objectives and advances other key priorities at the same time, including migration corridors, species protection, and supporting underserved communities. Federal land acquisition projects were competitively selected according to established criteria which considers land and species conservation values, the risk of development, historical or cultural resources, increased recreation access for all, economic benefits, and partnership engagement.

In 2020, Congress enacted the Great American Outdoors Act, P.L. 116-152 (GAOA) which amended the LWCF authorization (54 U.S.C 200303). This historic legislation ensures the Nation's commitment to conservation and recreation endures for future generations. GAOA guarantees full funding, \$900 million a year, is permanently available for LWCF conservation and recreation programs reauthorized by the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. The Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, P.L. 109-432 makes additional amounts available from the LWCF for State grants.

The Department of the Interior is responsible for administering and implementing these important programs, in concert with the U.S. Forest Service. The LWCF, as amended by GAOA, requires the President's annual budget submission to Congress include a proposed allocation of LWCF funding by account, program and project for consideration as part of the annual budget process. In FY 2022 and FY 2023, mandatory LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of 5.7%. In FY 2023, funds sequestered in FY 2022 will become available or "pop up" to support program activities. The funding tables display the estimated sequestration reduction related to the FY 2023 Budget Request. The FY 2022 sequestered amounts which will become available in FY 2023 will be determined in the final allocation of LWCF funding in an enacted FY 2022 full year appropriation. The estimated "pop up" amounts shown are estimates based on the FY 2022 Budget Request and will be revised once the funding allocation is finalized in a full year enacted appropriation. The sequestration reduction and the "pop up" funding will be applied uniformly across all programs and activities when funds are available for execution.

The Land Acquisition appropriation includes the Service's Federal land acquisition program and the Highlands Conservation Act grants to States program. LWCF also funds the land acquisition portion Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grants to States program (described in the CESCO chapter).

Appropriation: Land Acquisition
LWCF Category: Federal Land Acquisition

LWCF category/budget activity	2021 Actual ¹	2022 Annualized CR ¹	2023 Request				Change from 2022 (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Allocation Request ¹	
Land Acquisition Management (\$000)	17,000	17,000	0	0	+1,028	18,028	+1,028
Land Protection Planning (\$000)	465	465	0	0	+28	493	+28
Exchanges (\$000)	1,500	1,500	0	0	+91	1,591	+91
Inholdings, Emergencies, and Hardships (\$000)	12,500	12,500	0	0	-1,365	11,135	-1,365
Recreational Access (\$000)	15,500	15,500	0	0	-124	15,376	-124
Line-Item Projects (\$000)	54,875	54,875	0	0	+3,454	58,329	+3,454
Total, Federal Land Acquisition (\$000)	101,840	101,840	0	0	+3,112	104,952	+3,112
FTE	62	69			0	69	0

1 Starting in FY 2021, LWCF funding became available as mandatory funding. FY 2021 LWCF funding was not subject to sequester due to the timing of when the Great American Outdoors Act was enacted. All FY 2022 and 2023 LWCF funding is subject to sequestration reduction of -5.7% which by law, is applied during the year of execution uniformly across all programs.

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for (Federal) Land Acquisition

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Land Acquisition Management	+1,028	0
• Land Protection Planning	+28	0
• Exchanges	+91	0
• Inholdings, Emergencies, and Hardships	-1,365	0
• Recreational Access	-124	0
• Land Acquisition Projects	+3,454	0
Program Changes	+3,112	0

Program Overview

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to fulfill a bipartisan commitment to safeguard our natural areas, water resources, and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. In 1972, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) authorized using LWCF funding for the acquisition of land, waters, or interests therein for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, including those that are listed as endangered or threatened species. Acquired lands and waters become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) or National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS). When acquired in fee title, these lands and waters provide the public opportunities



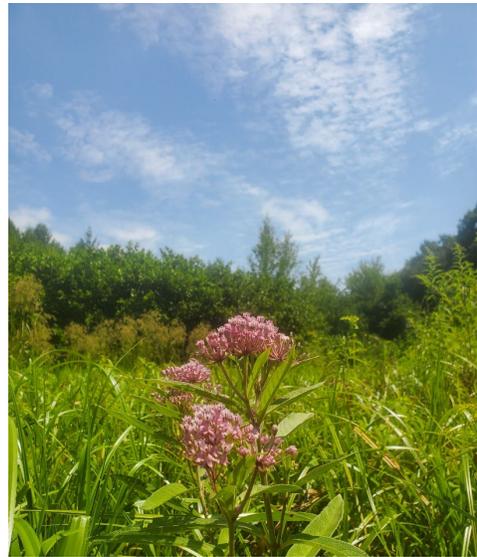
The acquisition of a conservation easement for Blackfoot Valley CA in Montana protects wildlife corridors and facilitated the transfer of the ranch to the next generation. Photo by Ryan Stutzman..

to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation. The Service purchases the minimum interest in land that is necessary to meet the Service's conservation mission. Therefore, if conservation easements will meet biological objectives, then typically the Service will pursue those rather than buying the land in fee.

Each new refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System is strategically planned to give migrating birds safe havens on their journeys, provide fish with clean waters, and ensure that our children and grandchildren have wild places to explore. The Service's Strategic Growth Policy directs the Service to focus on acquiring lands and waters that support three conservation priorities: 1) Recovery of threatened and endangered species; 2) Implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; and 3) Conserving migratory birds of conservation concern. These priorities are consistent with the objectives of the Administration's America the Beautiful initiative and will allow the Service to contribute greatly towards the goal of protecting 30% of land and waters by 2030.

Using these three priorities, a Service interdisciplinary team developed the Targeted Resource Acquisition Comparison Tool (TRACT). The TRACT provides a biological, spatially explicit, science-based, transparent process for evaluating proposed Refuge System land acquisitions based on each of these three conservation priorities. The TRACT does not assign weights to the three priorities and does not produce a single numerical ranking that combines all of the Service's priorities. The TRACT's rankings are instead intended to provide decision makers with an objective analysis that is grounded in the best available science; it is a decision support tool to inform the decision maker but does not make the decision. Consideration is also given to how an acquisition supports DOI and Service goals and priorities to provide connectivity for wildlife corridors and habitat, especially for climate change mitigation and adaptation and to increase public access, especially for underserved areas that would benefit from increased access to the outdoors.

The Service acquires land and interests in land from willing sellers only. For every project for which the Service requests LWCF funding, the Service has an approved Land Protection Plan (LPP) and has completed the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process. The LPP and NEPA processes include opportunities for public input from local communities, businesses, landowners, non-governmental organizations, Tribes, local governments, and other interested parties. Many land acquisition projects reflect on-going and new collaboration with conservation partners and complement local efforts to conserve and restore habitats, expand public outdoor opportunities, and enhance climate change resilience.



The Blue Ridge Conservancy donated a 24,087 parcel for Mountain Bogs NWR, North Carolina, to protect imperiled plant, amphibian, and animal species. Photo by Alice P. Lawrence, FWS.

Land Acquisition Management

This activity supports efforts directly related to the acquisition of lands within approved acquisition boundaries of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The funding supports all costs for staff and the administration, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of the Service's Federal land acquisition program in our Headquarters, Regional, and field offices. The land acquisition staff maintains the maps and property records for Service-managed lands, and prepares right-of-way permits for oil, gas, and other pipelines, electrical transmission lines, and other infrastructure. This budget activity also includes approximately \$2 million for the land acquisition program's share of Service-wide infrastructure needs and assessments, including leased space and information technology investments. Land acquisition management also funds contracts for boundary surveys, title work, and appraisals when the specific project

appropriation is insufficient to fund these costs in addition to land costs as well as limited DOI Office of the Solicitor preliminary and final title reviews and approvals.

Land acquisition staff provides specialized support for several realty-based functions, including:

- Working with willing sellers, from initial explanations of Federal acquisition options to the final acquisition, including processing and accepting donations;
- Preparing right-of-way permits for oil and gas and other pipelines, electrical transmission lines, telecommunications, and other infrastructure that crosses Service-managed lands;
- Developing and maintaining spatial and other tools that inform the decision-making process;
- Working collaboratively with tribes, States, local governments, landowners, non-governmental organizations, and other land management agencies to acquire land for wildlife corridors and public recreation;
- Creating, maintaining, and updating geospatial data, and property records for Service-managed lands. This information supports the Service's GIS/mapping capacity for land use and the Service's contributions to the Protected Areas Database of the United States (PAD-US), which is a single, continuously updated geospatial database/official national inventory of federal and state protected areas. PAD-US includes all conservation areas managed by Federal and State agencies; conservation areas owned by nonprofits; and private lands protected by conservation easements. PAD-US serves many users, and is developed through partnerships with tribes, States, Federal agencies, and non-profit organizations; and
- Preparing responses to information requests from a variety of sources.

Land Protection Planning

This activity supports National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for land acquisition projects and the development of Land Protection Plans (LPPs), a key function in implementing the Service's Strategic Growth Policy.

The LPP process begins when refuge field stations, local governments, and other conservation partners suggest areas for the protection of endangered species, migratory birds and other important fish, wildlife, and plant species. If there is enough local support and interest, the Service may start the process for developing an LPP. In some cases, LPPs will be prepared to establish new refuges or, more likely, to expand existing refuges to address the needs of fish, wildlife, and plant communities. Specific activities include gathering background data; coordinating with State, tribal and local entities; involving the public; analyzing ecological, legal, and financial issues; and printing and distributing draft and final plan documents. By using conservation planning aids such as models of species-habitat interaction, climate science and other decision support tools, Service staff can prioritize conservation and/or management actions needed to support or attain sustainable fish and wildlife populations at desired levels. Coordinating local actions with State and regional conservation goals improves the success of conserving large, connected natural areas. By working together, the Service and our conservation partners can accomplish much more than by working as separate entities.

Exchanges

Land exchanges provide unique opportunities to work in partnership with tribes, other Federal agencies and State and local governments, private landowners and organizations, and local and national conservation groups and are pursued when the exchange is a net benefit for the Service. Land exchange projects leverage the collective expertise of these partners to conserve critical habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife, decrease habitat fragmentation, and provide the public with access to natural areas to hunt, fish, photograph, and observe wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation. Exchanges are a win-win alternative that helps the Service to meet conservation goals while allowing the Service to be a good neighbor to local landowners. However, they are more labor and cost intensive since the Service has to do

two sets of all required evaluations (two appraisals, two title opinions, two contaminant surveys, and other standard realty work) for the out-going exchange lands and the incoming exchange lands.

Below is the most up to date list of all of the Service's potential land exchange projects. These projects total at least 10,425 acres, and the Service estimates that \$2,474,000 will be needed for acquisition-related management costs to complete all of them, including salaries, appraisals, title work, contaminant surveys, and other expenses. Exchanges may involve on-going expenditures over a period of years.

Potential Land Exchange Projects

State	Potential Exchanges	Acres to be Acquired	Management Costs
Alaska	Future Exchanges Plan	TBD	\$220,000
Alaska	Kenai NWR - CIRI	1,081	\$700,000
Alaska	Togiak NWR - Saguyak	120	\$30,000
Alaska	Yukon Delta NWR - Newtok	1,338	\$275,000
Arizona	Havasu NWR	10	\$10,000
Arizona	Kofa NWR (various)	372	\$85,000
Arkansas	Felsenthal NWR	2,168	\$35,000
California	Bitter Creek NWR	TBD	\$30,000
California	Sacramento River NWR	20	\$20,000
California	Tule Lake NWR	70	\$30,000
Colorado	Arapaho NWR	280	\$25,000
Georgia	Harris Neck NWR	50	\$25,000
Hawaii	Hakalau Forest NWR	2,131	\$40,000
Hawaii	Hanalei NWR	12	\$20,000
Illinois	Cypress Creek NWR (2)	85	\$11,000
Indiana	Patoka River NWR	80	\$9,000
Iowa & Wisconsin	Upper MS River NFWR	36	\$12,000
Louisiana	Delta NWR	359	\$25,000
Louisiana	Lake Ophelia NWR - FSA Tract	854	\$26,000
Maine	Umbagog NWR	50	\$30,000
Massachusetts	Parker River NWR	150	\$25,000
Michigan	Detroit River IWR	10	\$3,000
Minnesota	Beltrami WMA	544	\$8,000
Minnesota	Big Stone County WPA	5	\$9,000
Minnesota	Glacial Ridge NWR	200	\$8,000
Minnesota	Grant County WPA	3	\$9,000
Minnesota	Litchfield County WPA	50	\$9,000
Minnesota	Litchfield County WPA/ Stearns County WPA	24	\$9,000
Minnesota	Minnesota Valley NWR	10	\$9,000
Minnesota	Sherburne NWR	10	\$1,000
Missouri	Middle Mississippi NWR	10	\$9,000
Montana	Various Montana WPAs and WMDs	40	\$50,000
New Hampshire	Umbagog NWR	2	\$15,000
New Jersey	EB Forsythe NWR	26	\$35,000
North Carolina	Currituck NWR	1	\$25,000
North Dakota	Audubon WMD	55	\$25,000

State	Potential Exchanges	Acres to be Acquired	Management Costs
North Dakota	Various North Dakota WPA's & WMA's	500	\$200,000
Oregon	Bandon Marsh NWR	1	\$5,000
Oregon	Cold Springs NWR	14	\$40,000
South Dakota	Various South Dakota WPA's & WMD's	500	\$200,000
Texas	Laguna Atascosa NWR	95	\$35,000
Texas	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR	100	\$25,000
Texas	Trinity NWR	4	\$5,000
Vermont	Missisquoi NWR	7	\$20,000
Washington	McNary NWR	2	\$5,000
Washington	Steigerwald Lake NWR	16	\$10,000
Wisconsin	Necedah WMA	5	\$9,000
Wisconsin	Necedah WMA - FSA Tract	5	\$9,000
Wisconsin	Upper MS River NWFR	5	\$3,000
Total Exchange Acres and Management Costs		11,510.00	\$2,473,000

Inholdings, Emergencies, and Hardships (IEH)

The Service uses funding in this activity to expedite purchases of tracts of land from willing sellers for three categories: inholdings, emergencies, and hardships. The Service defines any land within an approved acquisition boundary as an inholding. The Service frequently uses funding for inholdings to purchase lands that connect with private or State conserved lands, to create larger contiguous blocks of protected wildlife habitat, and to expand public recreational opportunities. The Service also uses funding for inholdings to acquire small tracts of land when doing so will improve refuge management effectiveness or efficiency, eliminate a costly management problem, or provide or expand public access to existing refuge lands for hunting, fishing, and other compatible wildlife-dependent recreation. An emergency that may be best addressed with land acquisition from a willing seller could be a proposed development or a conversion to other uses that would result in the permanent loss of wildlife habitat or detrimental impacts to the refuge. Funding is also used to purchase lands when the owner is experiencing financial hardship and must quickly sell his or her land that is within an approved refuge acquisition boundary. This funding allows the Service to capitalize on emergent once-in-a-generation opportunities to conserve fish and wildlife habitat and to be a good neighbor to local landowners.



In December 2020, the Service used IEH funding to acquire a 50-acre property for Balcones Canyonlands NWR near Austin Texas. The property includes 1,000 feet of Cow Creek, which supports freshwater mussels and other aquatic species. The property also provides habitat for golden cheeked warblers and black-capped vireos. Acquisition provides public access to the creek and expands public recreation opportunities at the Refuge. FWS photo.

Use of Residual LWCF Funds

Federal land acquisition projects sometimes have small amounts of funds remaining after land has been acquired. These residual funds are insufficient to acquire additional land. The Service reallocates residual project funds of less than \$50,000 to the Inholdings / Emergencies and Hardships line item to be used to protect other lands that do not have project funding. This shift enables the Service to acquire valuable wildlife habitat within approved refuge acquisition boundaries that becomes available for acquisition between appropriations cycles.

Recreational Access

This activity provides funding for acquisition of land to conserve important wildlife habitats that provide public recreational opportunities. Refuges that have willing sellers may request funds to acquire lands to provide public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

Line-Item Projects

This activity funds individual land acquisition projects. Each year the Service acquires land or interests in land (water rights) in fee title or conservation easement through LWCF. The acquired lands provide habitat for wildlife and often enhance resource management capability. Fee title acquisitions generate economic benefits for local communities and provide the public with opportunities to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation. Conservation easements are an important tool to prevent habitat fragmentation and protect wildlife corridors while allowing ranching, farming, and forest operations to continue. Some conservation easements include public recreational access.

Recent acquisition highlights include:

Bear River Watershed Conservation Area, Wyoming

In September 2021, the Service acquired conservation easements on approximately 2,460 acres of working ranches for the Bear River Watershed CA in western Wyoming. The properties support several habitat types, including grasslands and shrublands, and a variety of species including elk, mule deer, moose, pronghorn, bear, lynx, and wolverine use these ranches as key wintering areas and migration corridors. The ranches include sections of Bear River and Yellow Creek, which provide breeding habitat for important native fish species such as Bonneville cutthroat trout and leatherside chub. The easements will permanently protect these habitats while allowing existing ranching practices to continue in support of the local rural economies of Cokeville and Evanston.



Acquisition of conservation easements at Bear River Watershed CA protect wildlife corridors and fish habitat while supporting ranching operations. Photo by Brian Ocepek, FWS.

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia

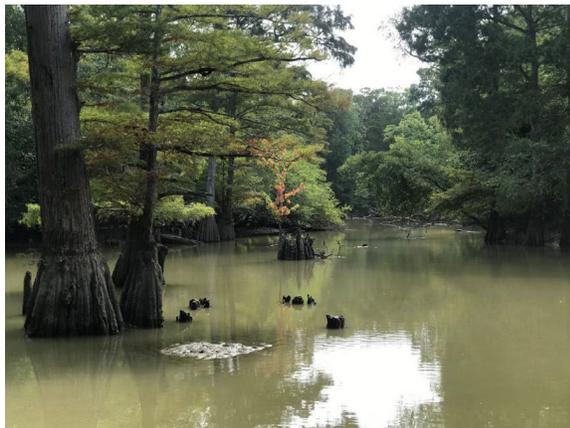
In December 2020, the Service, with the help of The Nature Conservancy, completed a multiphase acquisition of 6 tracts totaling 286 acres for Blackwater NWR. The tracts are along the Nanticoke River and contain tidal marsh and forest habitat. The river is a major spawning and nursery habitat for striped bass and other important anadromous fish species, including alewives and blueback herring. The tracts also provide wintering areas for black and canvasback ducks.



A recent acquisition for Blackwater NWR preserves fish spawning grounds and waterfowl habitat. FWS photo.

National Key Deer Wildlife Refuge, Florida

In September 2021, the Trustees of the Gladys Mulberg Family Trust donated 21.7 acres on Cudjoe Key for the National Key Deer Wildlife Refuge. The property consists of both lands and waters, which add to a matrix of federal, state, county, and other conservation properties providing an interconnected ecosystem. The shallow saltwater habitat provides critical nursery areas for commercially and recreationally important fish and shellfish such as shrimp, spiny lobster, redfish, tarpon, snook and snapper. The mangroves provide habitat for the mangrove cuckoo, mangrove water snake, and mangrove diamondback terrapin. The habitat supports a wide array of wading birds and federally listed endangered mammals, such as the Key deer, Lower Keys marsh rabbit, and silver rice rat.



The Cache River regularly floods bottomland hardwood forests at Cache River NWR, providing wintering waterfowl habitat. Photo by Jonathan Windley, FWS.

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, Arkansas

In August and September 2021, the Service acquired two tracts from willing sellers, totaling 92 acres for Cache River NWR that enhance the Refuge's habitat capacity for nesting, migrating, and wintering waterfowl and for forest-dwelling birds. Both tracts adjoin existing Refuge property and contain bottomland hardwood forest that floods regularly. One tract is adjacent to a public use road and improves access to existing Refuge lands for the nearby rural communities.

Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, Nevada

In August 2021, with the assistance of The Conservation Fund, the Service acquired a 433-acre tract for Stillwater NWR with 1,295 acre-feet of water rights from the Newlands Reclamation Project. The land will return to its native state while the water rights

will become part of the permanent water supply for wetlands on the Refuge. The acquired water will support 250 acres of wetlands on a long-term basis. Of the total purchase price of \$2,800,000, \$2,350,000 came from LWCF funding, with the balance accomplished by exchange. This acquisition is part of the Service's long-term commitment to restore and maintain the historic Stillwater Marsh. The Refuge is recognized as a site of international importance by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy.

Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge, Maine

In December 2020, the Service acquired a 48-acre forested property from a willing seller as an addition to the Great Thicket NWR. The property contains a wooded swamp and streams, providing a diversity of habitats for wildlife. Great Thicket NWR was established in 2017 to manage and protect young forest and shrubland habitat for the New England cottontail rabbit, ruffed grouse, American woodcock, monarch butterfly, box turtle, and other species that depend on young forest and shrubland. The Service plans to conserve 15,000 acres in 10 focus areas across six states through sales and donations of land from willing sellers or donors. The acquisition was the first acquisition within the Berwick-York focus areas in Maine.



The New England cottontail benefits from the protection of shrubland habitat efforts of Great Thicket NWR, state wildlife agencies, and other partners in Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island. Photo by John Greene, FWS.

Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Texas

In June 2021, the Service, in cooperation with The Conservation Fund, acquired two parcels totaling 1,513 acres for Laguna Atascosa NWR. The Service used Recreational Access funding to leverage funding from the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund to acquire the parcels. The larger parcel borders the Laguna Madre and the main unit of the Refuge. It has a network of unimproved roads, that will expand public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, including access to the Laguna Madre. The other parcel is located on the north side of State Highway 100 and connects to the Bahia Grande Unit of the Refuge. The Service is working to open the unit to public use, including working with the Federal Highway Administration to design safe, access areas. Ultimately the parcel will be a part of a trail system that will provide public hiking, biking, wildlife observation, and photography opportunities. Habitats on the parcels include 600 acres of tidal wetlands and lakes; 600 acres of coastal prairie; and 300 acres of native thornscrub. These areas provide foraging habitat for gull-billed terns, black skimmers, reddish egrets, piping plover, mottled duck, and red knot. They also provide habitat for federally endangered species, such as: nesting northern Aplomado falcons; four species of sea turtles that forage in nearshore seagrass beds in the Laguna Madre; and ocelots.



A recent acquisition at Laguna Atascosa NWR provides public trails and access to the Laguna Madre. FWS photo.

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Wisconsin

The Service acquired a 204-acre tract for Upper Mississippi River NWFR in the Black River Bottoms area of Wisconsin. The tract contains floodplain forest and wetland habitat, consisting of bottom land hardwoods and hard mast trees, including swamp white oak, silver maple, hickory, hackberry, and red oak. This habitat supports migratory birds and federally threatened eastern massasauga rattlesnake and the state threatened wood turtle. The tract has access to Highway 35 and the Great River State Trail and will enhance public wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities including wildlife observation, fishing, and waterfowl hunting.



Floodplains provide habitat for migratory birds at Upper Mississippi River NWFR. Photo by Tim Miller, FWS.

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, Washington



Roosevelt elk at Willapa NWR. Photo by Charlie Parrot, FWS.

In September 2021, the Service acquired 281 acres of upland forest habitat for the Nemah Unit of Willapa NWR. The acquisition of this property will contribute to the protection and overall health and function of the watershed, which supports a healthy Willapa Bay and associated aquatic species. The Service plans to restore and enhance western red cedar forests and re-establish late successional old-growth functions for the benefit of many migratory birds, big game species, and other species listed as threatened and endangered, including the marbled

murrelet. The property connects previously inaccessible Refuge lands to a public road, enhancing and expanding access for public wildlife-dependent recreation.

Justification of 2023 Program Changes

The 2023 budget allocation request for Land Acquisition is \$104,952 and 69 FTE, a net program change of \$3,112,000 and 0 FTE from the 2022 CR.

Land Acquisition Management (+\$1,028,000/+0 FTE)

The acquisition management funding supports all costs for staff and the administration, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of the Service’s Federal land acquisition program. This change reflects funding that will be sequestered; the remaining funding will allow the Service to continue operations at the FY 2022 level, including working with willing sellers and conservation partners to facilitate land acquisition projects.

Land Protection Planning (+\$28,000/+0 FTE)

The land protection planning funding supports National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for land acquisition projects and the development of Land Protection Plans (LPPs). This change reflects funding that will be sequestered; the remaining funding will allow the Service to continue operations at the FY 2022 level.

Exchanges (+\$91,000/+0 FTE)

Land exchanges provide unique opportunities to work in partnership with private landowners and organizations, local and national conservation groups, and other Federal agencies and State and local governments. Exchanges are an important alternative to buying land since very often landowners do not want to leave an area; exchanges are a win-win alternative that helps the Service align resource goals and decrease operations and management costs while also meeting the needs of private landowners. This change reflects funding that will be sequestered; the remaining funding will allow the Service to continue operations at the FY 2022 level.

Inholdings, Emergencies, and Hardships (-\$1,365,000/-0 FTE)

The Service is requesting \$11,135,000 for the inholdings, emergencies, and hardships program, which will be reduced by a 5.7% sequestration. This funding will allow the Service to continue capitalizing on emergent opportunities to conserve habitat for the enjoyment of the American public. This funding is only used for actual land purchases, including contract appraisals and other related costs.

Recreational Access (-\$124,000/-0 FTE)

The Service is requesting \$15,376,000 for the recreational access program, which will be reduced by a 5.7% sequestration. This funding will allow the Service to continue capitalizing on acquiring lands to provide public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. This funding is only used for actual land purchase, including contract appraisals and other related costs.

Line-Item Land Acquisition Projects (+\$3,454,000/+0 FTE)

The Service is requesting \$58,329,000 for line-item projects. The projects total to the proposed budget authority before sequester adjustments and reflect the actual funding need to complete all projects.

Line-Item Projects for FY 2023

Consistent with Congressional direction, the Service submits the following Federal land acquisition projects as part of the 2023 Budget process. Detailed final project data sheets for each identified project will be made available on the Department's LWCF website here: <https://www.doi.gov/lwcf>. The budget also includes the statutorily required Supplemental Project List. Supplemental Project Data Sheets and color maps will be provided separately.

The projects listed below are in priority order and have identified willing sellers. The Department will keep Congress informed should the circumstances of a specific project change during the course of the 2023 Budget process.

The project funding amounts reflect the total amount required for the acquisition and reflect the actual funding needed to complete each project.

The actual amounts of the sequester adjustments will vary to reflect the enacted funding levels. The Department will update the 2022 sequestered amounts which become available in 2023 once the allocation of 2022 LWCF funding is finalized in a full-year enacted appropriation.

The Service uses several tools, including conservation design, to implement its 2014 Strategic Growth Policy. Conservation design combines geospatial data with biological information and models to create maps and other tools that evaluate the refuge’s habitat potential to support fish, wildlife, or plant populations, including climate resiliency. The Service also works collaboratively with conservation partners to determine the kind, quality, and configuration of the needed habitat. With these tools and data, the Service can determine the current habitat capability and what is needed to achieve specific biological objectives or outcomes.

The land acquisition projects proposed for the FY 2023 Budget reflect additional important factors, including contribution of leveraged funds, conservation partner participation, opportunities for public recreation, and urgency of project completion to protect natural areas from development or other incompatible uses. The proposed projects support the Service’s mission-oriented priorities.

FY 2023 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Project List Allocation Summary Table
(Dollars in Thousands)

Budget Authority/Activity	Amount
FY 2023 Allocation (Request)	58,329
FY 2023 Estimated Sequestration Reduction (-5.7%)	-3,324
FY 2022 Estimated Pop Up (+5.7% of 2022)	+3,127
Total, Estimated Amount Available for Execution	58,132

FY 2023 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service GAOA LWCF Land Acquisition Project Request List (Dollars in Thousands)

Priority	Project	State(s)	Funding (\$ in 000s)	Acres
1	Rachel Carson NWR	ME	\$2,000	200
2	Lower Rio Grande NWR	TX	\$3,000	940
3	Great Thicket NWR	Multi - CT/MA/ME/NH/NY/RI	\$1,500	250
4	Cache River NWR	AR	\$1,000	333
5	Dakota Grassland CA	Multi - ND/SD	\$3,000	3,750
6	Silvio O. Conte NFWR	Multi - CT/MA/NH/VT	\$3,000	1,037
7	Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR	Multi - IA/MN	\$500	100
8	Laguna Atascosa NWR	TX	\$4,000	1,250
9	Sacramento River NWR	CA	\$1,000	285
10	Everglades Headwaters NWR/CA	FL	\$4,000	1,259
11	Cherry Valley NWR	PA	\$3,000	500
12	Dakota Tallgrass Prairie WMA	Multi - ND/SD	\$1,000	1,000
13	Hackmatack NWR	Multi - IL/WI	\$1,100	200

Priority	Project	State(s)	Funding (\$ in 000s)	Acres
14	Grasslands WMA	CA	\$1,000	200
15	Alaska Refuges	AK	\$2,800	22,691
16	Felsenthal NWR	AR	\$3,000	1,500
17	St. Marks NWR	FL	\$2,000	700
18	Willapa NWR	WA	\$3,500	1,012
19	Montana CA's	MT	\$12,000	16,000
20	Patoka River NWR	IN	\$2,500	764
21	San Joaquin River NWR	CA	\$2,000	205
22	Tulare Basin WMA	CA	\$1,000	100
23	Big Muddy NFWR	MO	\$429	188
	Before FY 2023 Sequester Adjustments		\$58,329	
	FY 2023 Sequestration Reduction Adjustments		-\$3,324	
	Estimated FY 2022 Sequester Pop Up Funding 1		+\$3,127	
Total, 2023 Estimated Amount Available for Land Acquisition Projects¹			\$58,132	

¹ Project amounts reflect the full estimated requirement after sequestration. The associated sequester reductions (-5.7%) for each project are consolidated and shown separately. The exact amount will vary upon enactment. In FY 2023, funds sequestered in FY 2022 will become available for obligation. The previously sequestered amounts which will become available in FY 2023 will be determined by the final allocation of LWCF funding in an enacted FY 2022 full year Appropriation. A revised set of tables will be provided after enactment of a full year enacted appropriation showing the actual "pop up" amounts anticipated in FY 2023 for each bureau.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 1

Project / Unit: Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): ME

Congressional District(s): ME-1

Location: York and Cumberland Counties

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	200	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	5,690	\$27,769,190
Remaining to be Acquired	8,994	\$89,940,000

Project Description:

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1966 in cooperation with the State of Maine to protect valuable salt marshes and estuaries for migratory birds. Located along 50 miles of coastline in York and Cumberland Counties, the Refuge consists of eleven Divisions stretching from Kittery to Cape Elizabeth. The proximity of the Refuge to the coast and its location between the eastern deciduous forest and the boreal forest creates a biodiverse composition of plants and animals not found elsewhere in Maine. Major habitat types present on the Refuge include forested upland, barrier beach/dune, coastal meadows, tidal salt marsh, and the distinctive rocky coast. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities, including wildlife observation, fishing, hunting, photography, and kayaking for the growing and increasingly diverse and more urban population of southern Maine and summer visitors.

Purpose / Need:

The Refuge’s land acquisition strategy is to acquire lands that will enhance coastal resilience and allow for salt marsh migration inland—a phenomenon already evident within the Gulf of Maine—and to protect the watersheds that serve as catchment basins for the seven tidal rivers that traverse the Refuge.

The Service has identified three parcels, totaling 120 acres, that enhance the protection of Refuge tidal river watersheds and associated salt marshes while providing room for salt marsh migration inland. The marshes are in the York River, Brave Boat Harbor, and Spurwink River Divisions and provide roosting and foraging habitat for the Federally listed as endangered roseate tern and the State listed as endangered least tern, while providing habitat for the saltmarsh sparrow (at risk species) and for wintering waterfowl, including American black duck, red breasted merganser, and Canada goose.

The Service has also identified two parcels, totaling 80 acres, that encompass part of the headwaters of the Little River in the Biddeford Division. The parcels are comprised of wetlands, vernal pools, and riparian habitat and are within a 500-acre undeveloped habitat block. The properties provide winter foraging habitat and warm season nesting habitat for waterfowl and provide diverse habitat for migratory birds. Acquisition will enhance public recreation opportunities, including wildlife observation, hunting, and fishing.

Cooperator(s):

Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (a partnership among national and local land trusts including the York, Kittery, and Great Works Regional Land Trusts).

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$10,000	\$2,500

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include boundary marking. Annual costs include maintenance and law enforcement.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 2

Project / Unit: Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): TX

Congressional District(s): TX-15, TX-28, TX-34

Location: South Texas: Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	940	\$3,000,000
Acquired to Date	104,675	\$86,894,343
Remaining to be Acquired	26,885	\$69,528,300

Project Description:

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (Valley) region has lost approximately 95 percent of its native Tamaulipan thornscrub habitat due to agriculture, urban expansion, and industrial development, and 99 percent of the native vegetation in riparian areas has been destroyed. Hoping to connect and protect these isolated tracts of habitat, the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1979 with a management priority to protect biodiversity. As a wildlife corridor, the Refuge follows the Rio Grande along the last 275 river miles, connecting isolated tracts of land managed by private landowners, non-profit organizations, the State of Texas, and two other National Wildlife Refuges: Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana. During migration, birds from the Central and Mississippi Flyways converge in the Valley. Where possible, migrating birds avoid flying too far east (over the Gulf Coast) or too far west (over the desert) and end up funneling through this region. In addition, many birds from South and Central America reach the northernmost point of their range on the Rio Grande with some species literally not migrating any farther north than the river. In addition, the Valley is where four climates (temperate, desert, coastal, and sub-tropical) converge. The 365-day growing season and rich soils of the Rio Grande delta have resulted in over 1,200 plant species within the Valley. This plant diversity attracts and supports a diversity of wildlife, birds, and butterflies that depend on the vegetation that can only be found here in the United States. The Refuge supports 18 Federally listed endangered or threatened species, including the ocelot, peregrine falcon, and Kemp’s ridley sea turtle. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, such as wildlife viewing, photography, and hunting.

Purpose / Need:

With this appropriation, the Service will acquire the final 940 acres of a 1,284-acre tract. Acquisition of the property expands protection for endangered species, such as the ocelot, and for native species, such as white-tailed deer, bobcats, chachalacas, and great kiskadees, along with a variety of migratory bird species. Approximately 120 acres of the property contains undisturbed native brush, and the remainder is former farmland, with irrigable acreage. Restored areas will provide increased vegetative and wildlife species. Acquisition will expand

public recreational opportunities, such as hunting, wildlife observation, and photography to nearby underserved communities and visitors.

Cooperator(s):

Friends of the Wildlife Corridor, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas General Land Office, Texas Department of Transportation, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy-Texas, Texas Commission for Environmental Quality, Ducks Unlimited, The Peregrine Fund, Coastal Conservation Association-Texas Chapter, The Rio Grande Valley Nature Coalition, Partners for Conservation, and private landowners.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$10,000	\$1,000

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include fencing and posting of Refuge boundaries, which the Service would fund from the Refuge's base funding.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 3

Project / Unit: Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI

Congressional District(s): CT-2,5; MA-9; ME-1; NH-1,2; NY-19; RI-2

Location: Spans 10 Focus Areas in six northeastern states.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	250	\$1,500,000
Acquired to Date	222	\$383,000
Remaining to be Acquired	14,538	\$98,617,000

Project Description:

Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2016 to manage and protect young forest and shrubland habitat for the New England cottontail rabbit, ruffed grouse, American woodcock, monarch butterfly, box turtle, and other species that depend on young forest and shrubland. The Refuge is part of a larger landscape effort with state wildlife agencies and other partners in Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island to protect and manage lands for young forest and shrubland habitat and the species that depend on those habitats. The Service plans to conserve 15,000 acres in 10 focus areas. Habitat restoration also benefits Federally listed endangered bog turtles and at-risk migratory birds including prairie warbler, blue-winged warbler, field sparrow, American woodcock, and brown thrasher. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation, including wildlife observation, nature interpretation, hunting, and fishing.

Purpose / Need:

The Service is in various stages of negotiations with willing sellers throughout the Refuge’s focus areas. The subject property is in a New England cottontail core area that contains the most viable population of the species remaining in New Hampshire. The parcel’s western boundary fronts over 2,000 feet along Fresh Creek, a tributary of the Salmon Falls River that offers excellent trout fishing opportunities. The parcel’s eastern boundary fronts a small county road, offering additional access for hunters, anglers, and other recreational users. The property is adjacent to large tracts of public and private conservation lands, providing the opportunity to work with partners to establish a network of trails for a variety of outdoor public recreational activities.

Cooperator(s):

States of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York; USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service; The Nature Conservancy; Trust for Public Land; Avalonia Land Conservancy (CT); Open Space Institute; Dutchess Land Conservancy (NY), Housatonic Valley Association; Harlem Valley Conservation Alliance (NY); Open Space

Institute (NY); Connecticut Audubon Society; York (ME) Land Trust; Kittery (ME) Land Trust; Great Works Regional Land Trust (ME); Maine Coast Heritage Trust; Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership (NH).

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$5,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up cost would be used for boundary marking. Annual costs include habitat management.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 4

Project / Unit: Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): AR

Congressional District(s): AR-1

Location: Adjacent to the White and Cache Rivers and Bayou DeView, 75 miles northeast of Little Rock in Monroe, Prairie, Woodruff, Jackson, Cross, and Poinsett Counties.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	333	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	72,606	\$72,377,190
Remaining to be Acquired	213,331	\$532,556,155

Project Description:

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1986 to protect significant wetland habitats and provide critical feeding and resting areas for migrating and wintering waterfowl. As one of the few remaining areas in the Lower Mississippi River Valley not drastically altered by channelization and drainage, the Cache River basin contains a variety of wetland communities including some of the most intact and least disturbed bottomland hardwood forests in the Mississippi Valley region and is the most important wintering area for mallard ducks in North America. The exemplary quality and diversity of habitats attract a wide variety of fish and wildlife, including Federally listed and candidate species such as northern long-eared bat, eastern black rail, interior least tern, piping plover, and monarch butterfly. The wetlands have been designated by the Ramsar Convention as “Wetlands of International Importance.” The Refuge is a nationally renowned area for waterfowl hunting. The Refuge also provides other public wildlife dependent recreation, such as fishing, boating, wildlife observation, photography, and hiking. The Refuge is located within a very rural, economically depressed area of Arkansas, whose communities depend on the hunting and fishing opportunities provided by the Refuge.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the fee title acquisition of a 320-acre tract and start the phased acquisition of a 185-acre tract. The tracts are located within the floodplain of the Cache River and contain bottomland hardwood habitat consisting of extant and regenerating seasonally flooded forest, permanent hardwood swamp and ponds, moist-soil areas, and herbaceous wetlands. The tracts have high value foraging, migrating, and wintering habitat resources for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds, landbirds, and breeding habitat for wood duck and forest-interior birds. Conservation of these parcels will benefit a wide variety of fish and wildlife, potentially including Federally listed species such as northern long-eared bat, eastern black rail, red knot, piping plover, and monarch butterfly. Acquisition of the 320-acre parcel will reestablish public access around Bayou DeView. Acquisition of the parcel will also increase recreational use on 1,665 acres of existing Refuge lands and allow public access for hunting and fishing to

2,627 acres of State lands (Dagmar Wildlife Management Area) that are now blocked by a gated road. Two county roads serve the 185-acre tract, who’s phased acquisition will be started with the 2023 appropriations, and will provide public access for recreation.

Cooperator(s):

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, National Wild Turkey Federation, Arkansas Bow Hunters Association, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, The Conservation Fund, Arbor Day Foundation, and Audubon Arkansas.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$500

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include boundary marking. Annual costs are for maintenance.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 5

Project / Unit: Dakota Grassland Conservation Area

State(s): ND, SD

Congressional District(s): ND-AL, SD-AL

Location: South Dakota and North Dakota, lying east of the Missouri River.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	3,750	\$3,000,000
Acquired to Date	95,964	\$48,402,531
Remaining to be Acquired	111,334	\$84,079,250

Project Description:

The Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) ecosystem consists of large, unique grassland and wetland complexes that provide critical habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, grassland birds, and other wildlife. Known as America’s “duck factory,” the PPR supports more than 50% of the total breeding population of North America’s migratory waterfowl. The prime breeding habitat for millions of ducks, the PPR includes parts of Iowa, the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Montana, and can support upwards of 100 breeding duck pairs per square mile. The Dakota Grassland Conservation Area is part of a large-scale habitat conservation effort to protect this highly diverse and endangered ecosystem across the North and South Dakota portions of the PPR. The Service has made significant progress in protecting priority waterfowl habitat in the PPR, but further habitat fragmentation and degradation continues at an alarming rate. Approximately 81% of the remaining grassland and 65% of wetlands in the PPR have no form of permanent protection. The Service’s conservation easement acquisition program offers landowners a non-regulatory, financial incentive to permanently protect wildlife habitat on private lands in the PPR. Landscape-scale preservation of the rich mosaic of native grasslands and functional wetlands will bolster the ecosystem’s resiliency to climate change.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the acquisition of wetland and grassland conservation easements from willing sellers on approximately 3,750 acres of grassland and wetland habitat in South Dakota and North Dakota. The funding leverages additional funding from Ducks Unlimited and other conservation partners. Acquisitions will benefit migratory birds, plants, and wildlife including Federally listed species such as piping plover, whooping crane, and Dakota skipper.

Cooperator(s):

North Dakota Game and Fish Department; North Dakota Natural Resources Trust; Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; The Nature Conservancy; and the South Dakota Grassland Coalition.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$0	\$0

Describe O&M:

The Service is already monitoring existing easements in the area; the additional costs would be minimal.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 6

Project / Unit: Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

State(s): CT, MA, NH, VT

Congressional District(s): CT-1, CT-2, CT-3; MA-1, MA-2; NH-2; VT-AL

Location: Several focus areas within the Connecticut River Watershed.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	1,037	\$3,000,000
Acquired to Date	38,692	\$40,002,563
Remaining to be Acquired	57,504	\$85,997,437

Project Description:

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was authorized in 1991 as a landscape scale, watershed based, climate resilient, and partnership empowered land conservation collaboration to protect the Connecticut River Watershed. Land protection promotes ecological integrity, species diversity and reinforces ecosystem structure and function. The Refuge purpose is to conserve, protect, and enhance the Connecticut River Valley populations of Atlantic salmon, American shad, river herring, short-nosed sturgeon, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, osprey, black ducks, and other native species of plants, fish, and wildlife. Refuge Divisions span the rural-suburban-urban gradient creating opportunities to connect with underserved communities as well as economically depressed areas. The diverse array of compatible public access opportunities provided within the Watershed offer an array of avenues to connect people with nature.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the acquisition of 1,037 acres in several focus areas within Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Many of the targeted tracts abut existing Refuge lands and other conservation lands, thereby enhancing connectivity for wildlife corridors and public recreation.

Within the total above, the Service plans to acquire a 33-acre parcel that is bounded on two sides by the tidally influenced freshwater wetland portion of the Salmon River and Pine Brook for the Salmon River Division (CT). Habitat conservation in this Division will help allow for the landward migration of the coastal wetland complex (brackish, and freshwater tidally influenced wetlands) due to climate change. The Service will also pursue a 6-acre property that will establish the Maromas Division in Connecticut.

The Service will also pursue the acquisition of three tracts totaling 97 acres within Massachusetts for the Dead Branch and the Fort River Divisions. Two of the tracts are along a high-quality segment of Dead Branch Brook within the Westfield River watershed that supports

an eastern brook trout fishery. The properties are considered by the State to be climate resilient and are dominated by mixed forest and scattered wetlands.

The Service will acquire a conservation easement on 300 acres for the Mascoma Division in New Hampshire that allows habitat management and public access. The Service will also acquire a 101-acre tract for the Pondicherry Division. The properties contain a mosaic of unfragmented habitats that contribute to the larger core of undeveloped land within the landscape.

The Service will acquire a 500-acre parcel for the West River Division (VT) that provides important stopover habitat for migrating landbirds as well as breeding habitat. The forested areas provide breeding habitat for species of conservation concern such as the wood thrush, blackburnian warbler, Canada warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, and American woodcock. There is potential breeding and foraging habitat for American black duck, wood duck, and other waterfowl species within and around the wetlands (conifer swamp, shrub-swamp, floodplain forest, and freshwater marsh), on and near the subject property and the adjacent open water area.

Cooperator(s):

States of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, as well as local communities. The Friends of Conte, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Kestrel Land Trust, Middlesex Land Trust, and WildLandscapes International. The four-state congressional delegation provides letters of support annually.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$7,000	\$5,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up cost would be used for boundary marking. Annual costs include habitat management.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 7

Project / Unit: Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): IA, MN

Congressional District(s): IA-1, IA-2, IA-3, IA-4, MN-1, MN-7

Location: Located in portions of 37 counties in IA and 48 in MN, the Refuge is bounded by the U.S.-Canada border to the north and Des Moines, IA, to the south. The Refuge boundary weaves through the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands and Agassiz Beach Ridges of northwest MN and the Prairie Coteau regions of southwest MN and northwest IA.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	100	\$500,000
Acquired to Date	12,250	\$8,402,841
Remaining to be Acquired	64,650	\$99,736,125

Project Description:

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2000 to address the loss of America’s grasslands and the decline of grassland wildlife. Scientists estimate the original tallgrass prairie in Minnesota and Iowa covered about 25 million acres. Now, there are only about 300,000 acres left in the two states. The Refuge was created to work with individuals, groups, and government agencies to permanently preserve and restore some of the northern tallgrass prairie. The Refuge’s long-term goal is to protect 77,000 acres.

Federally listed threatened and endangered species on the Refuge include four plant and seven animal species, including western prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover, Topeka shiner, rusty patch bumblebee, and piping plover. Several globally rare species can also be found on the Refuge, including the last remaining U.S. populations of the Dakota skipper and regal fritillary butterflies, which are in steep decline. The Refuge consists of many permanent, temporary, and seasonal wetlands crucial to national waterfowl, waterbird, and shorebird populations. These same water resources provide groundwater recharge supply and mitigates for the severity and risk of downstream flooding.

The many units of the Refuge are accessible to numerous diverse communities for public recreation such as fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, and photography.

Purpose / Need:

The Service is planning to acquire two or more tracts of land totaling 100 acres of fee title or conservation easement in northwestern Iowa and/or western Minnesota for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. Acquisitions of fee title will increase public recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation.

NGO conservation partners in Iowa and Minnesota will leverage acquisitions by providing matching funds, cost-share opportunities, or donating land. In Iowa, the Service works closely with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to purchase and manage tracts of land. In Minnesota, The Nature Conservancy actively provides funding to help restore recently purchased tracts. Some of these land donations are made possible by State of Minnesota grants and, per State law, are immediately open for public hunting and fishing. Acquisition will increase public wildlife observation, education, and photography opportunities. Due to the length of the Refuge, access to units is enjoyed by many diverse communities.

Cooperator(s):

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR), the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF), Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, county conservation boards, and local Chambers of Commerce.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$1,250	\$1,000

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include initial restoration and posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include habitat management and enhancement work (spraying, mowing, prescribed burns).

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 8

Project / Unit: Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): TX

Congressional District(s): TX-34

Location: South Texas: Lower Rio Grande Valley – Cameron and Willacy Counties.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	1,250	\$4,000,000
Acquired to Date	97,737	\$25,985,732
Remaining to be Acquired	54,327	\$121,727,564

Project Description:

Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1946 to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl and other migratory birds, principally redhead ducks. Today, there is an expanded emphasis that includes endangered species conservation and management for shorebirds. Nearly half of all the bird species found in the continental United States rest, feed, nest, or migrate on or through Refuge lands, making it a premiere bird-watching destination. The Refuge contains the largest population of the endangered ocelots in the United States and is important for conservation and recovery efforts for this endangered cat. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation such as wildlife watching, hunting, fishing, photography, and environmental education in a state with limited public lands.

Purpose / Need:

With the requested funding, the Service would begin the phased acquisition of an 8,000-acre ranch that is bordered on three sides by the Refuge. The remaining boundary lies along 10.5 miles of the Laguna Madre. Federally listed sea turtles forage in nearshore seagrass beds in the Laguna Madre and nest nearby on South Padre Island. The undisturbed shorelines and wetlands are ideal for waterfowl, gull-billed and royal terns, reddish egrets, black skimmers, piping plovers, red knots, and American oystercatchers. The property also supports tidal, saline, brackish, freshwater oxbows, and marshes, each of which are important habitats for wintering migratory waterfowl and neotropical birds. The native, Tamaulipan brush supports one of the last remaining breeding populations of the ocelot in the United States and meets a significant recovery action for the species. The property also contains habitat for the Federally listed endangered Aplomado falcon and could support breeding populations while providing a haven for many native wildlife species. Acquiring the property will protect coastal, vegetative, and wetland habitats, and maintain an intact ecosystem, enhancing biodiversity. Acquisition will also expand public wildlife-dependent recreational uses such as hunting, wildlife observation, and photography to nearby underserved communities and visitors.

Cooperator(s):

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas General Land Office, Texas Department of Transportation, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy-Texas, Ocean Trust, Texas Commission for Environmental Quality, Ducks Unlimited, The Peregrine Fund, Coastal Conservation Association-Texas Chapter, The Rio Grande Valley Nature Coalition, and the Partners for Conservation.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$300

Describe O&M:

Start-up costs include boundary posting. Annual costs include monitoring activities.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**Fiscal Year:** 2023**Priority:** 9**Project / Unit:** Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge**State(s):** CA**Congressional District(s):** CA-1**Location:** Tehama County, 18 miles southeast of Redbluff.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	285	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	11,755	\$29,545,592
Remaining to be Acquired	6,460	\$62,450,000

Project Description:

Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1989 and consists of multiple units along an 80-mile stretch of the Sacramento River between Red Bluff and Princeton, in Tehama, Butte, Glenn, and Colusa Counties. Many of the units have been restored by converting flood-prone agricultural lands into riparian habitats in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, River Partners, and many other cooperating partners. The riparian habitat along the Sacramento River is critically important for fish, migratory birds, plants, and river system health. It provides shelter for many songbirds and water-associated animals, including the river otter, turtles, beaver, American pelicans, ospreys, and migratory songbirds. Several threatened, endangered, and sensitive species can be found on the Refuge including Chinook salmon, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, western yellow-billed cuckoo, Swainson's hawk, and bank swallow. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities, including fishing, boating, hiking, hunting, wildlife viewing, and photography.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the acquisition of a 285-acre tract located in Tehama County. Tehama County has underserved and non-English speaking communities; the population includes 25% Hispanic or Latino persons and 16.3% of the population lives below the poverty level. The tract, which has extensive frontage on the Sacramento River, will provide public recreational opportunities, such as fishing, boating, hiking, hunting, wildlife viewing, and photography for the residents of Tehama County and visitors. The tract will provide potential habitat for the Federally listed as threatened western yellow-billed cuckoo and the riparian forest will provide a shade screen for winter and spring run Chinook salmon.

Cooperator(s):

Tehama County, the Sacramento River Forum, The Nature Conservancy, AltaCal Audubon Society, River Partners, Northern California Water Association, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and California Department of Water Resources.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$3,000	\$3,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up costs will include boundary sign posting. Annual costs will include maintenance and habitat management.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 10

Project / Unit: Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area

State(s): FL

Congressional District(s): FL-12, FL-15, FL-16

Location: Approximately 50 miles south of Orlando and 75 miles east of Tampa, in Okeechobee County.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	1,259	\$4,000,000
Acquired to Date	8,994	\$20,539,594
Remaining to be Acquired	141,823	\$449,774,697

Project Description:

Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area contains the headwaters of the greater Everglades ecosystem, protecting a combination of wetland and upland habitats supporting migratory birds, Federal and State listed species (143), and regionally important wildlife and plant communities within the Kissimmee River Basin. Habitats include a mosaic of seasonally wet grasslands, longleaf pine savannas, sandhill and scrub, and forested wetlands that support numerous imperiled plants and animals and connect landscapes for a wide array of species including Florida panther, Florida black bear, Audubon’s crested caracara, and Florida grasshopper sparrow. Easements acquired within the Conservation Area protect Florida’s cattle ranching heritage and fee acquisitions for the Refuge provide public outdoor recreational opportunities, including opportunities for underserved communities.

Purpose / Need:

The Service is working with willing sellers to acquire two conservation easements totaling 1,259 acres. Refuge acquisitions are strongly supported by a variety of partners and stakeholders and support the military readiness goals of the Avon Park Air Force Range and their Sentinel Landscape conservation efforts, offering potential cost sharing opportunities. Acquisitions will help the Everglades ecosystem become a more connected and functional conservation landscape that will provide effective habitat connections between existing conservation areas and allow habitats and species to shift in response to urban development pressures and climate change. Conservation easements help preserve one of Florida’s last working rural landscapes, protecting a unique regional landscape, trust resources, and the local economy. Acquisitions also contribute to safeguarding water supply for millions of Floridians and marine life by protecting groundwater recharge areas; holding and treating surface water runoff, which significantly contributes to efforts to protect and restore watersheds to reduce fresh and saltwater algae blooms.

Cooperator(s):

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Florida Sportsman's Trust; Florida Cattlemen's Association; National Wildlife Refuge Association. Open Space Institute. Ducks Unlimited. U.S. Department of Defense; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Okeechobee, Osceola, Highlands and Polk Counties; and The Nature Conservancy.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$12,000	\$10,000

Describe O&M:

Annual costs are for monitoring.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 11

Project / Unit: Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): PA

Congressional District(s): PA-17

Location: 60 miles north of Philadelphia in Monroe County.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	500	\$3,000,000
Acquired to Date	5,472	\$6,519,750
Remaining to be Acquired	13,215	\$86,300,000

Project Description:

Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established in December 2008 for the conservation of migratory birds and wildlife, and the habitats they depend on. The Refuge provides a diverse mosaic of wetland and upland habitats that support five Federally listed threatened or endangered species such as the bog turtle and Indiana bat. The Kittatinny Ridge (which flanks the south side of the valley) has been designated an Important Bird Area by the Pennsylvania Audubon Society and is a well-known migration flyway that concentrates up to 20,000 migrating raptors and more than 140 bird species every Fall. Large blocks of unfragmented forest along the ridge also serve as valuable breeding areas for interior-forest birds such as ruffed grouse, wood thrush, Eastern wood pewee, scarlet tanager, black-throated blue warbler, and worm-eating warbler. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities such as fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting, and wildlife viewing.

Purpose / Need:

The Service is planning to acquire approximately 500 acres in five tracts. These forested uplands, wetlands, and riparian areas will provide crucial habitat for native wildlife, including the Federally listed as threatened bog turtle and migratory birds of conservation concern. These tracts include lands on the Kittatinny Ridge, an Important Bird Area, and along Cherry Creek. These proposed tracts are adjacent to existing Refuge lands. Acquisition will expand public recreational opportunities, including wildlife observation, photography, hunting, hiking, and environmental education.

Cooperator(s):

The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, National Park Service (Appalachian National Scenic Trail), Pocono Natural Heritage Trust, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Monroe County, Open Space Institute, and Wildlands Conservancy.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$10,000	\$5,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up cost would be used for boundary marking. Annual costs include habitat management.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 12

Project / Unit: Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area

State(s): ND, SD

Congressional District(s): ND-AL, SD-AL

Location: South Dakota east of the James River Valley and 3 counties in the southeast corner of North Dakota.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	1,000	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	77,666	\$20,377,551
Remaining to be Acquired	106,334	\$84,079,250

Project Description:

Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area was established in 2000 to preserve quality tallgrass prairie habitat in southeastern North Dakota and eastern South Dakota to help maintain biodiversity and to slow habitat fragmentation. The plan for the Wildlife Management Area is to use conservation easements to protect 185,000 acres of the remaining tallgrass prairie in the eastern Dakotas. Tallgrass prairies support a rich variety of plant, animal, and insect species, including more than 147 species of breeding birds, ranging from neotropical migrants to waterfowl. In some areas, breeding waterfowl densities exceed 100 pairs per square mile. The habitat supports several Federally listed species, including the threatened Dakota skipper, endangered Powesiek skipperling, and monarch butterfly. The tallgrass prairie ecosystem also supports grassland bird species, including Baird’s sparrow, loggerhead shrike, and ferruginous hawk. Perpetual conservation easements preserve ecological functions by providing floodwater retention, groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, improved water quality, and reduced soil erosion.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the acquisition of perpetual wetland and grassland easements from willing sellers on approximately 1,000 acres of tallgrass prairie. Acquisition of perpetual easements protects important habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife, while maintaining ranching and other traditional working operations.

Cooperator(s):

North Dakota Game and Fish; Pheasants Forever; Audubon; Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; The Nature Conservancy; and the South Dakota Grassland Coalition.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$0	\$1,000

Describe O&M:

Annual costs include monitoring activities.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 13

Project / Unit: Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): IL, WI

Congressional District(s): IL-14, WI-1

Location: Walworth County, Wisconsin and McHenry County, Illinois.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	200	\$1,100,000
Acquired to Date	214	\$365,000
Remaining to be Acquired	11,192	\$61,556,000

Project Description:

Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2012 and is an urban refuge that is centrally located between the communities of Chicago and Rockford, Illinois and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is a conservation and outreach hub for the 12 million people that reside within these communities. The Refuge purposes include the protection, restoration, and management of remnant oak savannah, tallgrass prairie, riparian corridors, and wetlands. Of the ecosystems that once defined this area, less than 0.01% of the tallgrass prairie and 12% of remnant oak ecosystems remain. The Refuge complements state and local plans, including the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision; the Chicago Wilderness Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan; the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan; the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan; Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan; the Grassland Bird Conservation Design in the Chicago Region; the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Network; and the Nippersink Watershed Initiative.

The Refuge provides habitat for breeding migratory birds such as Henslow’s sparrows, bobolink, and eastern meadowlark, and several Federally listed endangered and threatened species, including prairie bush clover, eastern prairie fringed orchid, whooping crane, and rusty patch bumblebee. Public recreational opportunities include migratory bird, small and upland game, and big game hunting, as well as fishing, hiking, birding, photography, environmental interpretation, and education.

Purpose / Need:

The Service is planning to acquire several tracts totaling 200 acres in fee title. One targeted tract is located near Richmond High School where the Service is working with the school to incorporate restoration benefits within the high school educational curriculum and to engage youth in restoration planting. Acquisition will expand public recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, birding, photography, environmental interpretation, and education, in an urban area.

Cooperator(s):

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Openlands, The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Ducks Unlimited, McHenry County Conservation District, McHenry County Conservation Foundation, Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, Geneva Lake Conservancy, Nippersink Watershed Association, Kettle Moraine Land Trust, Illinois Audubon Society, county conservation boards, and local Chambers of Commerce.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$12,000	\$2,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up costs would include restoration, development of public access points, and posting of boundary signs. Annual expenses include habitat management such as spraying, mowing, brush removal, and prescribed burns.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 14

Project / Unit: Grasslands Wildlife Management Area

State(s): CA

Congressional District(s): CA-16

Location: Located in the Pacific Flyway between the Cities of Los Banos and Gustine.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	200	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	94,997	\$66,318,161
Remaining to be Acquired	38,133	\$152,330,200

Project Description:

The Grasslands Wildlife Management Area (WMA) was established in 1979 and is composed mostly of conservation easements. Perpetual conservation easements preserve wetland and grassland habitats, while allowing wildlife-friendly agricultural operations. Fee acquisition allows for habitat restoration as well as protection of water quality and quantity. The WMA supports diverse habitats including seasonally flooded marshlands, semi-permanent marshes, riparian habitats, wet meadows, vernal pools, native uplands, pastures, and native grasslands. These wetlands constitute 30% of the remaining wetlands in California's Central Valley and are extremely important to Pacific Flyway waterfowl populations. In addition to waterfowl, these habitats support shorebirds, wading birds, songbirds, raptors, and other wildlife species.

Purpose / Need:

The Service is targeting the fee title acquisition of two tracts totaling 200 acres, including water rights. Acquisition will allow for improved management of adjacent Service lands and will contribute to the long-term viability of the grassland and wetland ecosystems providing a haven for migratory birds and other wildlife species.

Cooperator(s):

California Department of Fish & Wildlife, River Partners, Ducks Unlimited, California Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, and Western Rivers Conservancy.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$2,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up costs will include boundary sign posting. Annual costs will include maintenance and habitat management.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 15

Project / Unit: Alaska National Wildlife Refuges

State(s): AK

Congressional District(s): AK-AL

Location: State of Alaska

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	22,691	\$2,800,000
Acquired to Date	6,915,087	\$11,251,773
Remaining to be Acquired	24,412	\$12,206,000

Project Description:

The Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA) consolidated and created many national wildlife refuges. ANILCA also defined the five purposes of each Refuge: 1) Conserve the refuge’s animal populations and habitats in their natural biodiversity including, but not limited to marine mammals, marine birds and other migratory birds, the marine resources upon which they rely, bears, caribou, and other animals. 2) Fulfill international treaty obligations of the United States relating to fish and wildlife and their habitats. 3) Provide opportunities for continued subsistence uses by local residents. 4) Conduct national and international scientific research on marine resources. 5) Ensure water quality and quantity within the Refuge (to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with purpose number 1).

The Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge presents a breathtakingly dramatic landscape made up of active volcanoes, towering mountain peaks, rolling tundra and rugged, wave-battered coastlines. As is the case with most of Alaska's coastal refuges, salmon provide the principal "nutrient engine" for Alaska Peninsula, supporting the species that prey upon them and enriching the rivers and surrounding lands after they spawn and die. Where there are salmon, there will usually be bears, and when the fish are running, Ugashik Lakes and the streams that surround them attract brown bears in great numbers. Other large land mammals include wolverine, the caribou of the approximately 7,000-animal Northern Alaska Peninsula Herd, wolves, and moose. Refuge lands are also home to almost 40% of the Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run, the largest sustainable sockeye fishery in the world. The Refuge offers a variety of public recreational opportunities, such as sport fishing, hunting, hiking, backpacking, boating, camping, and wildlife observation and photography.

ANILCA combined 11 previously established refuges with 1.9 million acres of additional lands to form the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge's 3.4 million acres include the spectacular volcanic islands of the Aleutian chain, the seabird cliffs of the remote Pribilof Islands, and icebound lands washed by the Chukchi Sea. Swirling clouds of seabirds, rare Asiatic migrant birds, beaches of bellowing sea lions and fur seals, and salmon streams in

abundance are a few of the wildlife highlights on the Refuge. The Refuge is perhaps most unique for: the sheer abundance of life (40,000,000 seabirds), species and subspecies found nowhere else (6 subspecies of rock ptarmigan are found only in the Aleutians), endangered and threatened marine mammals (Steller sea lion and otters), threats from invasive species (rats, fox, cattle, and marine invertebrates), and the possibility that new species are yet to be found among the remote and rugged 2,500 rocks, reefs, and islands of the Refuge. The Refuge provides public recreational access for wildlife viewing and photography, as well as recreational and subsistence hunting.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the phased acquisition of a 32,000-acre tract for Alaska Peninsula NWR and will acquire a 2,691-acre conservation easement for Alaska Maritime NWR.

The Alaska Peninsula NWR acquisition will provide protection for the watershed that feeds Chignik fisheries and a nearby lagoon, thereby increasing water quality and quantity for Bristol Bay sockeye salmon. Acquisition will also expand public recreational opportunities, such as sport fishing, hunting, hiking, backpacking, boating, camping and wildlife observation and photography.

Near the Native Village of Point Lay, 40,000 to 50,000 Chukchi Sea walrus, mostly adult females and their calves, crowd on the beach. Acquisition of a conservation easement will facilitate research into responses to climate change; provide access to study the retreat of sea ice; protect walruses from harassment and the potential for stampeding, which can result in trampling of calves; enhance partnering with the local Tribe in the stewardship of the walruses; and facilitate walrus monitoring and conservation before they become listed as an endangered species.

Cooperator(s):

The Great Land Trust and Chignik Lagoon Native Corporation, The Cully Corporation, and The Conservation Fund.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$5,000

Describe O&M:

Annual costs include signage, easement monitoring, overflights, and enforcement.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 16

Project / Unit: Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): AR

Congressional District(s): AR-4

Location: Ashley County in southeast Arkansas.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	1,500	\$3,000,000
Acquired to Date	67,725	\$3,825,188
Remaining to be Acquired	27,523	\$51,455,272

Project Description:

Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1975, contains an abundance of water resources dominated by the Ouachita and Saline Rivers and the Felsenthal Pool. The low-lying areas are dissected by an intricate system of rivers, creeks, sloughs, buttonbush swamps, and lakes throughout a vast bottomland hardwood forest that gradually rises to an upland forest community. Historically, periodic flooding of the "bottoms" during winter and spring provided excellent wintering waterfowl habitat. These wetlands, in combination with the pine and upland hardwood forest on the higher ridges, support a wide diversity of native plants and animals. The Refuge provides wintering habitat for hundreds of thousands of migrating waterfowl. Refuge lands are also used by neotropical migratory birds following the Ouachita River during their spring and fall migrations. The Refuge provides nesting habitat for prothonotary, Swainson's, and worm-eating warblers, Mississippi kites, and wood ducks. The Refuge also provides habitat for priority species such as black bear, Rafinesque's big-eared bat, southeastern myotis and the Federally listed red-cockaded woodpecker. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation, such as wildlife-viewing, hunting, fishing, boating, and camping. These activities support nearby rural and underserved communities that are dependent upon Refuge hunting and fishing opportunities.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the phased acquisition of a 2,500-acre tract that is adjacent to the main unit of the Refuge. Acquisition will increase the core forest block of the Refuge dominated by bottomland hardwood forest, upland pine, and mixed pine-hardwood forest to the benefit of black bear, bats, migratory songbirds, and other wildlife. Conservation of these parcels will benefit a wide variety of fish and wildlife species, including Federally listed wildlife such as red-cockaded woodpecker, northern long-eared bat, and monarch butterfly. There is also the possible presence of two Federally listed plant species, the endangered Pondberry and the threatened Geocarpon. This project increases the forest buffer along the Ouachita River to improve water quality for regional fisheries and four endangered/threatened mussels.

Acquisition will enhance public recreation opportunities, including hiking, sport fishing, birdwatching, wildlife viewing, and hunting.

Cooperator(s):

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Arkansas Bow Hunters Association, The Conservation Fund, The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and local hunting and fishing groups.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$10,000	\$2,500

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include boundary marking, gates, and road/access needs. Annual costs include maintenance and law enforcement.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 17

Project / Unit: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): FL

Congressional District(s): FL-4

Location: In the Florida Panhandle, 24 miles south of Tallahassee, in Wakulla and Jefferson Counties.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	700	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	82,838	\$21,985,732
Remaining to be Acquired	28,044	\$61,258,715

Project Description:

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1931 to provide wintering habitat for migratory birds. It encompasses over 80,000 acres spread out between Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor counties, and includes about 43 miles along the Gulf Coast of northwest Florida. The Refuge contains upland pine forest, wetland, hardwood forest, pine plantation, shrub and brush land, and freshwater marsh habitat. The Refuge is within a designated Important Bird Area and a Land Management and Research Demonstration Site for Longleaf Pine Ecosystems. The Refuge includes coastal marshes, islands, tidal creeks, and estuaries of seven north Florida rivers, and is home to a diverse community of plant and animal life. Wildlife includes numerous federal threatened, endangered, and at-risk species, including frosted flatwoods salamanders, red-cockaded woodpeckers, wood storks, eastern black rails, red knots, piping plovers, Florida manatees, gulf sturgeon, gopher tortoises, Florida pine snakes, spotted turtles, American oystercatchers, Wilson’s plovers, and least terns, and loggerhead, green, Kemp’s ridley, and leatherback sea turtles. The Refuge also has strong ties to a rich cultural past, and is home to the St. Marks Lighthouse, which was built in 1842 (current tower) and is still in use today. Over 17,000 acres are protected under the Wilderness Act of 1964 including a designated Globally Important Bird Area. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities, including to underserved communities, by offering hiking, hunting, photography, wildlife viewing, environmental education, and interpretation.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will acquire approximately 700 acres from one willing seller. The acquisition will secure habitat for Federally listed threatened and endangered species including the red-cockaded woodpecker, wood stork, and frosted flatwoods salamanders. The site already includes a historical salamander pond and ephemeral wetlands that could be improved to benefit salamanders. This project is particularly important to buffer the impacts of sea level rise due to climate change on these species since it will allow for migration inland. The lands provide important Florida black bear habitat, including corridors to link critical habitats for major

population centers, and will benefit wading birds, shorebirds, marsh birds, Neotropical migrants, and other high priority migratory birds. This acquisition will provide public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities and will improve recreational access to existing Refuge lands.

Cooperator(s):

The Sam Shine Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance, Ducks Unlimited, Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society, The Florida Natural Areas Inventory, St. Marks Refuge Association, Florida Trail Association, Apalachee Audubon Society, Florida Wildlife Federation, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Forest Service, Tall Timbers Research Station, and the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$3,000	\$11,000

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include boundary marking. Annual costs include habitat management and restoration, prescribed burning, maintenance, and law enforcement.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 18

Project / Unit: Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): WA

Congressional District(s): WA-3

Location: Pacific County, near the community of Long Beach.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	1,012	\$3,500,000
Acquired to Date	17,671	\$17,688,079
Remaining to be Acquired	8,059	\$24,177,000

Project Description:

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to protect migrating birds and their habitat. The Refuge has grown to encompass diverse ecosystems including salt marsh, muddy tidelands, forest, freshwater wetlands, streams, grasslands, coastal dunes, and beaches. This rich mix of habitats provides places for over 200 bird species to rest, nest, and winter, and benefits chum salmon, river otter, Roosevelt elk, bobcat, and over a dozen species of amphibians. The Refuge provides public recreation opportunities such as hiking, wildlife viewing, and shellfish harvesting.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the acquisition of several portions of timber tracts. Acquisitions will focus on upland forest habitats that provide nesting habitat for the Federally listed threatened marbled murrelet. Other species that benefit from forest protection include black bear, blacktail deer, Roosevelt elk, salamanders, forest-dwelling bats and other small mammals, forest birds, and a host of fungi and gastropods. Protecting upland habitat will also protect water quality for streams and Willapa Bay.

Cooperator(s):

The Nature Conservancy, Western Rivers Conservancy, the Columbia Land Trust, and Forterra.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$30,000	\$5,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up costs include boundary posting. Annual costs include routine law enforcement patrol and maintenance.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 19

Project / Unit: Montana Conservation Areas (Rocky Mountain Front CA/Blackfoot Valley CA/
Lost Trail CA/Swan Valley CA)

State(s): MT

Congressional District(s): MT-AL

Location: Western Montana.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	16,000	\$12,000,000
Acquired to Date	0	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	100,000	\$65,000,000

Project Description:

The Lost Trail, Rocky Mountain Front, Blackfoot Valley, and Swan Valley Conservation Areas surround one of the largest wilderness areas in the continental United States. The Conservation Areas protect a wild landscape of sage steppe, mixed grass prairie, montane forest, lakes, and rivers.

As one of the newest units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the Lost Trail Conservation Area (LTCA) represents state-of-the-art conservation design. LTCA encompasses 100,000 acres of private forestland surrounding Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge. The LTCA boundary was drawn to include the migration corridor for an elk herd that winters on the Flathead Indian Reservation and is significant to the Confederated Tribes of the Salish and Kootenai. LTCA also includes a Federally identified grizzly bear migration corridor, allowing for critical movement and genetic diversity identified in the species recovery report.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the acquisition of a perpetual conservation easement on approximately 16,000 acres at LTCA. The easement will protect critical habitat and migration corridors for grizzly bear, elk, and other iconic species, as well as guarantee continued public recreational access and traditional native uses in perpetuity, something that has drawn near universal support from Tribal partners, local government officials, hunting groups, conservation groups, and residents.

Cooperator(s):

Trust for Public Land; Confederated Tribes of the Salish and Kootenai; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Lincoln and Flathead County Commissioners; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; The Nature Conservancy; The Conservation Fund; and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$0	\$2,500

Describe O&M:

There are no startup costs for the conservation easement. Annual costs are primarily for travel and monitoring of the conservation easement.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 20

Project / Unit: Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): IN

Congressional District(s): IN - 8

Location: Pike and Gibson Counties in southwestern Indiana.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	764	\$2,500,000
Acquired to Date	10,625	\$9,210,000
Remaining to be Acquired	11,497	\$37,626,910

Project Description:

Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1994 to protect one of two remaining intact floodplain forest systems within Indiana and improve the water quality of the Patoka River. The Refuge protects wetlands, floodplain forest, and uplands along 30 miles of the Patoka River corridor for the benefit of migratory birds, fish, and wildlife, including Federally listed endangered species such as the Indiana bat and the interior least tern. The Refuge is located near the diverse communities of Evansville and Indianapolis, Indiana, and Louisville, Kentucky, and provides public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue phased acquisition of a 1,650-acre tract. The tract consists of bottomland forests and wetlands that provide habitat for waterfowl, waterbirds, and landbirds, along with associated upland forests and grasslands that provide habitat for Indiana bats. The tract is adjacent to the Patoka River; restoration of farmed land to natural habitat will increase water quality. The tract is easily accessible from county roads and will enhance public access to existing Refuge lands as well as expand public recreational activities, such as wildlife observation, photography, hunting, and fishing.

Cooperator(s):

Ducks Unlimited, Friends of Patoka Refuge, Sycamore Land Trust, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, National Wild Turkey Federation, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Duke Energy, Evansville Chapter of the Audubon Society, and USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$10,000	\$50,000

Describe O&M:

Startup costs posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include maintenance, law enforcement, and habitat management, including restoration of agricultural lands to natural habitat. Some costs for restoration and habitat enhancement projects are shared with conservation partners.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 21

Project / Unit: San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge

State(s): CA

Congressional District(s): CA-16

Location: Stanislaus County, approximately 10 miles southwest of Modesto.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	205	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	11,508	\$51,302,794
Remaining to be Acquired	13,103	\$99,072,500

Project Description:

Established in 1987, San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge is situated where three major rivers (Tuolumne, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin) join in the San Joaquin Valley, creating a mix of habitats that provide ideal conditions for high wildlife and plant diversity. The Refuge was initially established primarily to protect and manage habitat for the Aleutian cackling goose—a then Federally listed endangered species. Today, the Refuge is managed with a focus on migratory birds and endangered species that includes Swainson’s hawks that nest in the canopy of tall cottonwood trees; herons and cormorants that form communal nesting colonies within the tops of the large valley oaks; and the endangered riparian brush rabbits that have been re-introduced to the restored habitat from captive-reared populations. The woodlands also support a diversity of breeding songbirds including grosbeaks, orioles, flycatchers, and warblers, as well as the least Bell’s vireo—an endangered species that had last nested in the San Joaquin Valley more than five decades ago. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation, such as fishing, wildlife viewing, and photography.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the acquisition of two tracts totaling 205-acres. Acquisitions will benefit Federally listed species, including endangered riparian brush rabbit, riparian woodrat, least Bell’s vireo, Central Valley spring run Chinook salmon, and giant garter snake. With the help of several partners, the Service will restore riparian floodplain, which supports flood attenuation during seasonal high water events. Acquisition will also expand public recreational opportunities, such as fishing, boating, and wildlife observation, for Stanislaus County’s underserved, non-English speaking, and other communities.

Cooperator(s):

California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Parks, Oakland Zoo, River Partners, Ducks Unlimited, California Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, and Point Blue Conservation Science.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$2,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up costs will include boundary sign posting. Annual costs to include maintenance and habitat management.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 22

Project / Unit: Tulare Basin Wildlife Management Area

State(s): CA

Congressional District(s): CA-21

Location: 35 miles northwest of Bakersfield, in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	100	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	4,439	\$8,891,554
Remaining to be Acquired	17,461	\$86,804,900

Project Description:

The Tulare Basin Wildlife Management Area was established in 2009 with plans for eventual protection of 22,000 acres in an area between Kern and Pixley National Wildlife Refuges. Ninety percent of the land in the WMA will be conserved through the purchase of conservation easements from willing landowners. The Kern/Tulare Basin provides vital wintering and staging areas for northern pintail and other Pacific Flyway waterfowl. Dry upland habitats that are protected in association with wetlands are important to many types of wildlife.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the fee title acquisition of a 100-acre tract. The acquisition will benefit existing populations of State or Federally listed ESA species such as San Joaquin kit fox, Tipton kangaroo rat, and blunt-nosed leopard lizard. In addition to protecting upland habitat at the WMA, ownership of upland parcels near the Kern National Wildlife Refuge provides a buffer around wetlands at the Refuge.

Cooperator(s):

Tulare Basin Wetlands Association, California Waterfowl Association, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance, and the many groups associated with the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$2,000

Describe O&M:

Start-up costs will include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance and habitat management.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2023

Priority: 23

Project / Unit: Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

State(s): MO

Congressional District(s): MO-1, MO-2, MO-3, MO-4, MO-5, MO-6

Location: In the floodplain of the Missouri River from Kansas City to St Louis.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2023	188	\$429,000
Acquired to Date	18,312	\$9,188,703
Remaining to be Acquired	41,435	\$22,200,000

Project Description:

The historic Missouri River, nicknamed "Big Muddy" because of its murky, sediment-filled waters, serves as beneficial habitat for many wildlife species. The river's ability to carve through floodplains and create side channels, wetlands, and oxbow lakes has attracted and sustained wildlife since the retreat of glaciers from the region thousands of years ago. Drastic changes began to occur on the Missouri River soon after the journey of Lewis and Clark described its wildlife to the world in the early 1800s. Over the next century hundreds of steamships sank in the river and efforts began to control it. By the 1980s, over 700 miles of river had been channelized, reducing risks but also crucial habitat. Because of this and further damage by major flooding, the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was established in 1994 for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources. The Refuge stretches across the entire State of Missouri, connecting four of the top five most populated cities in the state and running parallel to U.S. Interstate 70, which is the most traveled road in Missouri with 28,000 vehicles using just the rural sections each day, and 60 percent of the state's population living within 30 miles. The Refuge encompasses river features, such as islands, chutes, bends, and tributary confluences. Refuge purposes include reconnecting the Missouri River and its tributaries to their floodplains, restoring hydrology, returning native vegetation, reducing invasive species, and offering a variety of wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities.

Purpose / Need:

The Service will pursue the fee title acquisition of 188 acres from multiple willing sellers. Acquisitions will improve access to existing Refuge lands and expand recreational opportunities and provide habitat for migratory birds, fish, and wildlife.

The Service will protect and restore bottomland forest and Missouri River floodplain for the benefit of numerous endangered and protected species, including pallid sturgeon, least tern, and a host of mussel species. Restored floodplains will mitigate flooding events for downstream communities. Restoration of lands is vital to the survival of native species and will involve

partnerships with landowners to keep working lands intact. Newly acquired lands will enhance and expand access for wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities for diverse communities in urban and rural areas.

Cooperator(s):

Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Mysun Charitable Foundation, Great Rivers Greenway, Conservation Federation of Missouri, Audubon Missouri, Ray and Jackson Counties, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Savings/Costs	Startup	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$1,500

Describe O&M:

Start-up costs include boundary posting. Annual costs include habitat management (spraying, mowing, etc.) and routine law enforcement patrol and maintenance.

LWCF Category: Grants to States

Activity: Highlands Conservation Act

LWCF category/ budgetactivity	2021 Actual ¹	2022 Estimate	2023 Request				Change from 2022 (+/-)	
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request		
Grants to States								
Highlands Conservation Act¹	(\$000)	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	10,000	0
	FTE	1	1			0	1	0

²Starting in FY 2021, LWCF funding became available as mandatory funding. FY 2021 LWCF funding was not subject to sequester due to the timing of when the Great American Outdoors Act was enacted. All FY 2022 and 2023 LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of -5.7% which by law, is applied during the year of execution uniformly across all programs.

The Highlands Conservation Act (H.R. 1964, 2004; 16 U.S.C. 3901) (HCA) authorizes a grant program to 4 States (Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania) to acquire land and protect natural resources in the 3.4 million acre Highlands Region, a biologically diverse landscape distinguished by Appalachian ridges, hills, and plateaus that provides nature-oriented recreational opportunities for millions of people living in and visiting the Northeast.

The Service is the lead agency for administering [the HCA Grant Program](#), and works in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, State Conservation Agencies, and conservation organizations.

Under the Service’s coordination, the HCA grant program has leveraged non-Federal funds at a 2:1 ratio, doubling the minimum 1:1 required amount. Since passage of the HCA in 2004, 12,667 acres of land have been protected under the program. Projects support key conservation objectives outlined in the HCA such as protecting high priority water, forest, wildlife, agriculture, and cultural resources.

Investment in the HCA program supports the goals set forth in the Biden-Harris Administration’s America the Beautiful Initiative as well as the priorities of the Department of Interior and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The HCA grant program is connecting people with nature and the outdoors by conserving land in a region where one in nine Americans live or are within a two-hour drive. The HCA grant program is protecting strategically important natural areas that sustain a diversity of fish and wildlife species. Priority at-risk species benefiting from HCA land conservation include the [bog turtle](#), [northern long-eared bat](#), [brook floater mussel](#), and the [New England cottontail](#). Land conservation in the Highlands Region is increasing climate change resiliency of the landscape and is protecting drinking water resources used by millions of people.

The following are examples of recent HCA-funded acquisitions in each state from the past year:

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) acquired the Beech Hill property, a 627-acre landscape with a mile and a half of cold-water streams, fifty acres of wetlands and ponds, and a 100-acre hill-top field that will be managed for grassland and shrubland birds and wildlife. The



acquisition expands the Goshen Wildlife Management Area and will be open to the public for bird watching, fishing, and hunting. “It’s the kind of property you just fall in love with the moment you step on it. This is truly a rich and diverse ecological community, and this parcel is going to provide conservation opportunities for generations to come.” - Rick Jacobson, Bureau Chief of Natural Resources for DEEP. *(left photo by Matt Starr, right photo by Tricia Andriski)*

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources partnered with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Natural Lands Trust to conserve 397 acres that serves as the “missing link” between two large conservation areas to create a 10,000-acre permanently protected landscape. The project protects three first-order tributaries of two streams (Furnace Run and Hammer Creek) designated as high quality, cold water streams that are tributaries to the Conestoga River, a primary drinking water source for the City of Lancaster. The conservation area will be open for public recreation including hiking, hunting, trapping, and bird watching.

The New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation completed the purchase of 149.4 acres to expand the 14,000-acre Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park, a popular outdoor recreational area known for miles of hiking trails, six ponds and lakes open to boating and fishing, and a scenic campground. The acquisition creates a new access area to the vast network of trails within the park. *(Photo Credit NY Parks)*



The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council conserved 43.8 acres in Tewksbury Township with a conservation easement. The land contains extensive water features including vegetated wetlands, a pond, and a branch of West Brook, considered a Category One Trout Production waterway by the State. The conservation area will be open to the public for hiking, cross-country skiing, nature study, photography, and birdwatching. The project abuts 198 acres of previously conserved land known as the West Brook Preserve. *(Photo Credit New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council)*

Justification of 2023 Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Highlands is \$10,000,000 and 1 FTE, level with the 2022 CR.

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Cooperative Endangered Species
Conservation Fund

COOPERATIVE ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND

Appropriations Language

For expenses necessary to carry out section 6 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1535), [\$43,340,000] \$23,702,000, to remain available until expended, [of] which [\$23,702,000] is to be derived from the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund; [and of which [\$19,638,000] \$19,000,000 is to be derived from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.] [Of the unobligated balances made available under this heading, \$12,500,000 is permanently rescinded from projects or from other grant programs with an unobligated carry over balance: Provided, that no amounts may be rescinded from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.]]

Note.--A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the budget was prepared; therefore, the budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of P.L. 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Authorizing Statutes

Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Prohibits the import, export, or taking of fish and wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species; provides for adding species to and removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species, and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery; provides for interagency cooperation to avoid take of listed species and for issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities; and implements the provisions of the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna* (CITES). Authorization of Appropriations: Expired September 30, 1992.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601). Authorizes appropriations to the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire land for national wildlife refuges as otherwise authorized by law. Authorization of Appropriations: Expires September 30, 2015.

Great American Outdoors Act (54 U.S.C. 2003). Establishes the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund to support deferred maintenance projects on Federal lands; requires deposits equal to 50% of all Federal revenues from the development of oil, gas, coal, or alternative or renewable energy on Federal lands and waters for fiscal years 2021-2025; and makes funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) permanent. The President shall annually report to Congress specified details regarding the allocation of funds to the LWCF. Congress may provide for alternate allocations using specified procedures.

Appropriation: Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund

	2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Conservation Grants (\$000)	13,000	13,000	0	0	0	13,000	0
Conservation Planning Assistance Grants (\$000)	8,000	8,000	0	0	0	8,000	0
Species Recovery Land Acquisition (\$000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HCP Land Acquisition Grants to States (\$000)	19,638	19,638	0	0	-19,638	0	-19,638
Administration (\$000)	2,702	2,702	0	0	0	2,702	0
Total Current Year Appropriated Funds (\$000)	43,340	43,340	0	0	-19,638	23,702	-19,638
<i>FTE</i>	9	9	0	0	0	9	0
Land and Water Conservation Fund – Species Recovery Land Acquisition (Mandatory)* (\$000)	11,162	11,162	0	0	0	11,162	0
Land and Water Conservation Fund – HCP Land Acquisition (Mandatory)* (\$000)	0	0	0	0	+17,917	17,917	+17,917
Total Current Year (CESCF + LWCF) (\$000)	54,502	54,502	0	0	-1721	52,781	-1721
Rescission/ Cancellation of Balances (\$000)	-12,500	-12,500	0	0	+12,500	0	+12,500
Total Current Year and Prior Year (\$000)	42,002	42,002	0	0	+10,779	52,781	+10,779
<i>FTE</i>	9	9	0	0	0	9	0
Mandatory – Unavailable Receipts** (\$000)	74,803	96,125	0	0	-12,844	83,281	-12,844

* FY 2023 Species Recovery Land Acquisition and HCP Land Acquisition funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of -5.7% which by law, is applied during the year of execution uniformly across all programs.

**Amounts shown reflect an annual deposit of an amount equal to 5 percent of total Federal Aid/Sport Fish and Lacey Act violation collections above \$500,000 into this Special Fund. The Special Fund amounts are not available in the fiscal year in which they are collected but are available for subsequent appropriation to the CESCF.

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• HCP Land Acquisition Grants	-19,638*	0
Program Changes	-19,638	0

*This funding is proposed to be funded through the Great American Outdoors Act Mandatory LWCF Funds.

Program Overview

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF; Section 6 of the ESA), administered by the Service's Ecological Services program, provides grant funding to States and territories for conservation of listed and at-risk species and habitats on non-Federal lands, including habitat acquisition, conservation planning, habitat restoration, status surveys, captive propagation and reintroduction, research, and education. These actions further the Administration's goal for conserving lands and waters by protecting biodiversity, slowing extinction rates and facilitating local and State conservation and restoration efforts in close coordination with private landowners and local communities. These actions contribute to achieving the Biden-Harris Administration's America the Beautiful initiative, a decade-long, locally led and voluntary campaign to conserve, connect and restore 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030. The Department of the Interior partnered with the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce and the White House's Council on Environmental Quality to develop initial recommendations on how to advance an inclusive and collaborative conservation vision. The subsequent preliminary report, *Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful*, recommends a ten-year campaign called "America the Beautiful," to conserve and restore the Nation's lands and waters, which the components of the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund contribute to through land acquisition and conservation planning assistance.

The Service implements the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended. The key purposes of the Act are to provide a means for conserving the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened (federally listed) species depend and to provide a program for the conservation of such species. The two primary goals are: 1) recovering federally listed species, and 2) preventing the need to list species-at-risk. The Service's approach to achieving these goals is through minimizing or abating threats to the species and through strategic actions to improve the condition of the species and their habitats.

As many listed species depend on habitat found on State and private lands, grant assistance through the CESCF program is crucial to conserving federally listed species. States and territories have been extremely effective in garnering participation by private landowners, Tribes and diverse stakeholders. These funds also provide the flexibility to prioritize equity and environmental justice so that the Nation can address the disproportionate impact of habitat loss and degradation on disadvantaged communities.

Section 6 grants help States and territories address the impacts of climate change by helping build partnerships that achieve meaningful on-the-ground conservation and through leveraging natural climate solutions into project designs. Land acquisition grants address land-based threats by funding land purchases to preserve key habitats. Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance grants assist in abating threats by protecting habitat and preventing the decline of sensitive species. Habitat Conservation Plans are pro-active landscape-level planning instruments that balance non-Federal land development objectives with species conservation.

In order to receive funds under the CESCF program, States and territories must contribute 25 percent of the estimated costs of approved projects, or 10 percent when two or more States or Territories implement a joint project. The balance of the estimated cost is reimbursed through these grants. To ensure that States and territories are able to effectively carry out endangered species conservation through this program, a State or territory must enter into a cooperative agreement with the Service to receive grants. All 50 States currently have cooperative agreements for animals, and 44 States have cooperative agreements for plants. All but one of the territories have cooperative agreements for both animals and plants.

Traditional Conservation Grants

Conservation Grants provide financial assistance to States and territories to implement conservation and monitoring projects for listed, candidate species, and at-risk species. The Service makes a regional allocation of these funds based on the number of species covered under cooperative agreements within each Service region. Each Region then solicits proposals and selects projects based on species and habitat conservation benefits and other factors. States receive Conservation Grants funding to implement recovery actions for listed species, implement conservation measures for candidate species, and perform

research and monitoring critical to conservation of at-risk species.

Conservation Planning Assistance Grants

The Conservation Planning Assistance (CPA) Grant program provides funding to States to support the development of new habitat conservation plans (HCP), the renewal or amendment of existing HCPs, as well as the development of new safe harbor agreements (SHA) and candidate conservation agreements with assurances (CCAA). Funding may support preparation of environmental review documents that may be needed under the National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act. In addition, funding supports the development and planning of activities such as document preparation, public outreach, baseline species surveys, habitat assessments, and inventories. By developing these plans and agreements, local governments and planning jurisdictions incorporate species conservation into local land use plans and obtain regulatory assurances for activities covered under their conservation agreements.

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants

Loss of habitat is the primary threat to most listed species. Land acquisition is often the most effective and efficient means of safeguarding habitats essential for recovery of listed species from land use changes that impair or destroy key habitat values. Land acquisition is costly, and neither the Service nor States and territories individually have all the resources necessary to acquire habitats essential for recovery of listed species. Recovery Land Acquisition Grants are matched by States and non-Federal entities to acquire these habitats from willing sellers.

Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants

The conservation benefits provided by HCPs can be greatly increased by protecting important habitat areas associated with HCPs. HCP Land Acquisition Grants are used by States and non-Federal entities to acquire habitats from willing sellers and to complement, not replace, the mitigation responsibilities of HCP permittees. States and territories receive grants for land acquisitions associated with approved HCPs because of their authorities and close working relationships with local governments and private landowners.

Administration

Federal grant management and administrative oversight are necessary to ensure compliance with program requirements and purposes. The funding requested for Administration allows the Service to carry out these responsibilities

2023 Program Activities

Traditional Conservation Grants

The Service published a request for proposals in January 2022 and anticipates making award announcements in the summer of fiscal year 2022. With the requested program funding, the Service expects to make a similar number of awards in FY 2023 as will be funded in FY 2022 (assuming the average grant amount is constant with that of FY 2021).

The Service awarded 245 Traditional Conservation Grants in FY 2021. Each project includes Federal funds provided through the CESCOF program, but, in all cases, funds were leveraged by State, county, city, or private matching funds. Some examples include:

- ✓ A Survey for Three-toothed Long-horned Caddisfly in Southeastern Oklahoma, \$19,295
- ✓ Black-footed Ferret Plague Management in Colorado, \$120,000
- ✓ Breeding Season Surveys for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, and Yuma Ridgway's Rail in Nevada, \$16,029
- ✓ Conservation of Texas Hornshell Host Fishes in New Mexico, \$41,550
- ✓ Monitoring of the Red Knot in Coastal South Carolina, \$26,756

Conservation Planning Assistance Grants

The Service published a request for proposals in February 2022 and anticipates making award announcements in the summer of fiscal year 2022. With the requested program funding, the Service expects to make a similar number of awards in FY 2023 as will be funded in FY 2022 (assuming the average grant amount is constant with that of FY 2021).

The Service awarded 14 Conservation Planning Assistance Grants in FY 2021. Examples are listed below. Each project includes the Federal funds provided through the CESCOF program, but in all cases these funds were leveraged by State, county, city, or private matching funds. (Please see <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html> for more information.)

- Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan (Tillamook, Lane, Washington, Clatsop, and Coos Counties, Oregon) \$750,000. This grant will support the Oregon Department of Forestry's development of the Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The State is working with over 40 stakeholders on this HCP as a means to provide an effective solution to current competing demands on approximately 640,000 acres of the State's forest landscape. Oregon's State Forests are managed to achieve the greatest permanent value for all Oregonians. This mandate directs forestland be managed for social, economic, and environmental benefits to provide both sustainable and predictable revenue from forest products and the long-term conservation of fish and wildlife habitats. The development of this HCP will ensure that take of northern spotted owls, marbled murrelets, or any other federally listed species is minimized through negotiated forest management strategies that will provide for protection from habitat modification and disturbance in a manner that meet both State forest management goals and the Service's goals to conserve the ecosystems upon which listed species depend, ultimately contributing to species recovery.
- Development of a Lake States Forest Management Bat HCP in Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin (State-wide) \$267,178. This grant will fund the completion of an HCP being developed by the Departments of Natural Resources in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin that focuses on forest management practices on State, county, and private lands within these three States. The species to be covered by the HCP include the federally listed Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat, as well as the unlisted little brown bat and tri-colored bat. The project will result in a better understanding of species distribution and summer habitat use by cave dwelling bats; species currently severely threatened by an epizootic disease outbreak. The project will also develop approaches to conserve covered species while allowing sustainable forest management practices, which in-turn, will allow public and private landowners to meet economic, ecological, and social goals.

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants

The Service published a request for proposals in February 2022 and anticipates making award announcements in the summer of fiscal year 2022. With the requested program funding derived from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Service expects to make a similar number of awards in FY 2023 as will be funded in FY 2022 (assuming the average grant amount is constant with that of FY 2021).

The Service awarded 12 Recovery Land Acquisition Grants in FY 2021. Examples are listed below. Each project includes the Federal funds provided through the CESCOF program, but in all cases these funds were leveraged by State, county, city, or private matching funds.

(Please see <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html> for more information.)

- Recovering Lahontan Cutthroat Trout at McDermitt Creek (Malheur County, Oregon and Humboldt County, Nevada) \$3,437,000. These grants will support the fee title acquisition and permanent protection of the 3,345-acre Disaster Peak Ranch straddling the State border in Malheur County, Oregon and Humboldt County, Nevada. This cross-jurisdictional and multi-agency partnership will promote the recovery of Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT), a federally listed species. Acquisition of the Disaster Peak Ranch and subsequent restoration efforts will help achieve delisting criteria identified in the species' recovery plan by enabling the establishment of an interconnected meta-population within the Quinn LCT Management Unit. The property is in ecologically high functioning condition and is expected to remain climate-resilient in the future.
- Conserving the Pleasant River Headwaters Forest in Maine's 100-Mile Wilderness (Piscataquis County, Maine) \$4,164,975. This grant will support the fee title acquisition and permanent protection of the 26,740-acre Pleasant River Headwaters Forest tract located in Maine's 100-Mile wilderness region. In partnership with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Appalachian Mountain Club will restore complete ecosystem functionality and permanently protect Atlantic salmon habitat on the property, contributing significantly to recovery goals identified in the Atlantic Salmon Recovery Plan.

Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants

The Service published a request for proposals in February 2022 and anticipates making award announcements in the summer of fiscal year 2022. With the requested program funding derived from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Service expects to make a similar number of awards in FY 2023 as will be funded in FY 2022 (assuming the average grant amount is constant with that of FY 2021).

The Service awarded 10 HCP Land Acquisition Grants in FY 2021. Examples are listed below. Each project includes the Federal funds provided through the CESCOF program, but in all cases these funds were leveraged by State, county, city, or private matching funds.

(Please see <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html> for more information.)

- Washington County - Desert Tortoise Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition (Washington County, Utah) \$6,400,000. This grant will support the fee title acquisition and permanent protection of 95.2 acres of habitat for the desert tortoise in the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve in southwestern Utah. Acquisition of these lands is essential in preserving the integrity of the reserve as these unburned parcels provide critical refugia for desert tortoises and seed sources for restoration of other areas of the reserve impacted by wildfires due to cheat grass invasions. Protecting this habitat will greatly complement the Washington County HCP and the work of many partners in establishing and managing the reserve for endangered species

conservation.

- County of Orange Central and Coastal Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition (Orange County, California) \$11,000,000. This grant supports the fee title acquisition and permanent protection of 384 acres of the Banning Ranch property located in West Newport Beach where the Santa Ana River meets the Pacific Ocean. The last large parcel of unprotected coastal open space remaining in Southern California, Banning Ranch supports a mix of coastal wetland, riparian woodland, coastal bluff sagescrub, shortgrass grassland and vernal pool communities. The property complements the County of Orange Central and Coastal Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan by conserving land contiguous with the HCP Reserve and benefitting covered listed species such as the coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, San Diego fairy shrimp and Pacific pocket mouse.



An FY 2021 grant to the State of Utah enabled the acquisition and permanent protection of 95.2 acres of core habitat for the federally listed threatened desert tortoise in Washington County.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund is \$23,702,000 and 9 FTE, a program change of -\$19,638,000 and 0 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grants (-\$19,638,000/ 0 FTE)

This funding is proposed to be funded through the Great American Outdoors Act LWCF Mandatory Funds.

Legacy Restoration Fund: GAOA

The National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF)

Appropriations Language

The National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF) account does not require appropriations language because there is permanent authority, established August 4, 2020 (P.L. 116-152), to use the receipts in the account in the fiscal year following their collection.

Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

Great American Outdoors Act of 2020, now referred to as The Great American Outdoors Act, P.L. 116-152 (GAOA), provided a trust-based vehicle for applying a significant portion of revenues and receipts from energy development on Federal lands and waters to reduce the deferred maintenance (DM) backlog for specific Department of the Interior (Department) Bureaus, as well as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. The legislation also authorizes permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million per fiscal year.

Projects funded and delivered with GAOA funding fall under the Construction and Deferred Maintenance guidelines. The Service has the legal mandate and responsibility to ensure its inventory of assets, facilities, and infrastructure is safe and adequate to accomplish its conservation mission and that operations are conducted in compliance with applicable regulations. More than 19 laws, statutes, and executive orders govern what the Construction program must do with the funding it receives from Congress. Governing authorities are discussed below.

Refuge Recreation Act (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4). Authorizes development of fish and wildlife areas for recreational use, including land acquisition and facilities construction and management.

National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award contracts for the provision of public accommodations of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715-715d, 715e, 715f-715r). Provides for land acquisition, construction, maintenance, development, and administration for migratory bird reservations.

Fish and Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. 742a-742f). Authorizes the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources, including the acquisition and development of existing facilities.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 9601-9675). Authorizes Federal agencies to conduct cleanup and/or recover costs associated with hazardous materials removal, remediation, cleanup, or containment activities from responsible parties.

Federal Facilities Compliance Act (42 U.S.C. 6961). Requires Federal agencies to comply with Federal, State, and local solid and hazardous waste laws in the same manner as any private party.

Pollution Prevention Act, (42 U.S.C. 13101, 13101 note, 13102-13109), as amended by P.L. 101-508. Requires pollution that cannot be prevented at the source to be recycled in an environmentally sound manner and disposal as a last resort.

Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act (42 U.S.C. 7701 -7706). Establishes an earthquake hazards reduction program.

National Dam Safety Program Act (33 U.S.C. 467). Provides for Federal agencies to implement the Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety, which established management practices for dam safety at all Federal agencies.

National Energy Conservation Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 8152-8259). Establishes an energy management program in the Federal government and directs Federal agencies to perform energy surveys and implement energy conservation opportunities to reduce consumption of nonrenewable energy resources in buildings, vehicles, equipment, and general operations.

Energy Policy Act (EPAct) (P.L. 109-58). Extends previous Congressional direction to Federal facility managers with even greater goals of energy efficiency improvements in existing and new facilities, mandates increased use of renewable energy sources, sustainable building design and construction, metering of all Federal buildings, and procurement of Energy Star equipment. This legislation contains energy efficiency tax credits and new ways to retain energy savings.

Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) (P.L. 110-140). Intends to move the United States toward greater energy independence and security; increase production of clean renewable fuels; protect consumers; increase the efficiency of products, buildings, and vehicles; promote research on and deploy greenhouse gas capture and storage options; and improve the energy performance of the Federal Government.

(16 U.S.C. 695k-695r). Provides for limitations on reduction of areas by diking or other construction in California and Oregon in the case of migratory waterfowl and other refuges, as well as other construction provisions.

(16 U.S.C. 760-760-12). Provides for the construction, equipping, maintenance, and operation of several named fish hatcheries.

(23 U.S.C. 144 and 151). Requires bridges on public highways and roads to be inspected.

Executive Orders

Presidential Memorandum of October 4, 1979, directs all Federal agencies to adopt and implement the Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety as prepared by the Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology (Secretary of the Interior Order No. 3048, implements and assigns responsibility for a Department-wide dam safety program in accordance with the President's memorandum).

Executive Order 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards (October 13, 1978). Requires agencies to ensure that facilities comply with applicable pollution control standards; ensure that sufficient funds for environmental compliance are requested in their budgets; and include pollution control projects in an annual pollution abatement budget plan.

Executive Order 13717, Establishing a Federal Earthquake Risk Management Standard (February 2016). Updates performance goals to strengthen the security and resilience of the Nation against earthquakes, to promote public safety, economic strength, and national security. Implementation Guidelines (January 2017) provide Federal agencies with clarifying guidance for implementing Executive Order 13717.

Appropriation: Great American Outdoors Act – NPLLRF

		2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Estimate	
Obligation Authority for Deferred Maintenance Reduction	(\$000)	95,000	89,585	0	0	+0	89,585	82
TOTAL, Great American Outdoors Act	(\$000)	95,000	89,585*	0	+5,415*	-0	95,000	+5,415
	<i>FTE</i>	22	39	0	0	+35	74	+35

*This amount reflects the best available data on the credit due to the FY22 Sequestration “Pop-Up” being applied to the FY23 NPLLRF appropriation.

**The amounts presented in 2022 and 2023 have had the sequestration amount removed in accordance with Sec. 251A of the BBDECA, 2 U.S.C 901a.

FY 2023 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Allocation Summary Table	
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>	
Budget Authority/Activity	Amount
FY 2023 Allocation (estimate)	95,000
FY 2023 Sequestration (estimate)	-5,415
FY2023 Sequestration Pop-Up (FY22 Estimate)	5,415
FY 2023 Proposed Projects	95,000
Total Available/Unallocated (estimate)	0

Program Overview

The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) is historic legislation that combines a financial commitment to conservation and recreation for future generations with a significant investment in the facilities needed to carry out Interior’s important mission, including the care and maintenance of America’s national treasures. This investment provides an unprecedented opportunity to reduce the Department of the Interior’s deferred maintenance backlog and restore deteriorating assets. To do so effectively requires investment prioritization and a sound program execution and management strategy.

The Department of the Interior is responsible for administering and implementing GAOA’s National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF) program, which is shared with the U.S. Forest Service. For fiscal years 2021 through 2025, Congress authorized up to \$1.9 billion annually to be deposited in the LRF Fund for projects that reduce deferred maintenance (DM). The annual deposit is equal to 50 percent of energy development revenues from oil, gas, coal, alternative, or renewable energy on Federal land and water credited, covered, or deposited as miscellaneous receipts under Federal law in the preceding fiscal year. Of the annual funding, 70 percent is allocated to the National Park Service, 5 percent is allocated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5 percent is allocated to the Bureau of Land Management, 5 percent is allocated to the Bureau of Indian Education, and the remaining 15 percent is allocated to the U.S. Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture.

This funding provides an opportunity to strategically address DM backlog projects at high-priority National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) locations. The assets of the NWRS comprise a taxpayer investment of \$37.7 billion dollars in 39,470 assets. Of these assets, approximately 45% of the infrastructure inventory is 40 years old or older and many have identified, but unfunded, DM work orders to address the deficiencies.

The purpose of this GAOA program, as administered through the NWRS has the following goals:

- Retain, restore, and enhance access and outdoor recreation in alignment with current Administration priorities;
- Leverage with Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) funding, maintenance and construction appropriations, grants, and partnerships for maximum impact;
- Strategically focus the funding on Urban Refuges and the top 10% most visited field stations, which support 80% of the public use and have more than one-third of the total DM backlog, to improve access to underrepresented communities;
- Complete 20-30 large projects utilizing all fund sources, including 10 to 20 partially or fully funded by GAOA, and reduce the rate of DM backlog growth from 1.2% to 0.75% annually;
- Complete proactive life-cycle investments to prevent DM, maximizing the return on the American taxpayers' investment;
- Implement a surge workforce of Maintenance Action Teams (MATs) to provide an in-house delivery and training mechanism for Wage Grade employees; and

Types of Deferred Maintenance Retirement Projects – All 50 States, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have the option of submitting project proposals for GAOA funding based on Regional prioritization and alignment with broader strategic investment initiatives. The following are typical activities that would retire existing Deferred Maintenance needs.

- Rehabilitation or replacement of public use facilities such as boat ramps, access roads, and campgrounds.
- Rehabilitation of levees and water control structures for both resiliency and operational purposes.
- Rehabilitation or replacement of significantly deteriorated buildings and offices.
- Demolition of unused buildings and structures.

This program is specific to the National Wildlife Refuge System and the administrative needs for implementation. Other Bureau Divisions are ineligible for project funding from this source.

Matching Requirements – There are no strict matching requirements for correlating funds to be obligated with the GAOA projects.

Obligation Requirements – The GAOA funds are not an appropriated fund source and are not subject to time constraints for obligation. The Service will continue to emphasize the priority of the GAOA program with internal metrics.

2021 and 2022 Program Performance

The Dale Bumpers White River National Wildlife Refuge located in southeastern Arkansas features a number of boat launches, ATV trails, and other public use amenities used to connect the public with recreational opportunities on the Refuge. Throughout the summer of 2021, the Service utilized internal Maintenance Action Teams to complete repairs and rehabilitation activities on two public use roads, five public parking areas, and three boat ramps.

Additionally, by the end of fiscal year 2021, the Service had awarded sixteen component projects at the nine GAOA project NWRS locations, as well as onboarded a large percentage of Maintenance Action Strikeforce Team members funded from the GAOA legislation.

Fiscal Year 2022 Program performance saw the preparation and budget submittal of an additional nine key NWRS locations designated to receive additional GAOA funding. The FY 2022 Project List includes the continuation of the MAT Strike Force Team project, initial funding of the NWRS's Civilian Climate Corps program, and key project work to address the highest priority Deferred Maintenance needs.

As an example of a high priority DM need, one of the FY 2022 proposed projects is at the Lake Andes NWR in South Dakota. The Refuge facilities flooded in May, 2019 and require replacement. GAOA funding will replace the flood damaged Refuge Office, Maintenance Facility, and supporting infrastructure currently on the Deferred Maintenance backlog. The replacement work will utilize a Climate Vulnerability Analysis with a focus on increased storm severity and flooding impacts to aid in a more resilient site selection and design for the GAOA investment.



Figure 1. Dale Bumpers White River NWR – Passmore Road Rehabilitation



Figure 2. Lake Andes NWR – Examples of Flood Damaged Facilities to be Replaced with GAOA Funding

NWRS Wage Grade maintenance professionals are critical to accomplish smaller-scale DM activities. Through the GAOA program, the NWRS is establishing a surge workforce to execute rehabilitation, demolition, and other low-risk construction activities.

For FY 2023 the Service will continue to prioritize Deferred Maintenance retirement projects within the NWRS that are consistent with the *National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Deferred Maintenance and Transportation Allocation and Strategic Investment Strategy*, Departmental guidance, and Presidential Administration initiatives.



Figure 3: Checking Grades on a Canal Rehabilitation Project at San Luis NWR, California

Project List

Consistent with Congressional direction, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service submits the following LRF projects as part of the FY 2023 Budget process. Detailed project data sheets will be submitted separately for each identified project. The project lists below have been thoroughly considered and vetted and are considered ready for implementation in FY 2023. The Department will keep Congress informed should the circumstances of a specific project change during the course of the FY 2023 Budget process.

The FY 2023 project list below assumes the full \$1.9 billion allowable for deposit into the Legacy Restoration Fund is realized and best available data on sequestration credits from FY 2022. Because determination of the deposit relies on the amount of qualifying energy revenue collected in the prior year, the actual amount available for FY 2023 projects will not be finalized until the start of FY 2023. Projects listed below are ranked and prioritized. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will select and implement projects based on the prioritized list below until the LRF allocation is exhausted net of the mandatory funding sequester (5.7% of funding). Projects not funded with the FY 2023 allocation may be considered for FY 2023 implementation with other funding sources.

FY 2023 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service GAOA LRF Project List

Unique ID	Priority	Station or Unit Name	Project/Activity Title	State	Cong. District	Funding Estimate	Estimated DM Addressed
F001	1	National Wildlife Refuges	Salary Funding for National Maintenance Action Team (MAT) Strike Forces, Year 3	Multiple	Multiple	8,000	139,104
F010	2	National Wildlife Refuges	Salary Funding for Supplemental Conservation Workforce, Year 2	Multiple	Multiple	2,000	16,000
F002	3	Wichita Mountains WR	Consolidate and Modernize Public Use Facilities and Improve Recreational Access, Phase II	OK	04	3,635	28,918
F016	4	San Luis NWR	Modernize Infrastructure to Improve Waterfowl Hunting Areas and Improve Recreational Access (Ph. II)	CA	18	2,250	6,500
F017	5	Buenos Aires NWR	Consolidate and Modernize Public Use Facilities and Improve Recreational Access, Phase I	AZ	2	14,760	12,300
F018	6	Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge	Rehabilitation of Water Management Infrastructure	UT	01	13,500	15,400
F019	7	Upper Mississippi NWFR	Replacement Repair and Consolidation of McGregor District Headquarters and Facilities	IA	01	10,620	8,480
F021	8	Cabo Rojo NWR	Replace Cabo Rojo Headquarters / Visitor Center Building	PR	N/A	3,763	3,763
F022	9	Midway Atoll NWR	Replace Waste Treatment Plant	MQ	N/A	7,380	8,500
F023	10	San Luis NWR Complex	Repair Water Management and Public Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure [Ph III]	CA	18	5,400	6,000
F024	11	Southeast Louisiana Refuges	Replacement of the Public Use Facilities and Critical Infrastructure	LA	2,1	1,556	1,800

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F025	12	Red River NWR	Replacement of the Primary Boardwalk and Trail Bridge	LA	4	900	1,000
F026	13	Wheeler NWR	Replace Compound Maintenance Shop	AL	5	1,345	1,494
F027	14	Bon Secour NWR	Rehabilitation of the Headquarters Office and Maintenance Building	AL	1	900	1,000
F028	15	Canaan Valley NWR	Rehabilitation to the Schaeffer Building	WV	1	126	140
F029	16	Ohio River Islands NWR	Rehabilitation of the Multipurpose Headquarters Building	WV	1	81	90
F030	17	Missisquoi NWR	Rehabilitation of the Multi-purpose Administration & Visitor Facility	VT	AL	81	90
F031	18	Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge-Nulhegan Basin Division	Rehabilitation of Infrastructure and Public Use Facilities	VT	AL	612	680
F032	19	Okefenokee NWR	Replace Administrative and Visitor Center	GA	01	1,800	2,000
			Program Administration (Indirect Costs)			2,850	
			Contingency Fund			13,441	
Total						95,000	253,259

Note: See project data sheets for detailed project descriptions.

Note: Estimated deferred maintenance numbers reflect the work orders to be closed upon completion of the project not within the funding year.

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North American Wetlands Conservation Fund

NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION FUND

Appropriations Language

For expenses necessary to carry out the provisions of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4401 et seq.), \$46,500,000 to remain available until expended.

Note.--A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the budget was prepared; therefore, the budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of P.L. 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Authorizing Statutes

North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989, (16 U.S.C. 4401-4414). Authorizes appropriations to be used to encourage partnerships among public agencies and other interests to protect, enhance, restore, and manage wetland ecosystems and other habitats for migratory birds and other fish and wildlife; to maintain current or improved distributions of migratory bird populations; and to sustain an abundance of waterfowl and other migratory birds consistent with goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and international obligations. Section 4406 of the Act authorizes fines, penalties, and forfeitures from violations of the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* to be made available for wetlands conservation projects. Section 4407 authorizes interest on excise taxes for hunting equipment deposited for wetlands conservation grants and costs for administering this grant program. Such amounts have been permanently appropriated as provided in Public Law 103-138.

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, (16 U.S.C. 3951-3956). Establishes the National Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Program within the Sport Fish Restoration Account for projects authorized by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act in coastal States.

Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, (26 U.S.C. 9504). Authorizes appropriations from the Sport Fish Restoration Account to carry out the *Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act*.

Appropriation: North American Wetlands Conservation Fund
Activity: North American Wetlands Conservation Fund

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
<u>Appropriations:</u>								
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	(\$000)	46,500	46,500	0	0	0	46,500	0
<u>Receipts (Mandatory):</u>								
Migratory Bird Treaty Act Fines	(\$000)	243	243	0	0	+8	141	+8
Total, North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	(\$000)	46,743	46,743	0	0	+8	46,641	+8
	<i>FTE</i>	7	7	0	0	0	7	0

* The amounts presented in all years include the sequestration in accordance with Sec. 251A of the BBDECA, 2 U.S.C 901a. In addition, the amounts shown include amounts previously sequestered which are now available in accordance with said Act.

Program Overview



Pelicans and shorebirds in a wetland in Sinaloa, Mexico. Credit: Pronatura Noroeste, A.C.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) is considered by many to be the most important piece of legislation and funding mechanism to conserve wetlands in the U.S. today. As the only Federal grant program dedicated to the conservation of wetland habitats for migratory birds, NAWCA has protected more than 33 million acres of wetlands in over 3,100 projects on the ground, engaging 6,500 partners across all 50 States plus the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Canada. There is no doubt that this grant program has significantly benefited waterfowl conservation in many ways and is one of the primary reasons that wetland- dependent bird species are doing better than most other groups of birds.

From the boreal forest of Canada, the Mississippi delta, and the mangroves of Mexico, North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants have supported collaborative partnerships and projects that protect and restore significant habitat for wetland-dependent birds and other wildlife. These grants also promote flood control, recharge groundwater stores, and improve water quality for local communities; sequester carbon; sustain hunting, fishing, and bird watching by increasing both the quality and quantity of opportunities for outdoor recreation; support the conservation of at-risk birds of conservation concern and the recovery of endangered and threatened species; and help implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and other national and international bird conservation plans.

Investing in Partnerships

Since its inception, thousands of public-private partnerships have leveraged NAWCA funding to protect and improve the health and integrity of wetland-associated landscapes across North America. NAWCA grants routinely leverage over twice the legally required 1:1 non-Federal matching ratio. Once approved to receive NAWCA grant funding, grantees begin an active partnership with the Service for the duration of the project to safeguard the program’s integrity and ensure success. Consistent and thorough monitoring helps identify areas where partners might need additional technical assistance; enables evaluation of grantee performance and regulatory compliance; and allows the Service to address any errors, irregularities, or issues of noncompliance.

NAWCA GRANT PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS 1991-2021

Country	Protected Acres	Enhanced, Restored, and Created Acres	Number of Projects
Canada	15,221,417	3,408,534*	585
Mexico	2,637,278	1,854,213	349
U.S.	5,198,552	4,773,540	2,201
All Countries	23,057,247	10,036,287	3,135

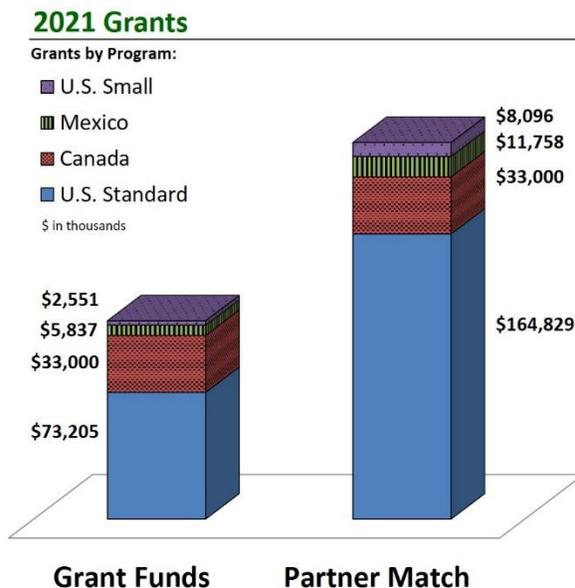
Acreages represent total proposed acres approved for funding in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico from FY 1991 through FY 2020. Some acres are included in both “Protected” and “Enhanced, Restored, and Created” due to multiple activities occurring on the same properties. Additionally, some protection is not perpetual. Therefore, the two categories should not be added to demonstrate total acres affected over the life of the program.

* This figure includes 413,910 acres of moist soil management completed prior to 1998.

Supporting Administration and Agency Priorities

NAWCA is a critical funding source for migratory bird habitat conservation and is an important tool to bring back the 3 billion birds lost over the last half century, but the program’s influence is much broader.

- Habitats conserved by NAWCA projects provide critical stopping points for birds to rest and eat as they migrate and are increasingly important as birds and other wildlife shift their ranges in response to climate change. The protected and restored wetlands in these projects provide important flood protection benefits and ground water recharge, improving community resilience to increased extreme weather events while also sequestering carbon. Conserving wetland habitat also contributes to the America the Beautiful goal of conserving at least 30% of U.S. land and ocean by 2030, protecting biodiversity and mitigating climate change impacts.
- NAWCA projects contribute to the conservation of at-risk birds of conservation concern and fulfilling the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act mandate to address these birds’ conservation needs.
- NAWCA projects often complement other Service conservation efforts through the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Endangered Species Act, national wildlife refuges, and other programs. The NAWCA grant program also complements and enhances actions of other agencies including the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Department of Defense.
- NAWCA projects connect both rural and urban communities with nature by funding projects that enrich and increase outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, birdwatching, hunting, and fishing.
- NAWCA grants produce local jobs in communities where habitat is conserved—for businesses directly involved in the conservation, as well as for those that benefit from the resulting habitat (e.g., conservation tourism, hospitality, etc.).
- NAWCA projects provide opportunities for local communities and individuals to contribute, as matching partners, in wetland conservation who otherwise might not be able to or likely to participate in broader conservation efforts.



2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Process and issue NAWCA grants that support wetland habitat conservation for migratory birds and other ecosystem benefits.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for North American Wetlands Conservation Fund is \$46,500,000 and 7 FTE, equal to the 2022 Annualized CR.

Mandatory Receipts – Receipts are derived from court-imposed fines for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and vary greatly from year to year. The FY 2023 estimate is \$141,000 for this account.



Redheads enjoying part of a wetland complex in the Imperial Valley, California. Credit: California Waterfowl

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Multinational Species Conservation Fund

MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND

Appropriations Language

For expenses necessary to carry out the African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988 (16 U.S.C. 4201 et seq.), the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 4261 et seq.), the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.), the Great Ape Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), and the Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004 (16 U.S.C. 6601 et seq.), [\$18,000,000] \$19,000,000, to remain available until expended.

Note.--A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the budget was prepared; therefore, the budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of P.L. 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Authorizing Statutes

African Elephant Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 4201-4203, 4211-4214, 4221-4225, 4241-4246, 1538). Authorizes funding for approved projects for research, conservation, management, and protection of African elephants and their habitats, and combating ivory trafficking. The Act authorizes prohibitions against the sale, importation, and exportation of illegally obtained ivory derived from African elephants. Authorization of Appropriations: Reauthorized through 2023.

Asian Elephant Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 4261-4266, 1538). Authorizes financial assistance for the conservation and protection of wild Asian elephants and their habitats. Authorization of Appropriations: Reauthorized through 2023.

Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 5301-5306, 1538). Authorizes funding to assist in the conservation of tigers in Asia and rhinoceroses in Asia and Africa, and in combating trafficking of rhinoceros and tiger parts. Prohibits the sale, importation, and exportation of products derived from any species of rhinoceros or tiger. Authorization of Appropriations: Reauthorized through 2023.

Great Ape Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 6301-6305, 1538). Authorizes financial assistance for the conservation of great apes within their ranges in Africa and Asia. Authorization of Appropriations: Reauthorized through 2023.

Marine Turtle Conservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 6601-6607). Authorizes financial assistance for the conservation of marine turtles, freshwater turtles, tortoises, and the habitats of marine turtles and tortoises in foreign countries and territories of the United States as amended (S. 47—205), and addresses other threats to the survival of marine turtles, freshwater turtles, and tortoises, including habitat loss, poaching of turtles or their eggs, and wildlife trafficking. Authorization of Appropriations: Reauthorized through 2023.

Multinational Species Conservation Fund Semipostal Stamp Act, (39 U.S.C. 416 note) as amended. Requires the United States Postal Service to issue and sell a Multinational Species Conservation Fund Semipostal Stamp. In FY 2021, appropriations language specified that the Postal Service may not destroy, and shall continue to offer for sale, any copies of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp, as authorized under the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-241). The proceeds from stamp sales are divided equally among the existing Multinational Species Conservation Funds and are used to help fund priority activities supported by those Funds. By law, the proceeds cannot affect or influence the disposition of discretionary appropriations.

Appropriation: Multinational Species Conservation Fund

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Budget Request	Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
African Elephant Conservation Fund	(\$000)	4,140	4,140	0	0	+200	4,340	+200
Asian Elephant Conservation Fund	(\$000)	2,530	2,530	0	0	+200	2,730	+200
Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund	(\$000)	5,580	5,580	0	0	+200	5,780	+200
Great Ape Conservation Fund	(\$000)	3,240	3,240	0	0	+200	3,440	+200
Marine Turtle Conservation Fund	(\$000)	2,510	2,510	0	0	+200	2,710	+200
Total, Multinational Species Conservation Fund	(\$000)	18,000	18,000	0	0	+1,000	19,000	+1,000
	<i>FTE</i>	2	4	0	0	+1	5	+0

Program Mission

To provide technical and financial assistance to local communities, wildlife authorities, and non-governmental organizations in range countries for on-the-ground conservation work to protect elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, great apes, marine turtles, and freshwater turtles and tortoises.

Program Overview

Elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, great apes, and marine turtles, freshwater turtles, and tortoises are among the world’s most recognized and beloved animals. Yet, these iconic species face severe threats and some even teeter on the brink of extinction due to habitat loss and degradation, climate change, poaching, wildlife trafficking, and disease. Key populations of these species are found in developing countries where these threats are compounded by political instability, expanding human populations, and a severe lack of funding and capacity for conservation. Although long-term results are not yet known, the health, economic, and security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic are now being documented and are expected to have a strongly negative impact on these at-risk species. Significant reductions in tourist and donor revenue are reducing the ability to effectively manage protected areas and wildlife.

The Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCFs) were authorized through five Congressional Acts to provide critical technical and financial assistance to local communities, government agencies, and non-government organizations working to protect and safeguard the future of wildlife. Through this support, the Service assists foreign countries to manage their wildlife populations and attract substantial leveraged funding, while also building considerable good will towards the United States. From 2015 to 2019, the MSCFs provided more than \$53.8 million in appropriated funds through grants and cooperative agreements for on-the-ground conservation and leveraged nearly \$112 million in additional funds. Since their inception, the MSCFs have engaged nearly 600 domestic and foreign partners in over 54 countries. The provision of financial assistance to protect these priority species helps to ensure their survival for the benefit of the American people and others around the world.

MSCF project selection is highly competitive and enables the Service to provide direct assistance to key wildlife populations and the most urgently needed activities. Priority activities include supporting the effective management of protected areas; monitoring wildlife populations; combating poaching and wildlife trafficking; reducing consumer demand for illegal wildlife products; mitigating human-wildlife conflict; and providing vital infrastructure, training, and equipment to effectively manage protected areas and wildlife populations. Several of the species covered by the MSCFs, including rhinoceroses, tigers, and African elephants, are under unprecedented pressure due to habitat loss, poaching, and trafficking. These programs provide essential and consistent support to ensure effective and strategic responses.



Forest elephant with calf. Credit: Daphne Carlson Bremer/USFWS

African Elephant Conservation Fund

The African elephant was recently re-classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with the forest elephant now listed as Critically Endangered and the savanna elephant as Endangered. The African elephant population has declined by approximately 110,000 since 2006, and the continent-wide estimate for the two species combined has been revised downward to 415,000 elephants.¹

The African Elephant Conservation Fund provides critical support to curb this poaching epidemic; to combat trafficking of ivory, elephant meat, and other illegal elephant products; and to reduce the demand

for these products. In recent years, these funds supported essential frontline protection in elephant habitat in West, Central, East, and Southern Africa; sponsored technological innovations to better detect and intercept ivory in transit and to more reliably and economically identify the geographic origin of confiscated ivory samples; bolstered efforts to reduce human-elephant conflict; and supported the installation of modern management systems for seized ivory in range countries.



Asian elephant with calf and juveniles. Credit: Meenakshi Nagendran/USFWS

Asian Elephant Conservation Fund

Large herds of elephants once roamed freely throughout Asia's forests and grasslands. Today, wild population estimates range from 45,671- 49,028,² with continued declines caused primarily by habitat loss and fragmentation, human-elephant conflict, and poaching.² The Asian Elephant Conservation Fund is a key source of global funding for the conservation of Asian elephants, with funded activities addressing the major threats to wild Asian elephant populations within range countries. Program activities include law enforcement training, population monitoring, public education campaigns via radio and television,

¹ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) 2016 African Elephant Status Report: <https://www.iucn.org/content/african-elephant-status-report-2016-update-african-elephant-database>

² IUCN Asian Elephant SSG (2020): *The Asian Elephants*, accessed on 06/02/2021 <https://www.asesg.org/PDFfiles/The%20Asian%20Elephants%20new.pdf>

research on population dynamics, human-elephant conflict mitigation, strengthening efforts to combat wildlife trafficking, improving wildlife veterinary capacity, and promotion of land-use planning.



Black rhinos. Credit: Karl Stromayer/USFWS

Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund

Rhinoceros poaching represents a significant threat to the species. In South Africa, which is where most African rhinos are found, poaching numbers increased from 13 animals in 2007 to more than 1,000 poached per year between 2013 and 2017. In 2018 and 2019, poaching numbers declined but still approximately two rhinos were killed illegally per day. In 2020, the last year for which data are available, 435 rhinos were poached in South Africa.³ Over the last two years, African rhinos have faced new security threats as economic support from tourism income has suffered due to COVID-19. In Asia, the status of both rhinos and tigers is also bleak. In the last 100 years, Asia's wild

tiger populations have been reduced by 97 percent due to poaching, habitat loss, and human-wildlife conflict. The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund, which supports conservation in both Asia and Africa, has been essential in responding to the poaching and trafficking crisis while also addressing other critical threats facing rhinos and tigers. Program activities aim to protect existing rhino and tiger populations; to restore animals to their original habitat; and to combat trafficking of tiger products, live animals, and rhino horn and other rhino products.



Mountain gorilla. Credit: Meenakshi Nagendran/USFWS

Great Ape Conservation Fund

The great apes, highly intelligent beings and humans' closest living relatives, are under extreme threat. Their slow rate of reproduction makes their populations less resilient to losses, and all are at risk of extinction. The Great Ape Conservation Fund supports efforts to conserve all apes, including chimpanzees, gorillas, and bonobos in Africa and orangutans and gibbons in Asia. The Fund supports combating poaching and trafficking in great apes, enhancing habitat protection, supporting effective management of protected areas, strengthening ape range countries' capacity to address

conservation threats, and creating long-term buy-in and stewardship for great ape conservation among local communities.

³ Save the Rhino International, Poaching Statistics: <https://www.savetherhino.org/rhino-info/poaching-stats/>



Kemps Ridley sea turtle hatchlings. Credit: National Park Service

Marine Turtle Conservation Fund

The Marine Turtle Conservation Program annually funds about 50 marine turtle conservation projects in over 30 countries conserving the most important and critically endangered nesting populations in the world. Most projects are community-based or work closely with local or indigenous communities to promote habitat and species conservation and bolster livelihoods. One of the program's strengths is the long-term, consistent funding it provides for conservation and scientific and technical support, while promoting constructive engagement with national governments for marine turtle protection. In FY 2021, the Service launched an additional competitive financial assistance program, to

conserve freshwater turtles and tortoises, following an amendment to the Marine Turtle Conservation Act through the *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019*.

Multinational Species Conservation Fund Semipostal Stamp

The Save Vanishing Species semipostal stamp was first issued in September 2011 to raise public awareness and garner support for critically important global conservation work. The stamp provides the public an easy and inexpensive way to help contribute to the conservation of tigers, rhinos, elephants, great apes, and marine turtles around the world. Featuring the image of an Amur tiger cub, the stamp sells just slightly above the cost of first-class postage with proceeds directed to the MSCFs. Since issuance, approximately 55 million stamps were sold, raising more than \$6.1 million in direct funding for international wildlife conservation.



Working with Local Communities towards Species Recovery

One example of the successful approach of the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund is in Cape Verde, where since 2009 the program has helped conserve the second largest loggerhead nesting population in the world. The program supported the formation of the Cape Verde Sea Turtle Partnership, which facilitates collaboration among local organizations and Cape Verdean authorities. Projects encompass the most important loggerhead nesting beaches on the islands of Boa Vista, Sal, and Maio, which harbor about 95 percent of nesting within Cape Verde. Prior to initiation of these projects, up to 40 percent of loggerhead females were killed on the nesting beaches each year, which has now been reduced to less than five percent. With over 200,000 nests recorded in 2020, the population is recovering with continued conservation programs on the nesting beaches.



Hawksbill sea turtle. Credit: Willyam Bradbury

Another success story is the Sea Turtle Conservancy's hawksbill project in Bocas del Toro Province of Panama in collaboration with the Ngabe indigenous communities on Chiriqui and surrounding beaches. Chiriqui Beach historically hosted the largest hawksbill nesting population within the Caribbean before being decimated by exploitation for its shell and the booming tortoiseshell market in Japan in the 1970s and 1980s. At the beginning of the project in 2003, fewer than 400 nests were recorded on Chiriqui Beach. After years of sustained conservation efforts, over 1,800 hawksbill nests were recorded in 2018. While far from recovered to historic nesting levels achieved in the 1960's, nesting trends are positive and the population is steadily recovering.

Species Funds Prevent and Reduce Zoonotic Disease

Researchers with the Wildlife Conservation Society supported by the Great Ape Conservation Fund sample a carcass while monitoring for Ebola. Photo: Wildlife Conservation Society.

The MSCFs play a critical role in supporting intact, resilient ecosystems that buffer both humans and wildlife from the spillover and spread of zoonotic disease. Grants support project partners in Africa, Eurasia, and Latin America working on the ground to implement conservation actions that also reduce disease transmission, such as by maintaining healthy wildlife populations and connected habitats, reducing the unsustainable commercial bushmeat trade, and carrying out research and monitoring to better understand and mitigate the spread of emerging diseases. For example, the Great Ape Conservation Fund has supported applied research on the Ebola virus in the Republic of Congo, in response to the 2013 and 2016 outbreaks, by examining animal reservoirs, routes of virus spillover to other species, and virus impacts on great apes and other wildlife. This work has also provided direct benefits to people, through exploring potential mitigation measures for local communities, carrying out virus surveillance efforts including community monitoring for Ebola-related wildlife mortality, and building in-country diagnostic capacity.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Support the Service's work with partners around the world to improve the conservation of elephants; rhinoceroses; tigers; great apes; and marine turtles, tortoises, and freshwater turtles and their habitats through technical and financial assistance programs.
- Work with grantees to support continuation of projects in the face of unexpected challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Support healthy wildlife populations and habitats, which in turn support healthy human communities, by protecting healthy, resilient ecosystems that are less vulnerable to disease outbreaks and potential spillover to people and livestock.
- Protect intact habitats and protected areas that are not only key wildlife strongholds but also serve the critical function of staving off the negative impacts of climate change at both the local and global scale by conserving vital ecosystem services and some of the worlds' most valuable carbon sinks.
- Invest in protected areas and landscapes where local communities and stakeholders are vested, engaged, and benefit from protection status.
- Support capacity to effectively protect wildlife and their habitat through the development of effective governance systems and responsible enforcement of the law across the full chain of illegal take.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund is \$19,000,000 and 5 FTE, a net program change of +\$1,000,000 and +1 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

African Elephant Conservation Fund (+\$200,000)— Threats to African elephants continue to rise, and with it, the need for assistance to on-the-ground conservation efforts in range countries. With the funding increase, the African Elephant Conservation Fund will be able to provide additional support to priority actions, such as enhancing protection of at-risk populations, decreasing human-elephant conflict, improving habitat conservation and management, and improving the evidence base for key conservation interventions.

Asian Elephant Conservation Fund (+\$200,000)— The Asian Elephant Conservation Fund continues to support projects aimed at reducing threats to wild Asian elephants in their range countries. Needs to reduce the most pressing threats continue to outpace available resources, and therefore the program prioritizes conservation actions with a high likelihood of long-term benefit. With the increase in funds, the program can provide additional much needed support for key activities including protected area management, decreasing human-elephant conflict, strengthening local capacity to effectively manage populations, and building the information base needed to ensure maximum impact of conservation dollars.

Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund (+\$200,000)— Threats to rhinoceroses and tigers have continued to increase through their respective ranges, with pressure from poaching and trafficking, habitat loss, and human-wildlife conflict all rising. This funding increase will support priority on-the-ground conservation actions in range countries for these species, including activities that secure key populations in their home range, habitat conservation and management, reducing trafficking of these species, and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of key interventions.

Great Ape Conservation Fund (+\$200,000)— Great ape populations in Africa and great and lesser ape populations in Asia have faced persistent and new threats in the past year, with continued habitat loss, reduced support for conservation activities with the loss of tourism revenue, and increased poaching and trafficking. The need for financial support to key populations in range countries continues to outpace available financial support. With the increased funds, the program will support high priority on-the-ground conservation activities in range countries, including the conservation and management of key protected areas, strengthening local capacity to advance conservation stewardship, applied research on the impacts of disease dynamics, including coronaviruses, and bridging gaps in conservation evidence.

Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (+\$200,000)— Turtles remain one of the most imperiled taxa, facing many threats including habitat loss, climate change, poaching and trafficking, and the illegal pet trade. With the expansion of the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund to now include tortoises and freshwater turtles, the increased funding will enable much needed support for essential on-the-ground conservation efforts across the globe, including securing nesting beaches, building local capacity for conservation stewardship, reducing the illegal trade for live animals as well as parts and products, and strategic investment in conservation interventions with strong evidence of success.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation

NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION FUND

Appropriations Language

For expenses necessary to carry out the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.), \$7,910,000, to remain available until expended.

Note.--A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Authorizing Statute

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act of 2006, (16 U.S.C. 6101-6109). For expenses necessary to carry out the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.). Authorizes a competitive grants program for the conservation of Neotropical migratory birds in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Appropriation: Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023				Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund	(\$000)	4,910	4,910	0	0	+3,000	7,910	+3,000
	FTE	1	1	0	0	0	1	0

Program Mission

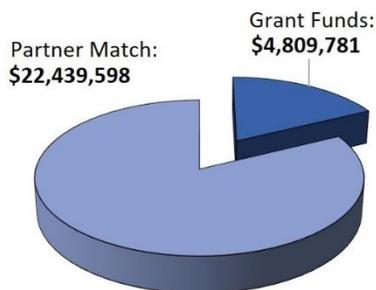
The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA or the Act) program provides matching grants to partners throughout the Western Hemisphere to promote the conservation of Neotropical migratory birds in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Neotropical migratory birds, as defined by the Act, are birds that spend their winters in Latin America and the Caribbean but breed in Canada and the United States.

Program Overview

The impacts of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act are internationally renowned. Since the first projects were funded in 2002, 658 grants have been awarded, totaling over \$79 million and leveraging over \$310 million in matching contributions. These projects benefit almost all 386 bird species that breed in the continental United States or Canada and spend the winter in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, or South America. For many of these species, addressing threats in their wintering areas outside of the United States are often the most important conservation actions to address population declines. These grants stimulate intercontinental bird conservation initiatives by funding critical habitat protection efforts, research and monitoring, and outreach and education programs, which help maintain the ecological and economic balance of birds throughout the Americas.

2021 Grants

Match Ratio: 4.7 to 1
 Projects: 30
 Countries/Territories: 23



By law, at least 75 percent of the NMBCA funds available each year must go to projects in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada, with the remaining funds available for projects in the United States. In Latin America and the Caribbean, where resources for migratory bird conservation are scarce, NMBCA funds act as a catalyst by providing critical resources for partners working to conserve bird species on their migrating and wintering grounds. NMBCA grants require a partner-to-grant dollar match of 3-to-1. NMBCA grants are highly competitive, with demand for projects greatly exceeding available funds. In fiscal year 2021, applicants requested nearly \$9 million in funding for NMBCA projects.

Supporting Administration and Agency Priorities

The Neotropical Migratory Bird grant program is an important tool to bring back the 3 billion birds lost over the last half century and supports the Administration’s and Department’s priorities, as well as international initiatives to improve resilience to climate change, engage people in conservation, and benefit underserved communities and economies.

- NMBCA projects will contribute to the Administration’s America the Beautiful initiative by focusing one-quarter of its funding to conserving habitat within the U.S.; the remaining 75 percent of NMBCA funding will contribute to global bird population targets. Additionally, selection criteria will favor proposals that include climate change components (e.g., building resiliency and adaptation; conserving or restoring habitat that provides connectivity or refugia).
- Working in partnership and energizing local, on-the-ground conservation efforts are cornerstones of NMBCA projects. This investment builds conservation capacity in local organizations, fosters international goodwill toward the United States, and connects diverse communities and cultures to birds and nature wherever they live.
- Migratory birds conserved under NMBCA generate revenue and jobs for industry and local economies. In 2016, 45 million Americans considered themselves to be bird watchers, and collectively spent billions of dollars on equipment, supplies, and travel related to this activity. NMBCA projects demonstrate that conservation investments abroad directly benefit Americans at home.

NMBCA Project Highlights

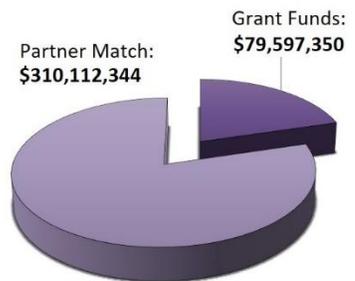
The NMBCA program focuses grant funding on high priority Neotropical migratory bird species, the priority actions identified by broader bird conservation efforts and continues to be a catalyst for conservation, supporting organizations working to address threats in areas important to migratory birds. NMBCA grants support a full range of conservation activities needed to protect and conserve Neotropical migratory bird populations.

Recent year examples of completed NMBCA projects include:

- *Protecting Habitat for Wood Thrush:* Non-sustainable land use practices and inadequate management of protected areas in Nicaragua and Honduras are reducing habitat available to wintering migratory birds, particularly Wood Thrush and Golden-winged Warbler. A NMBCA grant project addressed these threats by working with local communities to implement practices that integrate trees and grazing livestock and agro-forestry production systems on nearly 1,500 acres of land; created conservation agreements to ensure effective management of 600,000 acres of forest; and trained guards and law enforcement officials in effective enforcement operations for the benefit of the 55,000-acre Cerro Saslaya National Park in Nicaragua. Altogether, this project positively impacted more than 700,000 acres of critical habitat for migratory birds.

Program Impacts Since 2002

Match Ratio: 3.9 to 1
 Projects: 658
 Countries/Territories: 43





Distribution of native trees and disease resistant cacao for agroforestry production, Honduras. Credit: American Bird Conservancy

Increase Protected Areas and Habitat Quality for Migratory Birds in Ecuador: Habitat loss in the Neotropics is a key threat to migratory birds. Ecuador has one of the highest deforestation rates in South America. Ecuadoran partners addressed this crucial threat by managing 42,648 acres of 11 protected areas and by expanding their size with a total of 2,559 acres including key areas for Cerulean Warbler, Canada Warbler and Olive-sided Flycatcher. Jocotoco Foundation used its NMBCA grant to create a reserve of 360 acres for the Cerulean Warbler next to the Podocarpus National Park and restored 1,177 acres of degraded habitat at four sites through a combination of reforestation with native tree species, human-assisted natural regeneration, wetland creation and management, and cattle removal.



Reforestation event in celebration of the Sumaco Biosphere Reserve, Ecuador. Credit: Jocotoco Foundation

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Process and issue NMBCA grants that support the conservation of Neotropical migratory birds in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund is \$7,910,000 and 1 FTE, a net program change of +\$3,000,000 and +0 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (+\$3,000,000/ +0 FTE) – On average, \$1 million of NMBCA grant dollars leverages at least a 3-to-1 ratio of matching contributions, supports 5-7 projects, and improves 150,000 acres of habitat. The proposed funding increase would likely generate nearly \$12 million in matching funds and result in 15-21 additional projects throughout the Western Hemisphere that will benefit more than 400,000 acres of habitat that migratory birds depend upon for their survival.

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State and Tribal Wildlife Grants

STATE AND TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANT PROGRAM

Appropriations Language

For wildlife conservation grants to States and to the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Indian tribes under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, for the development and implementation of programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitat, including species that are not hunted or fished, [\$72,362,000]\$82,362,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That of the amount provided herein, [\$6,000,000]\$8,000,000 is for a competitive grant program for Indian tribes not subject to the remaining provisions of this appropriation: Provided further, That [\$7,362,000]\$10,362,000 is for a competitive grant program to implement approved plans for States, territories, and other jurisdictions and at the discretion of affected States, the regional Associations of fish and wildlife agencies, not subject to the remaining provisions of this appropriation: Provided further, That the Secretary shall, after deducting [\$13,362,000]\$18,362,000 and administrative expenses, apportion the amount provided herein in the following manner: (1) to the District of Columbia and to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, each a sum equal to not more than one-half of 1 percent thereof; and (2) to Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, each a sum equal to not more than one-fourth of 1 percent thereof: Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior shall apportion the remaining amount in the following manner: (1) one-third of which is based on the ratio to which the land area of such State bears to the total land area of all such States; and (2) two-thirds of which is based on the ratio to which the population of such State bears to the total population of all such States: Provided further, That the amounts apportioned under this paragraph shall be adjusted equitably so that no State shall be apportioned a sum which is less than 1 percent of the amount available for apportionment under this paragraph for any fiscal year or more than 5 percent of such amount: Provided further, That the Federal share of planning grants shall not exceed 75 percent of the total costs of such projects and the Federal share of implementation grants shall not exceed 65 percent of the total cost of such projects: Provided further, That the non-Federal share of such projects may not be derived from Federal grant programs: Provided further, That any amount apportioned in [2021]2023 to any State, territory, or other jurisdiction that remains unobligated as of September 30, [2022]2024, shall be reapportioned, together with funds appropriated in [2023]2025, in the manner provided herein.

Note.--A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the budget was prepared; therefore, the budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of P.L. 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Authorizing Statutes

Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544). Prohibits the import, export, or taking of fish and wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species; provides for adding species to or removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species, and for preparing and implementing

plans for their recovery; provides for interagency cooperation to avoid take of listed species and for issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities; provides for cooperation with States, including authorization of financial assistance; and implements the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

Fish and Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. 742(a)-742j). Establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-666(e)). The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to provide assistance to, and cooperate with, Federal, State, and public or private agencies and organizations in the development, protection, rearing, and stocking of all species of wildlife, resources thereof, and their habitat, in controlling losses of the same from disease or other causes, in minimizing damages from overabundant species, and in providing public shooting and fishing areas, including easements across public lands for access thereto.

Appropriation: State and Tribal Wildlife Grants

		2021 Actual	2022 Annualized CR	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Request
State Wildlife Grants (Formula)	(\$000)	59,000	59,000	0	0	+5,000	64,000	+5,000
State Wildlife Grants (Competitive)	(\$000)	7,362	7,362	0	0	+3,000	10,362	+3,000
Tribal Wildlife Grants	(\$000)	6,000	6,000	0	0	+2,000	8,000	+2,000
Total, State and Tribal Wildlife Grants	(\$000)	72,362	72,362	0	0	+10,000	82,362	+10,000
	FTE	15	18	0	0	+0	18	+0

Summary of 2023 Program Changes for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• State Wildlife Grants (Formula)	+5,000	+0
• State Wildlife Grants (Competitive)	+3,000	+0
• Tribal Wildlife Grants	+2,000	+0
Program Changes	+10,000	+0

Program Overview

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grant (STWG) Program provides Federal grant funds to States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, and Territories (States), and to federally recognized Tribes, to develop and implement programs for the benefit of fish and wildlife and their habitats, with a special focus on at-risk species that are not hunted or fished. The Program was established in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY 2002 (Public Law 107-63). Since then, the STWG Program has achieved exceptional results in preventing new Federal species listings, and delisting or down-listing species that were listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). See Table 1 below for a sampling of these species.

The SWG Program supports the Administration’s priorities including improving climate change adaptation and increasing resilience (through fish and wildlife research, habitat restoration, land acquisition, and other actions) and strengthening the economy (by supporting outdoor recreation activities). Many of the projects conducted under the SWG Program directly or indirectly support *Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. Program activities support land conservation and biodiversity efforts, contributing to the Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful (30x30) initiative.

Table 1. Sample of at-risk species conserved with SWG Program funding that were later found Not Warranted for Federal listing or were federally de-listed due to recovery or down-listed (from endangered to threatened) between 2015 and 2021. For more information see the State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Programs 20th Anniversary Report (<https://www.nwf.org/-/media/Documents/PDFs/Wildlife-Conservation/STWG-2020-Report.aspx?la=en&hash=375170659B917A72F8C21AFDF3B1E04673E2FBA4>).

SPECIES	STATE(S)	STATUS	YEAR	REPORT PAGE
Sierra Nevada red fox – Southern Cascades DPS	CA	Not warranted	2015	127
Greater sage-grouse	CA, CO, ID, MT, OR, SD, WA	Not warranted	2015	109
New England cottontail rabbit	CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI	Not warranted	2015	n/a
Arkansas darter	AR, CO, KS, OK	Not warranted	2016	157
Louisiana black bear	LA	De-listed - recovery	2016	59
Fisher – N. Rocky Mtn. DPS	ID, other western states	Not warranted	2017	137
Boreal toad	UT, CO	Not warranted	2017	148
White-tailed prairie dog	CO, UT, WY	Not warranted	2017	151
Brook floater	MA, ME, NH, NC, NY, VA	Not warranted	2019	9
Yellow-banded bumble bee	ME, other northeastern states	Not warranted	2019	19
California spotted owl	CA, NV	Not warranted	2019	141
Kirtland’s warbler	MI, MN	De-listed - recovery	2019	97
American burying beetle	AR, KS, MA, MO, NE, OH, OK, RI, SD, TX	Down-listed	2020	n/a
North American Wolverine	CA, CO, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY	Not warranted	2020	153
Least tern	AR, CO, IL, IN, IO, KS, KY, LA, MS, MO, MT, NE, NM, ND, OK, SD, TN, TX	De-listed – recovery	2021	n/a

The State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program, including the formula and competitive programs, is the primary Federal funding source for States seeking to implement proactive conservation actions that target America’s most imperiled wildlife species. The SWG Program is unique in that it helps to conserve our Nation’s wildlife heritage before species decline to levels that require listing under the ESA. It is also unique in its foundation of partnership with State fish and wildlife agencies, which are responsible for selecting and adding “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” to their Wildlife Action Plans (Plans).

When a State fish and wildlife agency identifies and adds a species to their Plan, the agency is eligible to receive SWG Program funding to conserve and recover them. Through preventative measures such as captive rearing and release and habitat restoration, the SWG Program helps to avert new Federal listings under the ESA. Many States also choose to dedicate SWG Program funds to help de-list and down-list threatened or endangered species.

The SWG Program leverages additional matching resources provided by State fish and wildlife agencies and their many conservation partners. Working with interested stakeholders, these grantee agencies translate State-identified conservation needs into practical actions and on-the-ground results. The SWG Program has played a crucial and indispensable role in reducing or preventing Federal listings of species such as the California spotted owl, North American wolverine, Least tern, and many others.

Some recent SWG Program success stories include:

- Golden-winged warbler (Under Review for Federal Listing)** – Like many other projects funded by the SWG Program, a modest grant to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) has helped leverage over \$7 million dollars in additional conservation funds provided by other partners. PGC expanded forest habitat for the warbler from 5,000 acres to over 11,000 acres by partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and their Working Lands for Wildlife Program. Large-scale conservation efforts such as PGC’s habitat enhancement program, supported in part by the SWG Program, help advance the Administration’s goals for the *America the Beautiful (30x30)* initiative. By working at a landscape scale, PGC and its partners also continue to make significant contributions to Golden-winged warbler recovery. These efforts, and those of other States within the warbler’s 31-state range, may help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determine that this declining species is not warranted for Federal listing.



Golden-winged warbler is currently under review for Federal listing. Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



The Canada lynx is federally threatened in 15 States, including Alaska. Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- Incorporating Climate Science in State Wildlife Action Plans** – A recent analysis of the Plans conducted by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies found that all 56 Plans address the need for incorporation of climate science in order to increase species and habitat adaptation and resilience to meet the climate crisis. To help States further utilize best-available climate science, the Service created the Plan Enhancement subprogram, which is funded as part of the annual Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program. Alaska Department of Fish and Game is one of six States that received a Plan Enhancement grant in FY 2021. The agency will use these funds to develop maps of species richness and quantify key climatic, topographic, and habitat variables that correlate with “biodiversity hotspots” for groups of at-risk species.

- Blanding’s and Spotted Turtle (Under Review for Federal Listing)** – Reptiles including at-risk turtles in the U.S. are particularly susceptible to climate-related stressors. FY 2021 Competitive SWG Program grants were awarded to Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, and Virginia for large-scale Blanding’s and Spotted turtle conservation projects. The work of these States will help define the species’ abundance and distribution, identify high-priority sites for protection, and implement adaptive conservation and management actions that consider the needs of the species in a changing climate. These projects support *Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. Data collected by these States will inform the Service’s current review for Federal listing.



Blanding’s turtle has benefited from SWG Program grants over the past 10 years, which may help avert the need for Federal listing. Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Wildlife-watching is a multi-billion dollar industry in the U.S. Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- **Strengthening the Economy Through Outdoor Recreation** - Our Nation's fish and wildlife are a source of joy and inspiration to millions of people. In an average year, 100 million U.S. residents participate in some form of wildlife-related recreation. In 2016, wildlife watchers spent \$75.9 billion on equipment, travel, and related costs, providing revenues for communities and companies that maintain jobs and support families. The State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Programs help ensure the stability and viability of a vast range of watchable wildlife throughout the United States. For more information, see the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated

Recreation (2016) (<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/fhw16-nat.pdf>)

The Tribal Wildlife Grants (TWG) Program supports federally-recognized Tribes in the development and implementation of conservation programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitats, including species of Tribal cultural or traditional importance. By helping reduce threats to populations of fish, birds, mammals, invertebrates and other species, the TWG Program directly benefits many Tribes whose members depend on such species for subsistence, cultural uses, and livelihoods. Tribes use certain species as traditional food sources, and species of cultural importance are a necessary component of Tribal sovereignty. Recipient Tribes may also voluntarily dedicate TWG Program funds to conservation efforts that help protect and recover ESA-listed threatened and endangered species.

Using a multi-partner approach that often involves inter-Tribal organizations, State and Federal agencies, and volunteers, Tribes often use TWG Program funds as seed money to launch key programs, facilities, and partnerships that continue to deliver results. TWG Program funds also are used to develop the capacity of Tribal natural resources agencies to address species conservation.

Some recent TWG Program success stories include:

- **Native Plant Restoration** - The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Native Plants Restoration and Capacity Building Project uses the Tribal Wildlife Grant Program to help develop tribal capacities to operate and manage a native plant nursery operation. Native plant species will be grown for use in habitat enhancement efforts that benefit fish and wildlife species of tribal cultural and traditional importance. Native plant restoration sites will benefit habitats by reducing sediment loading and improving water quality for fish and other aquatic organisms affected by turbidity and nutrients caused by power dam impacts. Many species of culturally important fish and wildlife have suffered the negative effects of degraded habitats within the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Territory. Some of the species that will benefit include Muskrat, Snapping Turtle, Yellow Perch, Walleye, Lake Sturgeon, Ruffed Grouse, Deer, and Wilson's Snipe. Tribal clans value these species as sources of food and organic materials for leather preservation, skin moisturizer, and other purposes.



The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe is using Tribal Wildlife Grant Program funding to construct a native plant facility to help restore plant communities and provide habitat for many species, including bumble bees. Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Chickaloon Native Village Fisheries Technicians PIT-tagging juvenile salmon. Photo: Chickaloon Native Village.

- **Salmon Conservation** - The Chickaloon Native Village of Alaska (CNV) implemented a juvenile salmon research project in the Matanuska Watershed to obtain important data on salmon that is necessary for effective resource management. This project described temporal and spatial distribution of juvenile Chinook and Coho Salmon in Moose Creek using passive integrated transducer (PIT) tag technology, and described growth rates of juvenile Chinook and Coho Salmon using fork length measurements. Tribal Fisheries Technicians collected baseline water quality data on Moose Creek and other tributaries of the Matanuska River. CNV Fisheries staff also worked to

build and strengthen cooperative partnerships with federal and state agencies, and watershed and fish habitat coalitions. This project benefits several anadromous species, including culturally significant Chinook Salmon and Coho Salmon.

2023 Program Activities

The 2023 budget will:

- Administer financial assistance to States, awarding formula-based and nationally-competitive grant funds to their fish and wildlife or other natural resource agencies. These agencies continue to coordinate effectively with the Service and other Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities, private landowners, and industry representatives in revising, updating, and implementing their Wildlife Action Plans. Involving many stakeholders with different perspectives helps ensure that the Plans are strategic, thoroughly vetted, and leveraged with resources from many partners. Implementation activities include a wide range of strategies from research and monitoring to direct species and habitat management. As many States begin making key improvements to their Plans in preparation for the Service's FY 2025 review deadline, they are increasingly incorporating climate science to address changing habitat conditions and extreme weather events. In FY 2023, the Service will continue offering Plan Enhancement subprogram grants that help advance the Administration's goal of improving species and habitat adaptation and resiliency as the climate changes. This includes supporting the America the Beautiful initiative. Summaries of all of the States' Plans are provided in the State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program 20th Anniversary report.
- Make strategic investments focused on at-risk species that have the potential to be listed under the ESA. Within just the past six years, States played an essential role in helping to preclude listing of 11 candidate species and in helping de-list or down-list four threatened and endangered species using SWG Program funds. The Service provides incentives to encourage State fish and wildlife agencies to focus efforts on ESA candidate or listed species, when doing so is consistent with priorities expressed in States' Plans.
- Continue supporting States' efforts to conserve species at range-wide or landscape scales. For several years, Northeastern States have pooled a portion of their formula grants program funding to be used in major initiatives to conserve and protect species that occur across the region. Pooled funds were used by collaborating States to meet habitat and population goals for the New England cottontail rabbit, contributing to a finding of not warranted for listing under the ESA in 2015. Priorities for FY 2023 include conservation of at-risk turtles and pollinators that occur throughout

the Northeast. Similar efforts to identify and collaboratively conserve Species of Greatest Conservation Need across State lines are also now underway in the Southeast and the Midwest.

- Administer financial assistance through the nationally-competitive Tribal Wildlife Grants (TWG) Program. TWG Program funding has proven critical in helping increase Tribal staff capacity to manage fish and wildlife populations and their habitats on Tribal lands. In FY 2023, TWG Program funds will target the protection and enhancement of populations of species that are used for subsistence, cultural, and ceremonial purposes by Tribal members. Additionally, funded projects will advance Administration priorities and goals by: strengthening the government-to-government relationships with Tribes through conservation partnerships; improving fish and wildlife habitat adaptation and resiliency in a changing climate; supporting the Administration's 30 by 30 conservation and restoration efforts; and providing Tribes the ability to address environmental justice issues that have disproportionately and cumulatively harmed or impacted fish and wildlife of cultural and traditional importance.

Proposed Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants is \$82,362,000 and 18 FTE, a program change of +\$10,000,000 and +0 FTE from the 2022 Annualized CR.

State Wildlife Grants (Formula) (+\$5,000,000/ +0 FTE) – The increase will result in completion of an estimated 75 new conservation actions targeting at-risk species identified in States' Plans. These actions include monitoring and assessment activities on public and private lands that help States, their conservation partners, and the Service obtain species information for Species Status Assessments that may support de-listing and down-listing actions, or findings of "Not Warranted" for listing under the ESA. A portion of the increase will be used for direct management activities such as captive rearing and release, habitat management and improvement, establishment of wildlife corridors, and actions to study and manage wildlife diseases. Based on published Department of Interior data showing that about 17 jobs are supported by each \$1 million in Federal funding awarded through the STWG Program, the increase will result in the creation of approximately 85 good-paying American jobs.

State Wildlife Grants (Competitive) (+\$3,000,000/ +0 FTE) – The increase will result in the completion of an estimated 45 new conservation actions that further the goals of 15 to 20 collaborative, range-wide imperiled species conservation initiatives. These projects involve a wide array of partners who contribute to landscape-scale conservation including nonprofit organizations, university species experts, private landowners, and other State and Federal agencies. The increase will result in the creation of approximately 51 good-paying American jobs in habitat conservation and restoration that will help improve resiliency to a changing climate. The increase will also promote innovation and information sharing through four to six special grants for enhancing and improving States' Plans, which States must revise and update by 2025. These special awards, offered through the Competitive SWG Program, seek to promote and enable new large-scale species conservation initiatives through cooperation and information sharing among multiple States and their conservation partners.

Tribal Wildlife Grants (+\$2,000,000/ +0 FTE) – The request will result in 10 to 12 new projects designed to help protect biodiversity on Tribal lands through conservation and restoration of culturally significant species and their habitats. The increase provides resources to support Tribes in their key role with States, Federal agencies, and private entities in helping recover species listed or candidates for listing under the ESA. The increase will result in the creation of approximately 34 jobs, provide employment opportunities for Tribal members, and help build needed capacity for adapting to climate-related impacts on Tribal lands.

Table 2
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
FINAL APPORTIONMENT OF STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

CFDA:
15.634

STATE	State Wildlife - 5620 (65/35 Match)
ALABAMA	\$852,983
ALASKA	2,774,801
AMERICAN SAMOA	138,740
ARIZONA	1,396,962
ARKANSAS	644,004
CALIFORNIA	2,774,801
COLORADO	1,181,447
CONNECTICUT	554,960
DELAWARE	554,960
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	277,480
FLORIDA	2,528,244
GEORGIA	1,466,739
GUAM	138,740
HAWAII	554,960
IDAHO	660,380
ILLINOIS	1,818,572
INDIANA	963,088
IOWA	676,899
KANSAS	802,956
KENTUCKY	737,068
LOUISIANA	801,743
MAINE	554,960
MARYLAND	733,317
MASSACHUSETTS	811,096
MICHIGAN	1,487,394
MINNESOTA	1,100,901
MISSISSIPPI	618,649
MISSOURI	1,096,902

STATE	State Wildlife - 5620 (65/35 Match)
MONTANA	955,624
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	138,740
NEBRASKA	655,016
NEVADA	946,836
NEW HAMPSHIRE	554,960
NEW JERSEY	1,070,052
NEW MEXICO	934,984
NEW YORK	2,541,029
NORTH CAROLINA	1,413,241
NORTH DAKOTA	554,960
OHIO	1,581,884
OKLAHOMA	836,995
OREGON	1,001,474
PENNSYLVANIA	1,740,567
PUERTO RICO	277,480
RHODE ISLAND	554,960
SOUTH CAROLINA	717,378
SOUTH DAKOTA	554,960
TENNESSEE	981,066
TEXAS	2,774,801
UTAH	807,513
VERMONT	554,960
VIRGIN ISLANDS	138,740
VIRGINIA	1,166,265
WASHINGTON	1,173,926
WEST VIRGINIA	554,960
WISCONSIN	984,238
WYOMING	624,666
TOTAL	\$55,496,021³

³ This table factors in amounts removed for administration and includes reverted funds from prior years.

Table 3
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022
CFDA: 15.634

STATE	State Wildlife - 5620 (65/35 Match)
ALABAMA	\$976,089
ALASKA	3,200,000
AMERICAN SAMOA	160,000
ARIZONA	1,663,140
ARKANSAS	735,347
CALIFORNIA	3,200,000
COLORADO	1,424,833
CONNECTICUT	640,000
DELAWARE	640,000
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	320,000
FLORIDA	3,080,140
GEORGIA	1,733,302
GUAM	160,000
HAWAII	640,000
IDAHO	795,600
ILLINOIS	1,976,599
INDIANA	1,089,780
IOWA	778,541
KANSAS	923,578
KENTUCKY	834,746
LOUISIANA	903,552
MAINE	640,000
MARYLAND	840,212
MASSACHUSETTS	930,843
MICHIGAN	1,650,992
MINNESOTA	1,282,231
MISSISSIPPI	691,952
MISSOURI	1,238,705

STATE	State Wildlife - 5620 (65/35 Match)
MONTANA	1,131,932
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	160,000
NEBRASKA	768,587
NEVADA	1,136,257
NEW HAMPSHIRE	640,000
NEW JERSEY	1,208,663
NEW MEXICO	1,088,065
NEW YORK	2,847,000
NORTH CAROLINA	1,657,144
NORTH DAKOTA	640,000
OHIO	1,748,784
OKLAHOMA	966,821
OREGON	1,185,519
PENNSYLVANIA	1,925,310
PUERTO RICO	320,000
RHODE ISLAND	640,000
SOUTH CAROLINA	848,325
SOUTH DAKOTA	640,000
TENNESSEE	1,145,915
TEXAS	3,200,000
UTAH	982,919
VERMONT	640,000
VIRGIN ISLANDS	160,000
VIRGINIA	1,352,703
WASHINGTON	1,421,743
WEST VIRGINIA	640,000
WISCONSIN	1,114,131
WYOMING	640,000
TOTAL	\$64,000,000

Table 4
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023
CFDA: 15.634

STATE	State Wildlife - 5620 (65/35 Match)
ALABAMA	\$976,089
ALASKA	3,200,000
AMERICAN SAMOA	160,000
ARIZONA	1,663,140
ARKANSAS	735,347
CALIFORNIA	3,200,000
COLORADO	1,424,833
CONNECTICUT	640,000
DELAWARE	640,000
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	320,000
FLORIDA	3,080,140
GEORGIA	1,733,302
GUAM	160,000
HAWAII	640,000
IDAHO	795,600
ILLINOIS	1,976,599
INDIANA	1,089,780
IOWA	778,541
KANSAS	923,578
KENTUCKY	834,746
LOUISIANA	903,552
MAINE	640,000
MARYLAND	840,212
MASSACHUSETTS	930,843
MICHIGAN	1,650,992
MINNESOTA	1,282,231
MISSISSIPPI	691,952
MISSOURI	1,238,705

STATE	State Wildlife - 5620 (65/35 Match)
MONTANA	1,131,932
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	160,000
NEBRASKA	768,587
NEVADA	1,136,257
NEW HAMPSHIRE	640,000
NEW JERSEY	1,208,663
NEW MEXICO	1,088,065
NEW YORK	2,847,000
NORTH CAROLINA	1,657,144
NORTH DAKOTA	640,000
OHIO	1,748,784
OKLAHOMA	966,821
OREGON	1,185,519
PENNSYLVANIA	1,925,310
PUERTO RICO	320,000
RHODE ISLAND	640,000
SOUTH CAROLINA	848,325
SOUTH DAKOTA	640,000
TENNESSEE	1,145,915
TEXAS	3,200,000
UTAH	982,919
VERMONT	640,000
VIRGIN ISLANDS	160,000
VIRGINIA	1,352,703
WASHINGTON	1,421,743
WEST VIRGINIA	640,000
WISCONSIN	1,114,131
WYOMING	640,000
TOTAL	\$64,000,000

Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration

DINGELL-JOHNSON SPORT FISH RESTORATION

Appropriation Language

The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration account does not require appropriations language because there is permanent authority, established August 31, 1951 (65 Stat. 262), to use the receipts deposited into the Trust Fund in the fiscal year following their collection.

Applicable Statutes

The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950, now referred to as the *Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 777 et seq.), as amended by the Deficit Reduction and Control Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-369), the *Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Act of 1987* (P.L. 100-17), the *Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1987* (P.L. 100-448), the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (P.L. 105-178), the *Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-408), the *Surface Transportation Act of 2003* (P.L. 108-88), SAFETEA-LU, and the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58), which expires in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, authorizes assistance to the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (States) to carry out projects to restore, enhance, and manage sport fishery resources. In addition to sport fishery projects, these acts allow for the development and maintenance of boating access facilities and aquatic education programs.

The Appropriations Act of August 31, 1951 (P.L. 82-136, 65 Stat. 262) authorizes receipts from excise taxes on fishing equipment to be deposited into the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, established as a permanent, indefinite appropriation. Receipts and interest distributed to the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund are available for use and distribution by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to States in the fiscal year following collection.

The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 3951 et. seq.) provides for three Federal grant programs for the acquisition, restoration, management, and enhancement of coastal wetlands in coastal States. A coastal State means a State of the United States, bordering on the Atlantic, Pacific, or Arctic Oceans, the Gulf of Mexico, Long Island Sound, or one or more of the Great Lakes, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the trust territories of the Pacific Islands. The Service administers two of the three grant programs that this Act provides funding for, including the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program and the North American Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. The latter program receives funds from other sources, as well as from the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Program. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers administers the third grant program that receives funding because of this Act. It also requires the Service to update and digitize wetlands maps in Texas and assess the status, condition, and trends of wetlands in Texas, and provides permanent authorization for coastal wetlands conservation grants and North American Wetlands Conservation projects. The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) authorizes funding for the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act through FY 2026.

The Clean Vessel Act of 1992 (16 U.S.C. 777c) Section 5604 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide grants to the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of sewage pumpout stations and dump stations, as well as for educational programs designed to inform boaters about the importance of proper disposal of their onboard sewage. Section 5604 also amended the *Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act* to provide for the transfer of funds out of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund for use by the Secretary of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard) to fund State recreational boating safety programs. The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) authorizes funding for the Clean Vessel Act of 1992 and boating infrastructure improvement through Fiscal Year 2026.

The Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 777c-777g) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to develop national outreach plans to promote safe fishing and boating, and to promote conservation of aquatic resources through grants and contracts with States and private entities. The Act contains provisions for transferring funds to the U.S. Coast Guard for State recreational boating safety programs. In addition, it authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide funds to the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to construct, renovate, and maintain tie-up facilities with features for transient boaters in vessels 26 feet or more in length, and to produce and distribute information and educational materials under the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program. The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) authorizes funding for boating infrastructure improvement through FY 2026.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-408) amends the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. It authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide funding under the Multistate Conservation Grant Program for wildlife and sport fish restoration projects identified as priority projects by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. These high priority projects address problems affecting States on a regional or national basis. It also provides \$200,000 each to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission; and \$400,000 to the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. The Act provides 12 allowable cost categories for administration of the Act.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users of August 10, 2005 (P.L. 109-59) made several changes to the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. SAFETEA-LU changed the distribution of Sport Fish Restoration receipts from amounts primarily specified in law to a percentage-based distribution. The Act extends program authorizations for the Clean Vessel Act Program, the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, and the National Outreach and Communications Program through FY 2009, and it extends the authority to use Sport Fish Restoration receipts for the U.S. Coast Guard's State Recreational Boating Safety Program through FY 2009. The Act authorizes the expenditure of remaining balances in the old Boat Safety Account through FY 2010, for Sport Fish Restoration and State recreational boating safety programs and redirected 4.8 cents per gallon of certain fuels from the general account of the Treasury to the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58, November 15, 2021) (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) changes several sections of the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. It amends Section 4 of the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 777c), changing the amount of administrative funding and extending authorizations for Sport Fish Restoration; Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act; Boating Infrastructure Improvement (combining funding for the Clean Vessel Act of 1992 and the Boating Infrastructure Grant Programs); and the National Outreach and Communications program through FY 2026. It also amends Section 9(a) [16 U.S.C. 777h(a)] for administrative activities and Section 14(e) [16 U.S.C. 777m(e)] to instruct the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (Council) to study the impact of derelict vessels and identify recyclable solutions for recreational vessels.

Appropriation: Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration

		2021 Actual	2022 Estimate	2023			Budget Estimate	Change From 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Payments to States	(\$000)	413,437	397,608	0	0	-1,975	395,633	-1,974
Administration	(\$000)	11,821	12,730	0	0	+708	13,438	+707
Clean Vessel	(\$000)	14,357	13,811	0	0	-68	13,743	-68
Boating Infrastructure Grant Program	(\$000)	14,358	13,812	0	0	-69	13,743	-68
National Outreach	(\$000)	14,357	13,811	0	0	-68	13,743	-68
Multistate Conservation Grant Program	(\$000)	3,006	3,000	0	0	0	3,000	0
Coastal Wetlands	(\$000)	20,107	19,342	0	0	-95	19,247	-95
Fishery Commissions	(\$000)	801	800	0	0	0	800	0
Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council	(\$000)	401	400	0	0	0	400	0
Subtotal	(\$000)	492,645	475,314	0	0	-1,567	473,747	-1,567
	<i>FTE</i>	49	49	0	0	+5	54	+5
North American Wetlands	(\$000)	20,107	19,342	0	0	-95	19,247	-95
	<i>FTE</i>	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
TOTAL, Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration	(\$000)	512,752	494,656	0	0	-1,662	492,994	-1,662
	<i>FTE</i>	50	50	0	0	+5	55	+5

The 2021, 2022, and 2023 amounts include sequestration in accordance with section 251A of the BBDECA, 2 U.S.C. 901a. In addition, the amounts in 2021, 2022, and 2023 include amounts previously sequestered, which are now available in accordance with said Act.

Program Description

The Sport Fish Restoration Program provides Federal aid to State fish, wildlife and boating agencies for the management and restoration of fish having material value in connection with sport or recreation. Since 1950, this stable source of funding has been critical to the recovery of many of the Nation's sport fish species and has provided over \$10.5 billion. The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act programs have expanded over time through a series of Congressional actions and now encompass several grant programs that address increased conservation and recreation needs of States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, and territorial governments. Partner agencies, within set program boundaries, determine the best use of these Federal funds to meet these needs. The various programs enhance the Nation's sport fish resources in both fresh and salt waters. They also provide funding for projects that improve and manage aquatic habitats, protect, and conserve coastal wetlands, and provide important infrastructure for recreational boaters. Through administering these programs, the Service helps to create and maintain strong conservation stewardship by supporting local communities in sustainably utilizing natural resources.

The economic impacts of boating and sport fishing in the United States are considerable. According to the *2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, 35.8 million people participated in fishing and generated over \$46.1 billion in retail sales. According to the American Sportfishing Association's 2018 report *Sportfishing in America: An Economic Force for Conservation*, anglers supported over 800,000 jobs in 2016.

All grant programs funded by the Sport Fish Restoration program leverage the Federal funds by requiring a minimum of a 25 percent cost share, with the exception of the Multistate Conservation Grant Program, which does not require a cost share. The core value of the program is a cooperative partnership of Federal and State agencies, anglers, boaters, and industry that provides significant benefits to the public and our nation's natural resources.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the Service work cooperatively together to manage the **Multistate Conservation** grant program. The Service ultimately awards and manages the grants, while AFWA administers the grant application process, providing oversight, coordination, and guidance for the program as established by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-408). These high priority projects address problems affecting States on a regional or national basis. Project types include biological research/training, species population status, outreach, data collection regarding angler participation, aquatic education, economic value of fishing, and regional or multistate habitat needs assessments.

The **Clean Vessel Act** grant program is a nationally competitive program for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of sewage pumpout stations and dump stations, as well as for educational programs designed to inform boaters about the importance of proper disposal of their onboard sewage. This program directly addresses the Secretary of the Interior's priority of assuring sustainable, secure water supplies. Table 2 provides the Fiscal Year 2021 Clean Vessel Act grant program awards.

The **Boating Infrastructure** grant program is a nationally competitive program that provides funding to construct, renovate, and maintain tie-up facilities with features for transient boaters in vessels 26 feet or longer. The program also produces and distributes information and educational materials. Tables 3 and 4 provide the Fiscal Year 2021 Boating Infrastructure Grant awards.

The **National Coastal Wetlands Conservation** grant program provides grants to States to restore and protect coastal wetlands ecosystems nationwide. Partnerships are an essential part of this program and allow the Service to work closely with a diversity of agencies and organizations concerned about natural resources, leveraging program funds for broad conservation benefits. Table 5 provides the Fiscal Year 2021 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant awards.

The **North American Wetlands Conservation Act** (NAWCA) grant program is an internationally recognized conservation program that provides grants throughout North America for the conservation of waterfowl and other wetland-associated migratory birds. This program receives funds from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund to support projects in U.S. coastal areas. These funds help sustain the abundance of waterfowl and other migratory bird populations throughout the Western Hemisphere. Table 6 provides the FY 2021 North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant awards.

The **National Outreach** program improves communications with anglers, boaters, and the public regarding angling and boating opportunities, which reduces barriers to participation in these activities, advances adoption of sound fishing and boating practices, promotes conservation and the responsible use of the Nation's aquatic resources, and furthers safety in fishing and boating. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3), is the recipient of this nationally-competitive grant program.

The Sport Fish Restoration Program funds many important projects across the United States including:



West Virginia DNR Fisheries Biologist Katie Zipfel holds a walleye from West Virginia's native strain.

West Virginia's Department of Natural Resources (WVDNR) used SFR funds to conduct genetic assessments of walleye. Biologists wanted to determine whether a local, native strain existed and, if so, whether it might be more productive for stocking than Lake Erie sourced walleye. Tissue samples from across West Virginia revealed a native strain of walleye within the upper Kanawha River, New River, and the upper Ohio River. WVDNR then developed a walleye management plan specific to stocking of the native strain. The genetics work involved in screening walleye for fish production at the hatchery, as well as ongoing population studies, show increases of native strain of walleye in West Virginia's waters, which provides more walleye angling opportunities.

Louisiana's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) uses funds to sustain their successful Get Out and Fish! (GOF) community fishing program at 17 fishing ponds near cities and towns. Partnering with local governments and community groups, LDWF stocks ponds with adult channel catfish in the spring and fall, and rainbow trout in the winter.



A young angler at a Get Out and Fish! event hosted in Louisiana.

South Carolina uses SFR funds for the Green Pond Landing & Event Center, which sits on the shores of 56,000-acre Lake Hartwell, one of the biggest and most favored recreation waterbodies in the Southeast. The facility continues progressing towards its planned, final design, its three-lane boat ramp is one of the most popular in Anderson County, and the facility already has a reputation as being one of the top fishing tournament sites in the country. It has a 400-foot remote courtesy dock and weigh-in site for fishing tournaments. The dock improves boating safety by reducing traffic congestion around the boat ramp and main docks during events. It will also provide more transient public dock space. Green Pond attracts recreational boaters in addition to anglers. The ADA-accessible facility offers 200 paved truck/trailer spaces and 100 single car spaces, and a two-story bathroom facility. The site will host an upcoming Bassmaster Classic event in 2022 – one of the world’s most prestigious professional bass tournaments.

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation stream biologists reached out to other States to learn how well stream-dwelling smallmouth bass grow over time. The result was a Thirteen-State Study that created a New Smallmouth Bass Management Tool. They also published a scientific paper in the *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*. These biologists amassed more than 11,000 data points from smallmouth bass swimming in streams from Minnesota to New York to North Carolina—as well as their own Oklahoma smallmouth streams. They used this data to develop mathematical models to help biologists predict fish size at a particular age, and they also the estimated time required to reach a specific size. Now biologists that manage stream smallmouth bass have another reliable tool to inform management decisions for improved fisheries and fishing.

Budget Estimate

The FY 2023 budget estimate for the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act programs is \$492,994,085 and 55 FTE. The estimate is based on current law projections provided by the Department of the Treasury’s Office of the Tax Analysis.

Table 1

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF DINGELL-JOHNSON
SPORT FISH RESTORATION FUNDS***

<u>STATE</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>	<u>FY 2022</u>	<u>FY 2023</u>
ALABAMA	6,876,759	6,891,770	6,832,142
ALASKA	20,713,023	19,983,067	19,781,665
AMERICAN SAMOA	1,380,868	1,332,205	1,318,778
ARIZONA	8,428,319	8,202,526	8,120,089
ARKANSAS	6,377,623	6,381,774	6,325,451
CALIFORNIA	19,692,341	18,654,555	18,429,018
COLORADO	11,130,006	10,907,164	10,799,627
CONNECTICUT	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
DELAWARE	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	1,380,868	1,332,205	1,318,778
FLORIDA	14,804,230	14,239,304	14,076,297
GEORGIA	11,063,586	10,228,940	10,083,938
GUAM	1,380,868	1,332,205	1,318,778
HAWAII	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
IDAHO	7,703,022	7,354,716	7,270,354
ILLINOIS	7,231,848	6,871,588	6,790,510
INDIANA	5,351,752	5,183,733	5,128,160
IOWA	5,148,139	4,844,890	4,785,555
KANSAS	5,822,258	5,404,749	5,334,025
KENTUCKY	5,748,364	5,417,651	5,350,422
LOUISIANA	8,083,096	8,001,029	7,924,643
MAINE	4,162,560	3,997,809	3,956,333
MARYLAND	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
MASSACHUSETTS	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
MICHIGAN	12,630,365	11,935,265	11,788,802
MINNESOTA	14,695,058	13,914,531	13,743,924
MISSISSIPPI	4,564,700	4,470,357	4,426,292
MISSOURI	8,762,279	8,184,196	8,077,908
MONTANA	9,959,246	9,576,607	9,473,798
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	1,380,868	1,332,205	1,318,778
NEBRASKA	5,267,292	5,003,942	4,946,620
NEVADA	6,160,653	5,985,176	5,925,517
NEW HAMPSHIRE	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
NEW JERSEY	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
NEW MEXICO	7,336,472	6,915,955	7,094,971
NEW YORK	9,160,366	9,179,560	9,099,141
NORTH CAROLINA	12,875,953	12,655,901	12,527,938
NORTH DAKOTA	4,837,532	4,619,573	4,568,002
OHIO	8,136,605	7,862,728	7,776,415

<u>STATE</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>	<u>FY 2022</u>	<u>FY 2023</u>
OKLAHOMA	8,601,647	9,170,924	9,126,483
OREGON	9,266,667	8,818,803	8,715,916
PENNSYLVANIA	9,631,906	9,317,437	9,215,291
PUERTO RICO	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
RHODE ISLAND	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
SOUTH CAROLINA	5,667,212	5,669,227	5,618,234
SOUTH DAKOTA	5,241,066	4,919,345	4,859,110
TENNESSEE	8,481,435	8,190,161	8,098,795
TEXAS	20,713,023	19,983,067	19,781,665
UTAH	7,665,878	7,356,647	7,274,946
VERMONT	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
VIRGIN ISLANDS	1,380,868	1,332,205	1,318,778
VIRGINIA	6,041,015	6,259,833	6,217,705
WASHINGTON	8,580,979	8,337,612	8,249,094
WEST VIRGINIA	4,142,605	3,996,614	3,956,333
WISCONSIN	12,818,692	12,060,014	11,906,332
WYOMING	6,354,490	6,085,431	6,018,633
TOTAL	414,260,452	399,661,336	395,633,314

*This table includes reverted funds and sequester returns from prior years.

Table 2

FY 2021 Clean Vessel Act Grant Program Awards*

State	Coastal or Inland	Federal Share
Alabama	Coastal	\$ 216,818.00
Alabama	Inland	\$ 90,041.00
Alaska	Coastal	\$ 39,000.00
Arizona	Inland	\$ 600,013.00
Arkansas	Inland	\$ 1,436,486.10
California	Coastal	\$ 1,057,500.00
California	Inland	\$ 1,270,250.00
Connecticut	Coastal	\$ 1,467,538.00
Connecticut	Inland	\$ 57,037.00
Florida	Coastal	\$ 1,480,274.00
Florida	Coastal	\$ 832,565.00
Georgia	Coastal	\$ 264,920.00
Illinois	Inland	\$ 99,179.38
Maine	Coastal	\$ 480,435.00
Massachusetts	Coastal	\$ 1,097,040.00
Minnesota	Inland	\$ 225,000.00
Mississippi	Coastal	\$ 103,747.50
Mississippi	Inland	\$ 61,198.20
New Hampshire	Coastal	\$ 93,558.00
New Hampshire	Inland	\$ 54,333.00
New Jersey	Coastal	\$ 1,061,067.00
New York	Coastal	\$ 526,716.00
New York	Inland	\$ 84,502.00
North Carolina	Coastal	\$ 120,000.00
North Carolina	Inland	\$ 451,952.25
Ohio	Coastal	\$ 475,814.38
Oklahoma	Inland	\$ 239,085.00
Oregon	Coastal	\$ 571,250.00
Oregon	Inland	\$ 722,500.00
South Carolina	Coastal	\$ 899,631.00
South Carolina	Inland	\$ 158,726.00
Texas	Inland	\$ 348,750.00
Washington	Coastal	\$ 1,490,500.00
Washington	Inland	\$ 1,093,000.00
Totals		\$ 19,270,426.81

*This table includes carryover and sequester returns from prior years.

Table 3

FY 2021 Boating Infrastructure Grant Program – Tier 1 Awards*

State/Territory	Federal Share
Alabama	\$ 200,000.00
Arizona	\$ 176,625.00
Arkansas	\$ 200,000.00
California	\$ 200,000.00
Georgia	\$ 87,887.00
Louisiana	\$ 200,000.00
Maine	\$ 166,080.00
Michigan	\$ 198,000.00
Minnesota	\$ 112,500.00
Mississippi	\$ 200,000.00
New Hampshire	\$ 189,605.00
New York	\$ 193,750.00
Oregon	\$ 200,000.00
South Carolina	\$ 199,999.00
U.S. Virgin Islands	\$ 158,126.00
Virginia	\$ 200,000.00
Washington	\$ 197,654.00
Wisconsin	\$ 200,000.00
Total	\$ 3,280,226.00

*This table includes carryover and sequester returns from prior years.

Table 4

FY 2021 Boating Infrastructure Grant Program – Tier 2 Awards*

State	Project Title	Federal Share
Alabama	Billfish Bay Marina	\$ 1,469,710.00
Florida	Camachee Cove Marina	\$ 772,000.00
Florida	Harborage Marina	\$ 850,014.00
Florida	Melbourne Riverwalk Marina	\$ 1,500,000.00
Maine	Fore Points Marina	\$ 1,390,255.00
South Carolina	Palmetto Bay Marina	\$ 1,500,000.00
South Carolina	Safe Harbor-Beaufort Marina	\$ 1,500,000.00
South Carolina	Seabreeze Marina	\$ 1,500,000.00
Virginia	Bay Point Super Yacht Pier	\$ 868,714.00
Virginia	Chesapeake Boat Basin	\$ 460,412.00
Virginia	Rivers Rest Marina	\$ 171,902.00
Washington	Luther Burbank Park Pier	\$ 394,948.00
Washington	Port of Bremerton	\$ 1,249,440.00
Total		\$ 13,627,395.00

* This table includes carryover and sequester returns from prior years.

Table 5

FY 2021 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program Awards*

Project	State	Federal Request	Non-federal Match	Total Project Cost
Bon Secour River	AL	\$491,640.00	\$223,472.00	\$715,112.00
Potter Marsh	AK	\$1,000,000.00	\$484,000.00	\$1,484,000.00
Coyote Hills	CA	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,717,000.00	\$2,717,000.00
Grizzly Island	CA	\$610,263.00	\$517,100.00	\$1,127,363.00
Hérons Head Park	CA	\$1,000,000.00	\$3,725,000.00	\$4,725,000.00
Mad River Slough	CA	\$806,990.00	\$366,814.00	\$1,173,804.00
Banning Ranch	CA	\$1,000,000.00	\$965,900.00	\$1,965,900.00
Bride Brook	CT	\$341,500.00	\$240,474.62	\$581,974.62
Augustine Creek	DE	\$883,000.00	\$402,000.00	\$1,285,000.00
Cape Sable	FL	\$1,000,000.00	\$417,334.00	\$1,417,334.00
Little Tiger Island	FL	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,070,010.00	\$2,070,010.00
Baptisia Tract	GA	\$1,000,000.00	\$500,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
Ka'ena Point	HI	\$231,775.24	\$264,186.27	\$495,961.51
Kaho'olawe	HI	\$355,531.00	\$259,668.00	\$615,199.00
Cousins River	ME	\$466,365.00	\$211,985.00	\$678,350.00
Tizzard Island	MD	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,169,000.00	\$2,169,000.00
North Fork Siuslaw	OR	\$520,527.00	\$830,243.00	\$1,350,770.00
Dawhoo Lake	SC	\$1,000,000.00	\$422,000.00	\$1,422,000.00
Great Santee Swamp	SC	\$1,000,000.00	\$422,000.00	\$1,422,000.00
Waccamaw River	SC	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,571,000.00	\$2,571,000.00
Anderson Creek	WA	\$650,000.00	\$271,000.00	\$921,000.00
Discovery Creek	WA	\$727,000.00	\$303,000.00	\$1,030,000.00
Livingston Bay	WA	\$1,000,000.00	\$425,000.00	\$1,425,000.00
Milltown Island	WA	\$1,000,000.00	\$417,500.00	\$1,417,500.00
West Oakland Bay	WA	\$1,000,000.00	\$423,000.00	\$1,423,000.00
TOTALS		\$20,084,591.24	\$17,618,686.89	\$37,703,278.13

*This table includes carryover and sequester returns from prior years.

Table 6
FY 2021 North American Wetlands Conservation Act
Coastal Grant Awards

State	Project	Amount
CT	Hammock River Marsh Enhancement & Sheets Protection	\$100,000
GA	South Atlantic Basins: Lower Pee Dee to Okefenokee III	\$2,000,000
GA	South Atlantic Basins: Lower Pee Dee to Okefenokee IV	\$1,000,000
HI	Makauwahi Cave Reserve Wetlands Enhancement	\$100,000
HI	Coastal & Upland Wetland Restoration on Kahoolawe	\$100,000
LA	Chenier Plain Marsh Enhancement	\$1,000,000
LA	Forty Arpent Canal Wetlands Enhancement	\$1,000,000
LA	Continental Marsh Enhancement	\$1,000,000
LA	Raccourci Bal Marsh Enhancement	\$2,000,000
MA	Mattapoissett Valley Wetlands	\$100,000
MD	Restoring Wetland Habitat in the Chesapeake Bay	\$100,000
MI	Chippewa Near-Shore Great Lakes Wetland Protection	\$100,000
MS	Pascagoula Headwaters Project	\$100,000
NJ	Manahawkin WMA Coastal Wetland Restoration	\$96,025
NJ	South Branch Rancocas Creek II	\$100,000
OH	Lake Erie Coastal Wetlands III	\$1,000,000
SC	Wild & Scenic Carolina Wetlands I	\$1,000,000
TX	Gulf Coast Joint Venture Mottled Duck Conservation Plan Initiative XIII	\$100,000
TX	Texas Chenier Plain V	\$1,500,000
TX	Galveston Bay Coastal Habitat	\$1,000,000
TX	Jefferson County Wetlands Improvement IV	\$1,500,000
VA	Virginia Tidal Rivers and Bays VI	\$2,000,000
	Total	\$16,996,025

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration

PITTMAN-ROBERTSON WILDLIFE RESTORATION

Appropriations Language

The Wildlife Restoration Account does not require appropriations language because there is permanent authority, established September 6, 1950 (64 Stat. 693), to use the receipts in the account in the fiscal year following their collection.

Authorizing Statutes

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937, now referred to as *The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act*, as amended (16 U.S.C. 669-669k) provides Federal assistance to the 50 States, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (States) for projects to restore, enhance, and manage wildlife resources, and to conduct State hunter education programs. The Act authorizes the collection of receipts for permanent-indefinite appropriation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for use in the fiscal year following collection. Funds not used by the States within two years revert to the Service for carrying out the provisions of the *Migratory Bird Conservation Act*. The *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* also requires the Secretary of the Treasury to invest the portion of the fund not required for current year spending in interest-bearing obligations. The interest must be used for the North American Wetlands Conservations Act.

The Appropriations Act of August 31, 1951 (P.L. 82-136, 64 Stat. 693) authorizes receipts from excise taxes on selected hunting and sporting equipment to be deposited in the Wildlife Restoration Account as a permanent, indefinite appropriation. Receipts and interest distributed to the Wildlife Restoration Account are made available for use by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the fiscal year following collection.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-408) amends the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide funding under the Multistate Conservation Grant Program for wildlife and sport fish restoration projects identified as priority projects by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. These high priority projects address problems affecting States on a regional or national basis. It also authorizes a Bow Hunter Education and Safety Program that provides grants to States.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 (16 U.S.C. 4407) amends the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* and requires the Secretary of the Treasury to invest the portion of the Wildlife Restoration Account not required for current year spending in interest-bearing obligations to be available for States to implement wetlands conservation projects.

Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act of 2019 (Pub. L. 116-17) amends the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669) to define a public target range and offers States alternatives for funding specific activities related to public target ranges under the Basic Hunter Education subprogram (BHE), the Enhanced Hunter Education Program (EHE), and the Wildlife Restoration Program (WR).

Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-94) amends the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669) to make hunter recruitment and recreational-shooter recruitment (as defined at 16 U.S.C. 669(a)(3)) an eligible activity with funds from both the Basic Hunter Education subaccount (5221) and the Enhanced Hunter Education subaccount (5230). It also removed the prohibition of public relations, and the requirement that the operation and maintenance of public target ranges using Basic Hunter Education funds be tied to a hunter safety program.

The America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act (Public Law 116-188), included a provision that amended the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669) to allow the use of value of any land owned by a Land Grant University as an in-kind match for cost-sharing requirements under the Act.

Appropriation: Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration

		2021 Actual	2022 Estimate	2023			Change From 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Estimate
Payments to States	(\$000)	670,006	1,106,615	0	0	-225,859	880,756	-225,859
Hunter Education and Safety Grants	(\$000)	8,016	8,000	0	0	0	8,000	0
Multistate Conservation Grants	(\$000)	8,016	8,000	0	0	0	8,000	0
Administration	(\$000)	11,821	12,730	0	0	+708	13,438	+708
Subtotal	(\$000)	697,859	1,135,345	0	0	-225,151	910,194	-225,151
	FTE	54	54	0	0	+6	60	+6
Interest - NAWCF	(\$000)	28,764	25,506	0	0	+2,289	27,795	+2,289
	FTE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration	(\$000)	726,623	1,160,851	0	0	-222,862	937,989	-222,862
	FTE	54	54	0	0	+6	60	+6

The 2021, 2022, and 2023 amounts include sequestration in accordance with section 251A of the BBDECA, 2 U.S.C. 901a. In addition, the amounts in 2021, 2022, and 2023 include amounts previously sequestered, which are now available in accordance with said Act.

Program Description

In 1937, Congress passed the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, authorizing the appropriation of funds from an existing excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition to the Secretary of the Interior for apportionment to States on a formula basis. It provided a much-needed, stable source of funding for wildlife conservation programs across the country and today is considered by many to be the single most successful wildlife conservation program. The legislation’s supporters were industry, sportsmen and women, and hunters – the very groups that would be most affected by the tax. Supporters accepted a permanent tax if it meant the government would use the funds to work with the States to ensure the sustainability of wildlife resources. The accompanying Service-administered grant programs, including the Section 4(c) Hunter Education and Safety Program (Basic Hunter Education) and the Section 10 Enhanced Firearm and Bow Hunter Education and Safety Program (Enhanced Hunter Education), are key components of the Nation’s cooperative conservation efforts for wildlife and their habitats. Through administering these programs, the Service helps to create and maintain



A banded Red Knot shorebird being studied as part of a monitoring effort in New Jersey.

strong conservation stewardship, supporting local communities in sustainably utilizing natural resources. Since 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program has contributed over \$13.4 billion to restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild bird and mammal populations, acquire and manage wildlife habitats, provide public uses that benefit from wildlife resources, educate hunters on conservation ethics and safety, and construct, operate, and manage recreational firearm shooting and archery ranges.

The economic impacts of hunting and recreational shooting in the United States are considerable. The Service's 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation estimates the total number of hunters in the United States to be 11.5 million, and total hunting expenditures to be \$26.2 billion. An estimated total of 32 million people went target shooting with firearms, and 12.4 million engaged in archery activities. According to the 2018 National Shooting Sports Foundation's report, *Hunting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation*, hunter spending generates \$185 million per day for the United States economy, and supports as many as 525,000 jobs. The 2018 National Shooting Sports Foundation's report, *Target Shooting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation*, reports that target shooters spent \$16.9 billion in 2016 on equipment and travel, and supported 329,000 jobs.

The core value of the program is a cooperative partnership of Federal and State agencies, hunters, archers, recreational shooters, and industry that provides significant benefits to the public and our Nation's natural resources. Grant programs funded by the Wildlife Restoration program include:

Traditional Wildlife Restoration (WR) authorizes using funds under 16 U.S.C. 669c(b) and provides Federal grant funding to the 50 States as well as the Commonwealths, and Territories (not the District of Columbia), for the selection, restoration, rehabilitation, and improvement of wildlife habitat; wildlife management research; wildlife population surveys and inventories; land acquisition; coordinating, developing, operating, and maintaining facilities, acquiring land for, expanding, or constructing public target ranges (up to 10 percent); provisions for public use of wildlife resources, and public relations activities in support of the previously listed activities.

The Basic Hunter Education and Safety Subprogram (BHE) authorizes using funds under 16 U.S.C. 669c(c) for activities under 16 U.S.C. 669g(b) to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and archery equipment, hunter responsibilities, ethics, and survival; construction, operation, and maintenance of public target ranges (used for hunter education or recreational shooting); recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters and recreational shooters; basic wildlife management and identification; and public relations that supports *hunter recruitment and recreational-shooter recruitment*, as defined at 16 U.S.C. 669(a)(3), as long as the public relations activities are necessary and reasonable for the performance of the award. Basic Hunter Education and Safety Programs include developing and implementing a programmed course of instruction leading toward achieving the State's hunter safety training goals and objectives.

The Enhanced Hunter Education and Safety Program (EHE) provides funding to the 50 States, as well as the Commonwealths and Territories (not the District of Columbia, to: enhance programs for hunter education, hunter development, and firearm and archery safety - hunter development programs introduce individuals to and recruit them to take part in hunting, bow hunting, target shooting, or archery; enhance interstate coordination of hunter education, and firearm and archery range programs; enhance programs for education, safety, or development of bow hunters and archers; enhance construction and development of firearm and archery ranges; update safety features of firearm and archery ranges; enhance activities for

hunter and recreational shooter recruitment, retention, and reactivation; and public relations activities as covered under the definition of *hunter recruitment and recreational-shooter recruitment* and defined at 16 U.S.C. 669(a)(3).

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the Service work cooperatively together to manage the **Traditional Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP)**. The Service ultimately awards and manages the grants, while AFWA administers the grant application process, providing oversight, coordination, and guidance for the program as established by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-408). These high priority projects address problems affecting States on a regional or national basis. Project types include biological research/training, species population status, outreach, data collection regarding angler participation, aquatic education, economic value of fishing, and regional or multistate habitat needs assessments.

In addition to the Traditional MSCGP, the President signed the Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act (Public Law (Pub. L.) 116-94) into law on December 20, 2019. This law, among other measures, created a new "**Modern Multistate Conservation Grant Program**" that makes up to an additional \$5 million available for projects that address hunter and recreational shooter recruitment, retention and re-activation (R3) as well as, projects that promote a national R3 program, including related communication and outreach activities. The Service refers to this program as the R3-MSCGP.

The Wildlife Restoration Program funds many important projects across the United States including:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife used funds to research dusky grouse diet and habitat use. Dusky grouse are native to the mountains of the western United States and Canadian provinces. They migrate as winter approaches, but not to the south. They move uphill — up steep mountain slopes where it is colder, snowier, windier and more inhospitable. This research study showed these birds take up residence in dense stands of spruces and firs and pines and tend to move very little until springtime. Thick foliage cuts the otherwise biting wind. These blueish-colored two-pound birds ride out the winter eating conifer needles. They have the ability to digest terpenes prevalent in conifers that other animals find unpalatable.

New Jersey Department of Fish and Wildlife has used funds for monitoring research for the Red Knot, a small shorebird listed as a federally threatened species that uses the Delaware Bay as a stopover point on its annual migration. The small birds converge in great numbers in the spring to take advantage of spawning horseshoe crabs. The crab eggs provide a high-protein food source that allows the Red Knots to double their body weight in just 10-12 days, and leave in good enough body condition to arrive in the Arctic where they breed. There is a direct connection between how much weight the birds gain in Delaware Bay and their breeding success, and Red Knot populations have declined as horseshoe crab numbers have dropped. Banding birds allows biologists to closely monitor the population. Biologists capture birds in the Delaware Bay to mark and assess bodyweight. Leg flags with unique characters are easily visible to observers across the birds' nearly pole-to-pole migration route and new lightweight radio transmitters provide real-time data about their movements. Delaware Bay is the only place that Red Knots are captured and marked in large numbers.

Rhode Island's Great Swamp Shooting Range was renovated by the division of Fish & Wildlife using Wildlife Restoration funds. Improvements included overhead safety baffles, earthen backstops, shooting station curtains, and a solar-energy-powered range office. The range includes 50-yard and 100-yard shooting lanes, and now provides a safe and industry standard environment for target shooting and hunter education.



Rhode Island's renovated Great Swamp Shooting Range.

Arizona Game and Fish Department built eighteen water catchment systems to support the conservation of Sonoran pronghorn - one of five subspecies of the animal iconic of the open plains of North America. Though adapted to desert living and built for speed, the animal cannot outrun the need for water. The larger of the catchments collect enough water during intense summer afternoon storms from July to September to store and deliver the water until replenished when rain falls upon the land the following summer. The population is monitored and these catchments also benefit elk, bighorn sheep, and many other species.

Budget Estimate

The FY 2023 budget estimate for the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program is \$937,989,000 and 60 FTE. The estimate is based on current law projections provided by the Department of the Treasury's Office of Tax Analysis.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE				
FINAL APPORTIONMENT OF PITTMAN-ROBERTSON				
WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022				
	WILDLIFE	HUNTER EDUCATION		
	FUNDS-5220	SEC 4(c)	ENHANCED	
		FUNDS-5210	FUNDS-5230	
<u>STATE</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	15.611	15.611	15.626	
ALABAMA	\$21,385,595	\$5,054,938	\$179,697	\$26,620,230
ALASKA	\$44,100,619	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$46,431,615
AMERICAN SAMOA	\$1,470,020	\$375,166	\$13,333	\$1,858,519
ARIZONA	\$24,087,941	\$6,752,990	\$240,000	\$31,080,931
ARKANSAS	\$16,565,549	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$18,896,545
CALIFORNIA	\$28,658,565	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$35,651,553
COLORADO	\$23,874,708	\$5,793,774	\$205,559	\$29,874,041
CONNECTICUT	\$4,410,062	\$3,631,461	\$129,219	\$8,170,742
DELAWARE	\$4,410,062	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$6,741,058
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FLORIDA	\$13,570,580	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$20,563,568
GEORGIA	\$28,250,242	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$35,243,230
GUAM	\$1,470,020	\$375,166	\$13,333	\$1,858,519
HAWAII	\$4,410,062	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$6,741,058
IDAHO	\$18,988,344	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$21,319,340
ILLINOIS	\$15,253,534	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$22,246,522
INDIANA	\$11,741,878	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$18,734,866
IOWA	\$13,384,010	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$15,715,006
KANSAS	\$18,112,049	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$20,443,045
KENTUCKY	\$13,839,445	\$4,533,639	\$161,212	\$18,534,296
LOUISIANA	\$18,438,531	\$4,688,325	\$166,754	\$23,293,610
MAINE	\$9,865,260	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$12,196,256
MARYLAND	\$4,562,730	\$6,212,081	\$220,741	\$10,995,552
MASSACHUSETTS	\$4,410,062	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$11,403,050
MICHIGAN	\$24,990,973	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$31,983,961
MINNESOTA	\$26,313,002	\$5,733,555	\$203,714	\$32,250,271
MISSISSIPPI	\$14,287,539	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$16,618,535
MISSOURI	\$22,319,267	\$6,195,700	\$220,367	\$28,735,334
MONTANA	\$26,222,526	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$28,553,522
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	\$1,470,020	\$375,166	\$13,333	\$1,858,519

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FINAL APPORTIONMENT OF PITTMAN-ROBERTSON WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022				
	WILDLIFE	HUNTER EDUCATION		
	FUNDS-5220	SEC 4(c) FUNDS-5210	ENHANCED FUNDS-5230	
<u>STATE</u>	<u>CFDA:</u> 15.611	<u>CFDA:</u> 15.611	<u>CFDA:</u> 15.626	<u>TOTAL</u>
NEBRASKA	\$15,510,037	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$17,841,033
NEVADA	\$17,833,811	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$20,164,807
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$4,410,062	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$6,741,058
NEW JERSEY	\$4,410,062	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$11,403,050
NEW MEXICO	\$20,383,633	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$22,714,629
NEW YORK	\$23,022,298	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$30,015,286
NORTH CAROLINA	\$24,341,966	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$31,334,954
NORTH DAKOTA	\$13,430,970	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$15,761,966
OHIO	\$14,923,582	\$6,752,986	\$240,000	\$21,916,568
OKLAHOMA	\$22,978,330	\$3,982,580	\$141,563	\$27,102,473
OREGON	\$21,989,837	\$4,255,198	\$151,095	\$26,396,130
PENNSYLVANIA	\$31,347,944	\$6,752,986	\$240,000	\$38,340,930
PUERTO RICO	\$4,410,062	\$375,166	\$13,333	\$4,798,561
RHODE ISLAND	\$4,410,062	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$6,741,058
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$9,927,441	\$5,141,136	\$182,549	\$15,251,126
SOUTH DAKOTA	\$16,130,081	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$18,461,077
TENNESSEE	\$24,959,899	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$31,952,887
TEXAS	\$44,100,619	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$51,093,607
UTAH	\$18,652,241	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$20,983,237
VERMONT	\$4,410,062	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$6,741,058
VIRGIN ISLANDS	\$1,470,020	\$375,166	\$13,333	\$1,858,519
VIRGINIA	\$12,581,953	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$19,574,941
WASHINGTON	\$14,009,982	\$6,752,988	\$240,000	\$21,002,970
WEST VIRGINIA	\$8,926,983	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$11,257,979
WISCONSIN	\$25,465,985	\$5,929,679	\$210,865	\$31,606,529
WYOMING	\$17,157,251	\$2,250,996	\$80,000	\$19,488,247
TOTAL	\$882,058,368	\$225,099,606	\$8,000,000	\$1,115,157,974¹

¹ This table includes reverted funds from prior years.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE				
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF PITTMAN-ROBERTSON				
WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023				
	WILDLIFE	HUNTER EDUCATION		
	FUNDS-5220	SEC 4(c)	ENHANCED	
<u>STATE</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	15.611	15.611	15.626	
ALABAMA	\$16,871,637	\$4,200,571	\$179,697	\$21,251,905
ALASKA	\$34,681,600	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$36,632,845
AMERICAN SAMOA	\$1,156,053	\$311,875	\$13,333	\$1,481,261
ARIZONA	\$18,945,935	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$24,799,670
ARKANSAS	\$13,023,145	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$14,974,390
CALIFORNIA	\$22,526,621	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$28,380,356
COLORADO	\$18,815,416	\$4,828,667	\$205,559	\$23,849,642
CONNECTICUT	\$3,468,160	\$3,013,274	\$129,219	\$6,610,653
DELAWARE	\$3,468,160	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$5,419,405
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FLORIDA	\$10,679,102	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$16,532,837
GEORGIA	\$22,225,922	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$28,079,657
GUAM	\$1,156,053	\$311,875	\$13,333	\$1,481,261
HAWAII	\$3,468,160	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$5,419,405
IDAHO	\$14,912,238	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$16,863,483
ILLINOIS	\$11,980,254	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$17,833,989
INDIANA	\$9,231,325	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$15,085,060
IOWA	\$10,499,916	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$12,451,161
KANSAS	\$14,230,497	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$16,181,742
KENTUCKY	\$10,870,223	\$3,765,732	\$161,212	\$14,797,167
LOUISIANA	\$14,507,157	\$3,892,772	\$166,754	\$18,566,683
MAINE	\$7,752,228	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$9,703,473
MARYLAND	\$3,586,193	\$5,165,299	\$220,741	\$8,972,233
MASSACHUSETTS	\$3,468,160	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$9,321,895
MICHIGAN	\$19,635,356	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$25,489,091
MINNESOTA	\$20,686,480	\$4,768,190	\$203,714	\$25,658,384
MISSISSIPPI	\$11,244,330	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$13,195,575
MISSOURI	\$17,545,957	\$5,144,424	\$220,367	\$22,910,748
MONTANA	\$20,617,845	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$22,569,090
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	\$1,156,053	\$311,875	\$13,333	\$1,481,261

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE				
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF PITTMAN-ROBERTSON				
WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023				
	WILDLIFE	HUNTER EDUCATION		
	FUNDS-5220	SEC 4(c)	ENHANCED	
		FUNDS-5210	FUNDS-5230	
<u>STATE</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>CFDA:</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	15.611	15.611	15.626	
NEBRASKA	\$12,194,345	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$14,145,590
NEVADA	\$14,028,459	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$15,979,704
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$3,468,160	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$5,419,405
NEW JERSEY	\$3,468,160	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$9,321,895
NEW MEXICO	\$16,051,254	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$18,002,499
NEW YORK	\$18,139,038	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$23,992,773
NORTH CAROLINA	\$19,155,221	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$25,008,956
NORTH DAKOTA	\$10,561,421	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$12,512,666
OHIO	\$11,729,371	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$17,583,106
OKLAHOMA	\$18,051,404	\$3,309,915	\$141,563	\$21,502,882
OREGON	\$17,282,622	\$3,542,058	\$151,095	\$20,975,775
PENNSYLVANIA	\$24,631,530	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$30,485,265
PUERTO RICO	\$3,468,160	\$311,875	\$13,333	\$3,793,368
RHODE ISLAND	\$3,468,160	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$5,419,405
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$7,805,042	\$4,279,624	\$182,549	\$12,267,215
SOUTH DAKOTA	\$12,674,990	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$14,626,235
TENNESSEE	\$19,633,774	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$25,487,509
TEXAS	\$34,681,600	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$40,535,335
UTAH	\$14,671,057	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$16,622,302
VERMONT	\$3,468,160	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$5,419,405
VIRGIN ISLANDS	\$1,156,053	\$311,875	\$13,333	\$1,481,261
VIRGINIA	\$9,894,729	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$15,748,464
WASHINGTON	\$11,015,018	\$5,613,735	\$240,000	\$16,868,753
WEST VIRGINIA	\$7,019,498	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$8,970,743
WISCONSIN	\$20,012,805	\$4,924,950	\$210,865	\$25,148,620
WYOMING	\$13,491,786	\$1,871,245	\$80,000	\$15,443,031
TOTAL	\$693,631,993	\$187,124,491	\$8,000,000	\$888,756,484

Migratory Bird Conservation Account

MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION ACCOUNT

Appropriations Language

This activity does not require appropriations language, except for advances, which are not requested, as there is permanent authority as provided in the 81st Congress, Second Session—Chapter 896, Interior Appropriations Act, 1951, September 6, 1951 (64 Stat. 697) to use the receipts.

Authorizing Statutes

The Migratory Bird Conservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 715-715d, 715e, 715f-715r), established the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) to approve migratory bird areas that the Secretary of the Interior recommends for acquisition. The Act also authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire MBCC-approved migratory bird areas.

The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 718a-718k), requires all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older to possess a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly known as a Duck Stamp, while waterfowl hunting. Funds from the sale of Duck Stamps are deposited in a special treasury account known as the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) established by this Act. The Act also authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to use funds from the MBCF to acquire waterfowl production areas. The 2014 amendment to the Act (Pub. L. 113-264) increased the price of the Federal Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25, with the \$10 increase dedicated to the acquisition of conservation easements.

The Wetlands Loan Act (16 U.S.C. 715k-3 - 715k-5), requires the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Service Director, to obtain the approval of the State's Governor or the appropriate State agency to acquire land in the State with MBCF monies. The Act also authorized the appropriation of advances of up to \$200,000,000 to accelerate acquisition of migratory waterfowl habitat. From 1963 to 1988, \$197,439,000 was appropriated under this authority.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee), requires payment of fair market value for any right-of-way granted over, across, through, or under National Wildlife Refuge System lands. These payments are deposited into the MBCF.

The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, as amended (P. L. 99-645; 100 Stat. 3582), provides for: (1) an amount equal to the amount of all import duties collected on arms and ammunition to be paid quarterly into the MBCF, and (2) removal of the repayment provision of the Wetlands Loan Act (P. L. 87-383).

Appropriation: Migratory Bird Conservation Account

	2021 Actual	2022 Estimate	2023				Change from 2022 (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Land Acquisition: Fee, Easements, and Leases (\$000)	116,689	88,218	0	0	-1,818	86,400	-1,818
U.S. Postal Service Duck Stamp Printing and Sales Costs (\$000)	479	600	0	0	0	600	0
Total, Migratory Bird Conservation Account (\$000) <i>FTE</i>	117,168 79	87,818 79	0 0	0 0	-1,818 0	87,000 79	-1,818 0

*The amounts presented include sequestration in accordance with section 251(a) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, 2 U.S.C. 901(a). In addition, the amounts include previously sequestered funding, which are now available in accordance with said Act.

Program Overview

The Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) allows the Service to acquire important waterfowl habitat within units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Service pursues MBCF acquisition of lands, waters, or interests in land or water, including fee title, easements, and leases, from willing sellers, when necessary to prevent the loss of important waterfowl habitat. We leverage the best waterfowl science available, and the expertise of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) community, including Migratory Bird Joint Venture (JV) step-down plans, Migratory Bird Program and JV staff expert opinions, and input from State wildlife agencies, to identify important areas to acquire. Areas acquired become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and provide compatible wildlife-dependent educational and recreational opportunities that contribute to NAWMP goals. The program contributes to the goals of the Administration’s America the Beautiful initiative, including identifying important lands and waters for conservation, supporting locally led and designed conservation efforts, and supporting the voluntary stewardship efforts of private landowners.



The 2021-2022 Duck Stamp features Delaware artist Richard Clifton’s painting of a drake lesser scaup. Each fall approximately 200 artists participate in the opportunity to become the next “Duck Stamp Artist” in the only federally regulated art contest.

The *Migratory Bird Conservation Act* established the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC), which oversees MBCF expenditures. The MBCC is chaired by the Secretary of the Interior and includes four members of Congress. During its 93-year history, the MBCC has approved acquisition of key wetland habitats to sustain migratory bird populations, while establishing or enhancing many of our Nation’s most popular destinations for public waterfowl hunting and bird watching. Since 1929, the MBCC has approved proposals to establish or expand more than 255 national wildlife refuges using the MBCF. By protecting more wetlands, these refuges also improve water quality and groundwater recharge, and moderate flooding events.

All proposed MBCF land acquisitions for national wildlife refuges must be approved by the MBCC, and the MBCC only considers such proposals in a State after:

- The State’s legislature has consented by law to acquisition by the United States (16 U.S.C. 715f);

- The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has consulted with the affected county or other unit of local government and with the State's Governor or the appropriate State agency, about the proposed land acquisition (16 U.S.C. 715c); and
- The State's Governor or his/her designee has approved the acquisition (16 U.S.C. 715k-5).

Additionally, the State official that administers the State's game laws, or his/her representative, serves as an ex officio member of the MBCC and considers and votes on all proposed acquisitions in their State.

There are two major sources of funds deposited into the MBCF account. The best-known source is the revenue received from the sale of Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as Duck Stamps, as provided for under the *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of March 18, 1934, as amended*. The other major funding source is import duties collected on arms and ammunition, as provided for under the *Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986*. The MBCF is further supplemented by payments for rights-of-way granted across refuge lands, and any proceeds from refuge land disposals or State-reverted Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration funds.

Delivering Conservation for Migratory Birds

Since its creation, the MBCF has contributed significantly to the successful conservation of wetland-dependent migratory birds and continues to support habitat conservation for waterfowl and other birds, including coastlines, grasslands, and forests. From 1935 to 2021, the Service expended more than \$1.7 billion from the MBCF to purchase 3.1 million acres in fee title and nearly 3 million acres in conservation easements. Examples of recent MBCC-approved land acquisition projects are below:



Tidal saltmarsh surrounded upland forested habitat at Edwin B. Forsythe NWR. Photo by Vinny Turner.

- Acquisition of 1,811 acres at the Umbagog NWR in Oxford County, Maine. The property consists of riparian wetlands, emergent wetlands, and surrounding forest and cutover timberland in various stages of regrowth, that provide nesting habitat for American black ducks, wood ducks, common goldeneyes, and common mergansers. The acquisition secures public access to the tract and an additional 5,000 acres of adjoining refuge lands, as the primary public road access to all refuge lands in the Town of Upton is through the tract. Management of the property will focus on protecting habitats for waterfowl and providing wildlife-dependent public recreational uses including hunting and fishing.
- Acquisition of 2,385 acres at the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR located 13 miles north of Atlantic City, New Jersey. The property consists of tidal saltmarsh and inland forested habitat comprised of oaks and pines. This tract is important as wintering and stopover habitat for American black ducks and other species of waterbirds; as breeding habitat for saltmarsh sparrows and Eastern black rail; and for protecting water quality in Refuge marshes. Acquisition connects existing refuge lands and provides public access including public hunting opportunities.
- Acquisition of 973 acres at the Turnbull NWR located 16 miles south of Spokane, Washington. The property consists of wetlands, uplands, and forested lands. Acquisition will enable the Service and its conservation partners to restore previously drained wetlands. Management of the property will focus on protecting habitats for waterfowl and providing wildlife-dependent public recreational uses.

Budget Estimate

The 2023 budget estimate for the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund is \$87,000,000 and 79 FTE.

Recreation Fee Program

FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION FEE PROGRAM

Appropriations Language

The budget includes a General Provision that proposes to reauthorize the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act until October 1, 2023. The Act is set to expire on October 1, 2022.

Authorizing Statutes

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801-6814). The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) provides the authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreation land and waters. The Act seeks to improve recreational facilities and visitor opportunities and services on Federal recreational lands by reinvesting receipts from fair and consistent recreational fees and pass sales. The budget includes a General Provision to reauthorize the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, which will expire on October 1, 2022.

Appropriation: Federal Lands Recreation Fee Program

		2021 Actual	2022 Estimate	2023			Change from 2021 Estimate (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)*	Budget Estimate	
Federal Lands Recreation Fee (\$000)		7,222	6,500	0	0	6,500	0
Program	<i>FTE</i>	23	30	0	0	30	0

*The amounts presented in 2021, 2022, and 2023 includes the sequestration in accordance with Sec. 251A of the BBDECA, 2 U.S.C 901a. In addition, the amounts in 2021, 2022, and 2023 include amounts previously sequestered, which are now available in accordance with said Act.

Program Mission

FLREA authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Service to collect, retain, and expend recreation fees to provide benefits and services to visitors. The funds provide revenue for “repair, maintenance, and facility enhancement related directly to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety; interpretation, visitor information, visitor service, visitor needs assessments, and signs; habitat restoration directly related to wildlife-dependent recreation that is limited to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, or photography; law enforcement related to public use and recreation; direct operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation Fee Program; and a fee management agreement established under section 6(a) or a visitor reservation service.” [FLREA, 16 U.S.C. 6803(c)].

Program Overview

The Recreation Fee Program allows the collection of entrance fees at 32 National Wildlife Refuges and expanded amenity and special recreation permit fees at National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries. The Service retains 100% of all revenue under FLREA and returns at least 80 percent of the collections to the specific refuge site of collection to enhance visitor facilities and programs.

The Service has 177 approved Recreation Fee Program sites that collect fees for entrance, special permits (such as hunting) and commercial uses, such as guiding and outfitting. Revenues from passes are used to improve trails, boat ramps, and other facilities; manage hunt programs; develop and install signs; and provide other visitor amenities.

An additional 24 National Fish Hatchery, Ecological Service offices, or other refuge sites also sell the National Parks & Federal Recreational Lands Annual and Senior Passes. These sites also provide free passes for people with disabilities, members of the U.S. military, Gold Star Families, and Veterans. This provides a needed service in some communities that are far from other public lands.

Recreation Fee revenues vary based on visitation. The Service’s Recreation Fee Program expects to collect approximately \$6,500,000 in FY 2023 and \$6,500,000 in FY 2023 under FLREA authority.

Each year, the Service identifies days where entrance fees are waived nationwide. We have added an additional fee free day in 2022, with the establishment of Juneteenth as a Federal holiday. The schedule for 2023 is:

January 16, 2023	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 20, 2023	President's Day
June 19, 2023	Juneteenth (new)
August 4, 2023	Great American Outdoors Act Signing
September 30, 2023	National Public Lands Day
October 8, 2023	First Sunday of National Wildlife Refuge Week
November 11, 2023	Veteran's Day



At Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge in Indiana, over 150 people participate in the annual youth hunt. Recreation fees from the hunt help fund the operations of the hunt program.

Budget Estimate

The 2023 budget estimate for the Federal Lands Recreation Fee Program is \$6,500,000 and 30 FTE.

National Wildlife Refuge Fund

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE FUND

Appropriations Language

The budget proposes to eliminate discretionary funding for this program. Therefore, appropriations language is not necessary.

Authorizing Statutes

Refuge Revenue Sharing Act (16 U.S.C. 715s). Authorizes payments to be made to offset tax losses to counties in which Service fee and withdrawn public domain lands are located.

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Sections 1002 and 1008 (16 U.S.C. 3142 and 3148). Address the procedures for permitting oil and gas leases on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain (Section 1002) and other non-North Slope Federal lands in Alaska (Section 1008).

Appropriation: National Wildlife Refuge Fund

Funding Type		2021 Actual	2022 Estimate	2023			Budget Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Appropriations	(\$000)	13,228	13,228	0	0	-13,228	0	-13,228
Receipts*	(\$000)	6,747	7,927	0	0	+73	8,000	+73
Total, National Wildlife Refuge Fund	(\$000)	19,975	21,155	0	0	-13,155	8,000	-13,155
	<i>FTE</i>	4	4	0	0	0	4	0

* The amounts presented include sequestration in accordance with section 251(a) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, 2 U.S.C. 901(a). In addition, the amounts include previously sequestered funding, which are now available in accordance with said Act.

Program Overview

The purpose of the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act is to share revenues derived from refuge lands with counties and other units of local government to compensate for lost tax revenues from Federal land acquisitions. The Act authorizes revenues and direct appropriations to be deposited into a special fund, the National Wildlife Refuge Fund (NWRF), and used for payments to counties in which lands are acquired in fee (fee land) or reserved from the public domain (reserved land) and managed by the Service for fish and wildlife purposes, minus any associated costs. These revenues are typically between \$6-\$8 million each year, and are derived from the sale or disposition of products (e.g., timber and gravel); other privileges (e.g., rights-of-way and grazing permits); and/or leases for public accommodations or facilities (e.g., oil and gas exploration and development) incidental to, and not in conflict with, refuge purposes.

The Act authorizes payments for Service-managed fee lands based on a formula that entitles counties to whichever is the highest of the following amounts: 1) 25 percent of the net receipts; 2) 3/4 of 1 percent of the fair market value of the land; or 3) 75 cents per acre.

The refuge revenue sharing payments made on lands reserved from the public domain and administered by the Service are always 25 percent of the net receipts collected from the reserved land in the county. If no receipts are collected, there is no revenue sharing payment. However, the Department of the Interior makes Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) (31 U.S.C. 6901-6907) on all public domain lands, including Service-reserved lands. The Service reports to the Department annually on all Service reserved land acres and the revenue sharing amounts already paid on those acres. The Department then calculates the PILT amounts, subtracts the amounts the Service has already paid, and makes the PILT payments to the local governments.



Cattle grazing at Red Rock Lakes NWR replicates historic buffalo grazing for the benefit of sage grouse and other species. Proceeds from grazing operations are deposited into the National Wildlife Refuge Fund to be distributed to counties and other forms of local government. FWS photo.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) addresses procedures for oil and gas leasing on non-North Slope Federal lands in Alaska and for transportation and utility systems in and across the Alaska conservation system units. Applicants pay the costs to process applications or administer permits relating to utility and transportation systems or seismic exploration. These payments directly reimburse the Service for its management costs.

Justification of 2023 Program Changes

Discretionary Appropriations (-\$13,228,000/ +0 FTE)

The Service is not requesting funding for the appropriated (discretionary) portion of the National Wildlife Refuge Fund in order to support higher priorities. This Fund was intended to compensate communities for lost tax revenue from Federal land acquisitions, but fails to take into account the economic benefits refuges provide to communities.

Mandatory Receipts: The 2023 estimate for National Wildlife Refuge Fund revenue is \$8,000,000 with revenue producing activities. The table below shows how the Service derives the funding amount available for payments to counties and other units of local government.

National Wildlife Refuge Fund Estimates for Payments to Counties (Dollars in Thousands)

Category/Element	2021 Actual	2022 Estimate	2023 Estimate	Program Change (+/-)
Receipts and Expenses				
• Receipts Collected	6,726	8,000	8,000	0
• Sequestration	-383	-456	-456	0
• Recoveries	97	50	50	0
• Expenses for Sales	-2,481	-2,624	-2,624	0
• ANILCA Expenses	0	-30	-30	0
• Estimated User-Pay Cost Share	-56	-56	-56	0
Net Receipts -- Available during the following year	3,903	4,884	4,884	0
Payments to Counties				
• Receipts Available - collected previous year		3,903	4,884	+981
• Sequestration Restored		383	456	+73
• Appropriations		13,228	0	-13,228
Total Available for Payments to Counties		17,514	5,340	-12,174

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Contributed Funds

CONTRIBUTED FUNDS

Appropriations Language

Activities funded from this account do not require appropriation language since there is permanent authority to use the receipts.

Authorizing Statutes

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-668). This Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to accept donations of land and contributed funds in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 743b-7421). This Act authorizes loans for commercial fishing vessels; investigations of fish and wildlife resources; and cooperation with other agencies. The Service is also authorized to accept donations of real and personal property. P.L. 105-242 amended this Act to authorize cooperative agreements with nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and to promote volunteer outreach and education programs. Funds contributed by partners from sales and gifts must be deposited in a separate account in the Department of the Treasury.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (16 U.S.C. 4601-1h). This Act authorizes donations of fund, property, and personal services or facilities for the purposes of the Act.

National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Act (16 U.S.C. 742). Authorizes cooperative agreements with nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and to promote volunteer, outreach, and education programs.

National Fish Hatchery System Volunteer Act (120 STAT 2058-2061). Authorizes cooperative agreements with nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to promote the stewardship of resources through biological monitoring or research; to construct, operate, maintain, or improve hatchery facilities, habitat and services, and to promote volunteer, outreach, and education programs.

Appropriation: Contributed Funds

		2021 Actual	2022 Estimate	2023			Change from 2022 (+/-)	
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		Budget Estimate
Contributed Funds	(\$000)	3,036	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	0
	<i>FTE</i>	18	18	0	0	0	18	0

Program Overview

The Service accepts unsolicited contributions from other governments, private organizations, and individuals. Once collected, the funds are used to support a variety of fish and wildlife conservation projects that contribute to fulfillment of the Department of the Interior's goals and the Service's mission.

Contributions are difficult to forecast accurately due to external events. In recent years, annual contributions have ranged from approximately \$3.7 million in FY 2014 to \$6.2 million in FY 2020.

2023 Program Performance

The Service uses contributed funds to address its highest priority needs in concert with other types of funding. The funds in 2023 will be used for projects similar to those planned and completed in previous fiscal years. For example, the Service used contributed funds for the following activities in 2021:

Fish and Aquatic Conservation: The Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program (FAC) has built a partnership with North Dakota, which has been identified as a national model for supporting sport fisheries, in a State that has no hatcheries of their own. In FY 2021 the State contributed close to \$374K to produce game fish species to support a nearly \$1B annual recreational industry important to many rural communities in the State. FY 2021 contributed funds were also used to maintain and improve fish rearing ponds. North Dakota is an active participant in the rearing and distribution of Brown Trout, Chinook Salmon, Tiger Muskellunge, Rainbow Trout, Northern Pike, and Walleye at the Garrison Dam and Valley City National Fish Hatcheries.

Since 2014 the Service has received a total of \$1.7 M in contributed funds to support the Leadville National Fish Hatchery. Leadville is one of two hatcheries that work collaboratively with private and state partners to rear endangered Wyoming toads. In FY 2021, the contributed funds financed the Wyoming toad program, supported staff positions to manage the program, provided maintenance and upgrades to the toad facility and equipment, and provided for trail signs. The hatchery, like many in the National Hatchery System, provides on-site opportunities to recreate outdoors that are an important part of the local community. The ski trails, interpretive signs and other visitor support infrastructure made possible by these funds also play a vital role in supporting the physical and mental health of area residents during the continuing COVID pandemic.

The Bozeman Fish Technology Center (BTC) is a leader in the development of specialized feed that meets the nutritional needs of a wide range of aquatic and terrestrial species. Contributed funds helped with finding environmentally conscious solutions to meet the feed needs of our hatcheries and supporting the efforts of our partners to include Oregon State University, Virginia Tech and Tethy's Aqua. Contributed funds supported the development and manufacturing of feeds for two species of fish, the June sucker and the blue sucker.

Ecological Services (Alaska): Funds provided by The Conservation Fund (TCF) to the Service were used for multiple restoration projects. For example, funds were used to replace failing culverts under Chena Spur Road and construct a weir structure to redirect flow, improve fish passage, and restore Cripple Creek near downtown Fairbanks to its historic channel. Replacement of the failing culvert at Chena Spur Road will open approximately 7 miles of stream as well as 3,169 acres of riparian wetlands of the upper Cripple Creek's natural channel benefiting the natural rearing habitat for chub, grayling, Chinook salmon, chum salmon, burbot, longnose sucker and sculpin. In another project, TCF funds were utilized to eradicate, control and prevent the spread of known infestations of the invasive aquatic weed Elodea, and restore aquatic resources in the Yukon River Basin. The planned restoration activities will eradicate Elodea in 230 surface acres of clearwater stream habitat on Totchaket Slough and approximately 40 surface acres of Chena Lake. Eradication of Elodea in these waterways will once again provide for rearing and spawning habitat for Chinook salmon, chum salmon, grayling and whitefish.

National Wildlife Refuge System:

Missouri Grasslands for Monarchs Project: This project was completed in three phases with distinct accomplishments for monarch habitat conservation. Each project included restoring both migrating and breeding habitat beginning with 293 acres on Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in association with newly restored wetland habitat. Loess Bluffs NWR hired one 2-year term position to work with volunteers in collecting native seeds, then distributing the seeds for restoration of habitat on a 40-acre tract on the refuge. Finally, the Missouri Private Lands Office worked with our conservation partners to help 58 landowners with additional cost-share to restore and enhance diverse habitat for monarchs and pollinators within 1,066 acres of private land on the Missouri flyway in Missouri, with the commitment to maintain that habitat for 10 years through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Funds were also used to tag monarchs and educate the public on the importance of pollinators reaching over 36,000 citizens.



1 - Monarch tagging with local students (credit FWS)

2 - Monarchs on native forbs during fall migration in native prairie habitat (credit FWS)

Bridging the Gap with Native Communities: Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge coordinates and collaborates directly with over 50 Alaska Native villages each year. Funds targeted to “Bridging the Gap Between Native Communities” in FY 2020 were used to support the Refuge Information Technician (RIT) program. This program strives to improve communications between the Refuge and numerous Yupik, Chupik, and Athabascan communities within and around the Refuge by hiring locally from within these communities. As National Wildlife Refuge System employees, RITs coordinate government-to-government Tribal consultations, translate between English and the respective Alaska Native languages, foster stronger relationships between the Refuge and villages, and serve as liaisons with Tribal

governments. Funds were used to fund RIT travel to reach more villages on behalf of the Refuge, attend the Elder and Youth conference to further relationships across the State of Alaska, and to purchase safety equipment allowing the RITs to travel between communities on snow machines during the winter.

Budget Estimate

The 2023 budget estimate for Contributed Funds is \$5,000,000 and 18 FTE.

Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations

MISCELLANEOUS PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS

Appropriations Language

Activities funded from these mandatory spending accounts do not require appropriation language since they were authorized in previous years.

Authorizing Statutes

Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, as amended, (P.L. 98-473, section 320; 98 Stat. 1874). Provides that all rents and charges collected for quarters of agencies funded by the Act shall be deposited and remain available until expended for the maintenance and operation of quarters of that agency.

Flood Control Act, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 460d). Provides that receipts collected from the sales of timber and crops produced on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land leased by another Federal agency for natural resources conservation may be used to cover expenses of producing these products and for managing the land for natural resource purposes.

Truckee-Carson Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act, (P.L. 101-618, section 206(f)), as amended by Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY 1998, (P.L. 105-277). Authorizes certain revenues and donations from non-Federal entities to be deposited into the Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund to support restoration and enhancement of wetlands in the Lahontan Valley and to restore and protect the Pyramid Lake fishery, including the recovery of two endangered or threatened species of fish. Payments to the Bureau of Reclamation for storage in Northern Nevada's Washoe Project that exceed the operation and maintenance costs of Stampede Reservoir are deposited into the Fund and are available without further appropriation, starting in FY 1996. Beginning in FY 1998, P.L. 105-277 provides that receipts from the sales of certain lands by the Secretary of the Interior are to be deposited into the Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund.

Commercial Filming Fee, (P.L. 113-287). This law authorizes a fee system for commercial filming activities on Service land and to use the fees for expenditure by the Secretary, without further appropriation.

Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998, (16 U.S.C.742f). This Act authorizes the cooperative agreements with nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and to promote volunteer outreach and education programs.

Appropriation: Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations

		2021 Actual	2022 Estimate	2023			Budget Request	Change from 2021 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)		
Operations and Maintenance of Quarters	(\$000)	3,505	3,400	0	0	0	3,400	0
	<i>FTE</i>	2	4	0	0	0	4	0
Proceeds from Sales	(\$000)	280	275	0	0	0	275	0
	<i>FTE</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lahontan Valley & Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund	(\$000)	940	1,000	0	0	-500	500	-500
	<i>FTE</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Film and Photography Fee Program	(\$000)	0	75	0	0	0	75	0
	<i>FTE</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Partnership Enhancement	(\$000)	0	100	0	0	0	100	0
	<i>FTE</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total, Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations	(\$000)	4,725	4,850	0	0	-500	4,350	-500
	<i>FTE</i>	2	4	0	0	0	4	0

Program Overview

Operations and Maintenance of Quarters

The Operations and Maintenance of Quarters (Quarters) Account uses receipts from the rental of Service-owned quarters to pay for maintenance of those quarters. Certain circumstances, including a lack of off-site residences and site isolation, require Service personnel to occupy government-owned quarters. Such work includes protecting fish hatchery stock (e.g. maintaining water flow to fish rearing ponds during freezing temperatures), monitoring water management facilities, ensuring the health and welfare of visitors, responding to fires and floods, and protecting government property.

Proceeds From Sales, Water Resources Development Projects

As described in 16 U.S.C. 460(d), receipts collected from the sale of timber and crops from National Wildlife Refuge System lands leased or licensed from the Department of the Army may be used to pay the costs of production of the timber and crops and for managing wildlife habitat. Twenty-three National Wildlife Refuges were established as overlay projects on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land, and they are administered in accordance with cooperative agreements. The agreements provide that timber and grain may be harvested and sold with the receipts returned for development, conservation, maintenance, and utilization of such lands. The Service has used these funds in the past for soil amendments; road construction and repairs; and ditch and fence construction and maintenance. These expenses cannot exceed the receipt amounts deposited as proceeds from sales.

Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund

Pursuant to the Truckee-Carson Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act of 1990, the Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund receives revenues and donations from non-Federal parties to

support the restoration and enhancement of wetlands in the Lahontan Valley and to restore and protect the Pyramid Lake fishery. Payments received from the Bureau of Reclamation's Washoe and Truckee Storage Projects in excess of operation and maintenance costs for Stampede Reservoir are available without further appropriation, as are donations made for express purposes and State cost-sharing funds. In addition, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to deposit proceeds from the sale of certain lands and interests in lands into the Fund. Land sales proceeds are used primarily to pay annual water delivery costs for Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, Northern Nevada's premier waterfowl hunting destination and part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

Film and Photography Fee Program

Congress provided authority for the Service to require permits and establish reasonable fees for commercial filming activities and certain still photography activities under Service jurisdiction. It requires all four bureaus involved—the Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service—to develop and implement a consistent fee schedule. To date, the four bureaus have revised the draft fee schedule after a public comment period. The final fee schedule is awaiting publication. Once finalized, all costs recovered under this Act shall be available for expenditures by the Secretary of the Interior, without further appropriation, at the site where collected, and shall remain available until expended.

Community Partnership Enhancement

The Community Partnership fund was established to encourage volunteer programs, donations, and other contributions by persons or organizations for the benefit of a particular National Wildlife Refuge or complex. The partnership between a refuge or complex and non-Federal organizations may promote public awareness of the resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System and public participation in the conservation of resources. Partnerships may be in the form of a non-profit organization (as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of that Code), academic institution, or State or local government agency to carry out projects or programs for a refuge or refuge complex. Funds may be used to promote education and the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and cultural and historical resources on a refuge or refuge complex.

2023 Budget Estimate

The 2023 budget estimate for Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations is \$4,350,000 and 4 FTE.

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Administrative Provisions and Legislative Proposals

Administrative Provisions

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service may carry out the operations of Service programs by direct expenditure, contracts, grants, cooperative agreements and reimbursable agreements with public and private entities. Appropriations and funds available to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service shall be available for repair of damage to public roads within and adjacent to reservation areas caused by operations of the Service; options for the purchase of land at not to exceed one dollar for each option; facilities incident to such public recreational uses on conservation areas as are consistent with their primary purpose; and the maintenance and improvement of aquaria, buildings, and other facilities under the jurisdiction of the Service and to which the United States has title, and which are used pursuant to law in connection with management, and investigation of fish and wildlife resources: Provided, That notwithstanding 44 U.S.C. 501, the Service may, under cooperative cost sharing and partnership arrangements authorized by law, procure printing services from cooperators in connection with jointly produced publications for which the cooperators share at least one-half the cost of printing either in cash or services and the Service determines the cooperator is capable of meeting accepted quality standards: Provided further, That the Service may accept donated aircraft as replacements for existing aircraft: [Provided further, That the Secretary may recover costs for response, assessment, and damages to National Wildlife Refuge System resources from the actions of private parties, or for costs as otherwise provided by Federal, State, or local law, regulation, or court order as a result of the destruction, loss of, or injury to any living or non-living National Wildlife Refuge System resource: Provided further, That the damages described in the previous proviso shall include the following: compensation for the cost of replacing, restoring or acquiring the equivalent of the damaged National Wildlife Refuge System resource; and either the value of any significant loss of use of a National Wildlife Refuge System resource pending its restoration, replacement or acquisition of an equivalent resource or the value of the National Wildlife Refuge System resource in the event the resource cannot be replaced, restored or an equivalent acquired: Provided further, That any instrumentality, including but not limited to a vessel, vehicle, aircraft, or other equipment or mechanism that destroys, causes the loss of, or injures any living or non-living National Wildlife Refuge System resource or which causes the Secretary to undertake actions to prevent, minimize, or abate destruction, loss of, injury, or risk to such resource shall be liable in rem to the United States for response costs and damages resulting from such destruction, loss, injury, or risk to the same extent as a person is liable: Provided further, That in addition to any other authority to accept donations, the Secretary may accept donations of money or services to meet expected, immediate, or ongoing response costs and damages; response and assessment costs and damages recovered by the Secretary and donations received under this provision shall be available to the Secretary, without further appropriation, and shall remain available until expended, for damage assessments conducted, or for restoration and replacement of National Wildlife Refuge System resources, and shall be managed under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Fund as per 43 U.S.C. 1474b-1:] Provided further, That notwithstanding 31 U.S.C. 3302, all fees collected for non-toxic shot review and approval shall be deposited under the heading "United States Fish and Wildlife Service—Resource Management" and shall be available to the Secretary, without further appropriation, to be used for expenses of processing of such non-toxic shot type or coating applications and revising regulations as necessary, and shall remain available until expended: Provided further, That the second proviso under the "Resource Management" heading in title I of division E of Public Law 112-74 (16 U.S.C. 7421-1) is amended by striking 2012 and replacing it with 2023; and striking \$400,000 and replacing it with \$750,000.

The Secretary may recover costs for response, assessment, and damages to Service resources from the unauthorized actions of private parties, including non-compliance with Service-issued permits, or for costs as otherwise provided by Federal, State, or local law, regulation, or court order as a result of the destruction, loss of, or injury to any living or non-living Service resource: Provided, That such damages may include compensation for the cost of replacing, restoring, or acquiring the equivalent of the damaged Service resource; the value of any significant loss of use of a Service resource pending its restoration, replacement, or the acquisition of an equivalent resource; or the value of the Service resource in the event the resource cannot be restored, replaced or re-acquired: Provided further, That response costs as described herein may include the following actions: preventing, minimizing, or abating destruction or loss of, or injury to, a Service resource; abating or minimizing the imminent risk of such destruction, loss, or injury; or monitoring the ongoing effects of any incident causing such destruction, loss, or injury: Provided further, That any instrumentality, including but not limited to a vessel, vehicle, aircraft, or other equipment or mechanism that destroys, causes the loss of, or injures any living or non-living Service resource or which causes the Secretary to undertake actions to prevent, minimize, or abate destruction, loss of, injury, or risk to such resource shall be liable in rem to the United States for response costs and damages resulting from such destruction, loss, injury, or risk to the same extent as a person would be liable under the same or similar circumstances: Provided further, That in addition to any other authority to accept donations, the Secretary may accept donations of money or services to meet expected, immediate, or ongoing response costs and damages: Provided further, That amounts and damages recovered by the Secretary for response and assessment costs, and donations collected pursuant to this provision, shall be credited to the "United States Fish and Wildlife Service--Resource Management" account, and shall remain available until expended for response costs and damage assessments conducted; restoration, replacement, or acquisition of Service resources; and monitoring and studying Service resources.

Justification of Language Change

Addition of the following wording:

Provided further, That the proviso under this heading in Public Law 112-74 is amended by striking "2012" and replacing it with "2023"; and striking "\$400,000" and replacing it with "\$750,000."

The Service requests an increase in Special Fund authority for payment at the discretion of the Secretary for information, rewards or evidence. The increase from \$400,000 to \$750,000 is necessary due to the large number of extensive covert operations the Service has conducted during recent years, such as Operation Crash. The Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) overseas attaché units has increased the Service's capability to combat wildlife trafficking. The unit was created in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 and currently has 12 attachés stationed around the world.

In March 2012, the Service entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of the Interior's Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB) for OLE to conduct criminal investigations of alleged violations of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA) which also increased the covert operations. One major case was the investigation of Last Chance Jewelers which yielded thousands of dollars in fines, restitution, and jail time.

During FY 2019, the Service paid out \$350,000 for expenses for payments of information, rewards and evidence from the Special Fund allotted \$400,000. With an expanding enforcement activity, the current administrative provision may unnecessarily restrict the Service in aggressively pursuing law enforcement investigations.

Addition of the following wording:

The Secretary may recover costs for response, assessment, and damages to Service resources from the unauthorized actions of private parties, including non-compliance with Service-issued permits, or for costs as otherwise provided by Federal, State, or local law, regulation, or court order as a result of the destruction, loss of, or injury to any living or non-living Service resource: Provided, That such damages may include compensation for the cost of replacing, restoring, or acquiring the equivalent of the damaged Service resource; the value of any significant loss of use of a Service resource pending its restoration, replacement, or the acquisition of an equivalent resource; or the value of the Service resource in the event the resource cannot be restored, replaced or re-acquired: Provided further, That response costs as described herein may include the following actions: preventing, minimizing, or abating destruction or loss of, or injury to, a Service resource; abating or minimizing the imminent risk of such destruction, loss, or injury; or monitoring the ongoing effects of any incident causing such destruction, loss, or injury: Provided further, That any instrumentality, including but not limited to a vessel, vehicle, aircraft, or other equipment or mechanism that destroys, causes the loss of, or injures any living or non-living Service resource or which causes the Secretary to undertake actions to prevent, minimize, or abate destruction, loss of, injury, or risk to such resource shall be liable in rem to the United States for response costs and damages resulting from such destruction, loss, injury, or risk to the same extent as a person would be liable under the same or similar circumstances: Provided further, That in addition to any other authority to accept donations, the Secretary may accept donations of money or services to meet expected, immediate, or ongoing response costs and damages: Provided further, That amounts and damages recovered by the Secretary for response and assessment costs, and donations collected pursuant to this provision, shall be credited to the "United States Fish and Wildlife Service--Resource Management" account, and shall remain available until expended for response costs and damage assessments conducted; restoration, replacement, or acquisition of Service resources; and monitoring and studying Service resources.

This change adds language to provide the Service with the authority, similar to that of the National Park Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to seek compensation from responsible parties whose unauthorized actions injure or destroy Fish and Wildlife resources. Under current law, when Service resources are injured or destroyed, the costs of repair and restoration falls upon the appropriated budget for the affected field station or office. This is the case even when parties are ordered to pay restitution. Competing priorities can leave damaged Refuge System resources languishing until Congress appropriates funds to address the injury. This delay may result in more intensive injuries, higher costs of future redress of the injury, and long-term degradation of publicly-owned resources.

This provision would allow persons responsible for harm—not taxpayers—to pay for any injury they cause. Unlike some other land management agencies, the Service only has criminal penalties (fines) for those injuries occurring on Service property. In most cases, the injuries far exceed any fines recovered by the U.S. Government. With this authority, the recovery of damages for injury to Service resources would be used to reimburse assessment costs; prevent or minimize the risk of loss; monitor ongoing effects, and/or use those funds to restore, replace, or acquire resources equivalent to those injured or destroyed.

Significant examples suitable for damage recovery under this provision include a case of cutting the boundary fence at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico where multiple sets of tire tracks were found indicating trespass by motor vehicle to the Refuge and damaging fragile desert habitat. The St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge in Florida experienced damage to an entrance gate and its locking

mechanism and the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico reported government signs that had been vandalized by spray paint rendering them unreadable.

Additionally, this language would also allow the Service to retain restitution payments ordered in cases prosecuted by the Justice Department such as in a recent case pertaining to illegal fishing and sale of lake trout from Lake Michigan, which was stocked by the FWS National Fish Hatcheries. In 2015 and 2016, the FWS Office of Law Enforcement conducted an undercover operation which resulted in dozens of citations. The U.S. Department of Justice prosecuted the defendants for illegally taking fish under the Lacey Act, in violation of underlying Michigan law, and many have already been ordered to pay restitution to the National Fish Hatcheries. The restitution order was based on actual fish counts of fish introduced by the hatchery and then illegally taken by the tribal fishers. In total, the restitution from all defendants will be over \$1 million. Some of the restitution payments have already been made, and the Service has sent those payments to Treasury. The Service anticipates receiving ongoing restitution payments as a result of this case.

2023 Appendix

Section 403 Compliance

Purpose: To fulfill legislative requirements for disclosure of program assessments used to support Government-wide, departmental, or agency initiatives or general operations. Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260):

SEC. 403. The amount and basis of estimated overhead charges, deductions, reserves or holdbacks, including working capital fund and cost pool charges, from programs, projects, activities and subactivities to support government-wide, departmental, agency, or bureau administrative functions or headquarters, regional, or central operations shall be presented in annual budget justifications and subject to approval by the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Changes to such estimates shall be presented to the Committees on Appropriations for approval.

Pursuant to the *Section 403* directive, the Service fully discloses its administrative costs as follows:

NATIONAL COMMON PROGRAM SERVICES: With the Administrative reorganization, the Service has consolidated all regional shared costs and national shared costs into a common program services charge. These charges account for specific administrative services for facilities management, procurement, human resources, financial and other services.

NON-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT USER-PAY COST SHARE: Non-Resource Management Programs continue to pay annually for the administrative services they consume. The funding received from Non-Resource Management Programs supplements central, regional and Servicewide support operations. Specifically, the Non-Resource Management Programs pay for their actual use of communication services and Workers' Compensation. Other costs, such as Washington and Regional office administration and Service-wide costs, such as Unemployment Compensation are measured through FTE usage.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION: The Service has historically paid workers' compensation costs centrally through the Servicewide bill paying account. As a result, programs were not aware of the costs that result from employee injuries. Since FY 2015, workers' compensation costs have been charged to the applicable programs. The Service made this change to address an audit finding and provide incentive for programs to participate in the Department's Return to Work initiative.

ENTERPRISE-WIDE SERVICES: In order to provide the necessary level of funding for Enterprise-wide and Working Capital Fund Direct Bill services, the Service assesses its resource management programs for costs that can be directly tracked back to users. This includes software licenses, cell phone costs, personnel system costs, employee badges and the like.

RESERVES: The Service Director may manage a deferred allocation fund of up to one-half of one percent of the current year Resource Management appropriation for each subactivity in excess of three million dollars. These management reserve funds are used for unanticipated requirements.

The Service strictly adheres to the policy that Congressional priorities must be funded in their entirety and are not subject to the deferred allocation or user-pay cost share.

Below shows administrative cost estimates for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023:

	Fiscal Year 2022
External Administrative Costs	
WCF Centralized Billings	\$27,872,900
WCF Direct Billings/Fee for Service	\$16,911,510
Program Assessments	
Holdbacks, Reserves, and Deductions	\$7,150,000
Bureau Administrative Costs	
National Common Program Services	\$34,538,239
Non-Resource Management User-Pay Cost Share	\$12,998,884
Workers' Compensation	\$5,051,200
Enterprise-Wide Services	\$48,110,279
Fiscal Year 2023	
External Administrative Costs	
WCF Centralized Billings	\$29,979,199
WCF Direct Billings/Fee for Service	\$27,569,608
Program Assessments	
Holdbacks, Reserves, and Deductions	\$9,598,171
Bureau Administrative Costs/Central and Regional Operations	
National Common Program Services	\$38,500,000
Non-Resource Management User-Pay Cost Share	\$15,198,884
Workers' Compensation	\$5,399,900
Enterprise-Wide Services	\$50,515,793

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

**Employee Count by Grade
(Total Employment)**

	FY 2021 Actuals	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Executive Level V	0	1	1
SES	22	24	25
Subtotal	22	25	26
SL - 00	0	0	0
ST - 00	0	2	2
Subtotal	0	2	2
GS/GM -15	139	142	160
GS/GM -14	549	561	630
GS/GM -13	1,440	1472	1653
GS -12	1,720	1758	1974
GS -11	1,514	1547	1738
GS -10	8	8	9
GS - 9	969	990	1112
GS - 8	109	111	125
GS - 7	617	631	708
GS - 6	191	195	219
GS - 5	445	455	511
GS - 4	141	144	162
GS - 3	47	48	54
GS - 2	6	6	7
GS - 1	0	0	0
Subtotal	7,895	8,068	9,062
Other Pay Schedule Systems	620	634	712
Total employment (actuals & estimates)	8,537	8,729	9,802

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Allocations Received from Other Accounts								
Department Program	FY 2020 Actual		FY 2021 Estimate		FY 2021 Actual		FY 2022 Estimate	
	Budget Authority	Outlays	Budget Authority	Outlays	Budget Authority	Outlays	Budget Authority	Outlays
Department of Agriculture:								
Forest Pest Management	0	176,000	187,000	130,900	187,000	0	200,000	196,100
Department of the Interior:								
<i>Office of Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration</i>								
Damage Assessment 8300	1,670,300	1,325,407	2,500,000	2,251,090	1,674,027	1,363,551	2,500,000	2,252,208
Restoration 9800	35,484,842	20,534,171	40,000,000	38,645,453	30,222,893	52,553,421	50,000,000	44,066,868
<i>Office of Wildland Fire Coordination</i>								
Wildland Fire Management	78,832,722	72,670,100	85,000,000	83,149,816	96,362,000	91,518,061	85,000,000	88,408,600
<i>Office of the Secretary, DOI</i>								
Disaster Relief - Hurricane Sandy	0	3,838,034	0	1,500,000		1,072,112	0	2,500,000
National Parks and Public Lands Management Act	0	0	95,000,000	66,500,000	95,000,000	4,405,861	89,585,000	91,209,500
Salaries and Expenses, CARES Act	3,585,000	959,538	40,860,500	29,677,850	62,715,107	33,367,295	0	18,814,532
<i>Bureau of Land Management</i>								
Central Hazardous Materials Fund	1,636,773	2,197,161	4,167,657	3,408,392	4,033,870	2,899,656	4,167,657	4,127,521
So. Nevada Public Lands Management	2,532,962	966,552	590,166	1,173,005	834,482	784,953	590,166	663,461
Energy Act - Permit Improvement	1,590,000	1,532,325	670,000	946,000	2,305,000	1,538,468	670,000	1,160,500
Department of Transportation:								
Federal Highway Administration-Discretionary 0500	2,697,980	1,331,471	0	809,394	3,142,742	1,298,705	0	942,823
Federal Highway Administration- Mandatory 8083	11,978,026	12,048,218	12,396,017	12,270,620	12,773,862	12,859,128	12,396,017	12,509,371
TOTAL	140,008,604	117,578,977	281,371,340	240,462,519	309,250,984	203,661,210	245,108,840	266,851,483

FWS BIL Spend Plan



Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

Implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

2023 Spend Plan

The reporting requirements within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (PL-117-58) state:

Sec. 601. Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall submit to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations a detailed spend plan for the funds provided to the Department of the Interior in this title in this Act for fiscal year 2022, and for each fiscal year through 2026, as part of the annual budget submission of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary of the Interior shall submit a detailed spend plan for the funds provided to the Department of the Interior in this title in this Act for that fiscal year.

The following spend plan details how the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) plans to execute these investments in FY 2023 while adhering to the Administration's implementation priorities. The Department has articulated these priorities as:

- investing public dollars efficiently, working to avoid waste, and focusing on measurable outcomes for the American people;
- increasing the competitiveness of the United States economy, including through implementing the Act's Made-in-America requirements and bolstering United States manufacturing and supply chains;
- improving job opportunities for millions of Americans by focusing on high labor standards for these jobs, including prevailing wages and the free and fair chance to join a union;
- investing public dollars equitably, including through the Justice40 Initiative, which is a Government-wide effort toward a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits from Federal investments in climate and clean energy flow to disadvantaged communities;
- building infrastructure that is resilient and that helps combat the crisis of climate change; and
- effectively coordinating with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments in implementing these critical investments.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a total of \$455 million to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for the programs and activities shown in the table below. Funding is provided as emergency discretionary appropriations and is available for obligation until expended.



FWS Total Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding

(\$ in 000s)

		FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	Total
Account Name							
22XF1611BL/FFRK40000	Klamath Basin	30,780	30,780	30,780	30,780	30,780	153,900
22XF1611BL/FGOK90000	Klamath Basin	1,458	1,458	1,458	1,458	1,458	7,290
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer (only if specified in bill)	162	162	162	162	162	810
Account Name, Total		32,400	32,400	32,400	32,400	32,400	162,000
Account Name							
22XF1611BL/FFRT40000	Lake Tahoe	3,230	3,230	3,230	3,230	3,230	16,150
22XF1611BL/FGOT90000	Lake Tahoe	153	153	153	153	153	765
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer (only if specified in bill)	17	17	17	17	17	85
Account Name, Total		3,400	3,400	3,400	3,400	3,400	17,000
Account Name							
22XF1611BL/FSCS10000	Sage-Steppe	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	47,500
22XF1611BL/FGOS90000	Sage-Steppe	450	450	450	450	450	2,250
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer (only if specified in bill)	50	50	50	50	50	250
Account Name, Total		10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000
Account Name							
22XF1611BL/FFRD40000	Delaware Basin	4,940	4,940	4,940	4,940	4,940	24,700
22XF1611BL/FGOD90000	Delaware Basin	234	234	234	234	234	1,170
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer (only if specified in bill)	26	26	26	26	26	130
Account Name, Total		5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	26,000
Account Name							
22XF1611BL/FFRF40000	Fish Passage	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	190,000
22XF1611BL/FGOF90000	Fish Passage	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	9,000
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer (only if specified in bill)	200	200	200	200	200	1,000
Account Name, Total		40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	200,000
FWS, Total		91,000	91,000	91,000	91,000	91,000	455,000

These programs will provide habitat restoration, invasive species control, conservation of at-risk and listed species and other benefits to four significant ecosystems as well as opportunities to restore habitat connectivity for aquatic species around the country.

Implementation Strategy

There are no changes to the governance structure, monitoring and evaluation, or administration from what is presented in the Service’s 2022 spend plan for BIL funding.

Klamath Basin Restoration

Program Managers

Pacific Southwest Regional Director, Executive Lead
Klamath Basin Collaborative Coordinator

Program Description and Objectives

Funding provided will be allocated for habitat restoration and water right acquisition to help restore the Klamath ecosystem, as well as for enhanced hatchery production of listed Klamath species (Lost River and shortnose suckers).



The headwaters for the Klamath Basin start in the arid mountains east of the Cascade Range in southern Oregon. Downstream, these waters support one of the largest lake-wetlands complexes in the western US. These unique aquatic habitats in the Upper Klamath Basin support the incredible biodiversity for which the watershed is celebrated. Water is also a critical economic resource as it is used for irrigating crops and supporting cattle across the Basin, where there is a long history of highly productive farming and ranching.

River, riparian, lake, and wetland habitats are what make the Klamath Basin unique. These habitats historically supported millions of fish and waterbirds. Wetlands and riparian habitats also provide key ecosystem services that sequester nutrients and provide habitat for all life stages of fish native to the basin. More than half of the wetlands in the Basin have been modified by draining, levee construction, and agricultural practices. These changes have impacted populations of all species that depend on these habitats including water dependent birds, fish, and other organisms.

The Service's Klamath Basin Restoration Program will fund projects and activities identified through a collaborative, transparent and science-based process. For FY 2023 the Service will develop a list of specific projects and activities that will be funded from the Klamath infrastructure funding. The Service will advertise a funding opportunity that will be for projects and activities that support or will help improve river, riparian, lake, and wetland habitats, which historically supported millions of fish, waterfowl, and other native wildlife. The Service will invite project proposals that fall within the entire Klamath Basin drainage from the headwaters to the mouth of the Klamath River. Klamath Basin stakeholders have a long history of working together on restoration activities, and have also undertaken the enormous challenge of resolving major natural resource conflicts in the Klamath Basin. Applicants will be, therefore, encouraged to submit project proposals that seek out and/or build upon opportunities for collaboration with other conservation partners in the Klamath Basin.

The objectives of the Service's Klamath Basin Restoration Program include enhancing captive rearing of listed sucker species at the Klamath Falls National Fish Hatchery and Klamath sucker and salmon conservation and recovery. A significant portion of the funding available will be reserved for construction of the hatchery.

Implementation Strategy

The Fish and Wildlife Service will target projects that will maximize environmental benefits, can be initiated quickly, and will create jobs in the Klamath Basin and improve conditions for the many Tribes and communities that depend on a healthy, resilient, and well-functioning watershed. A project evaluation process will be developed by the Service, Tribal partners and other stakeholders.

The Service has been part of, and has supported, long-standing partnerships in the Klamath Basin for more than 20 years with the States of California and Oregon, local Tribes and various conservation partners from throughout the Basin. We have deep and important relationships with each of the Tribes in the Klamath Basin, and plan to use existing mechanisms to fully



engage with them on the best uses of infrastructure funding. In past years, we have received appropriated dollars for Klamath restoration, and had a robust dialogue with the Klamath Basin Tribes about priorities. We intend to use these strong partnerships to advance basin-wide conservation to ensure robust, inclusive Tribal consultation and stakeholder involvement. Within the Federal family, we anticipate working closely with the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Lake Tahoe Restoration

Program Managers

Pacific Southwest Regional Director, Executive Lead

Pacific Southwest Assistant Regional Director, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Staff Lead

Program Description and Objectives

The program objectives align with the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act Section 5(d)(2) which states *The Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary, the Planning Agency, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Nevada Department of Wildlife, shall deploy strategies consistent with the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan to prevent the introduction or spread of aquatic invasive species in the Lake Tahoe region.*

Implementation Strategy

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are commonly spread by activities such as boating, fishing, hatchery releases, and aquarium dumping. The Lake Tahoe Region is not only threatened by new introductions of AIS to Lake Tahoe from other waterbodies, but also the expansion of existing populations within the lake that imperil Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) and other native aquatic species and the habitat on which they depend.

AIS control measures are permitted under the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act for established populations of invasive plants, fish, and invertebrates. Under the Lake Tahoe AIS Management Plan, these invasive species are targeted for removal to reduce their impact and limit their spread. The FWS spend plan for FY 2023 is to primarily use funding in direct collaboration with the States of California and Nevada, the Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and other partners, in support of implementation and evaluation of the Lake Tahoe AIS Management Plan. Priority actions include aquatic invasive fish removal such as management of tributaries to Lake Tahoe to remove and prevent migration of invasive species into priority conservation waters; aquatic invasive invertebrate removal that focuses on mysid shrimp and crayfish removal from Lake Tahoe that will significantly contribute to the reestablishment of native zooplankton populations and reestablish a native food chain for the benefit of native species; develop, refine and implement research and



monitoring plans for these program areas with specific goals, objectives, and metrics that will adaptively inform effectiveness and provide adaptive management strategies through implementation; AIS Prevention and Biosecurity projects that will augment existing prevention programs under the Lake Tahoe Management Plan; and aquatic invasive plant removal, with emphasis in the Tahoe Keys. The Fish and Aquatic Conservation program manages AIS for the Service.

Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation

Program Managers

Mountain-Prairie Regional Director, Executive Lead

Mountain-Prairie Assistant Regional Director, Migratory Birds/Science Applications, Staff Lead

Coordinator, Sagebrush Ecosystem Team, Staff Lead

Program Description and Objectives

This program builds on an existing collaborative effort by the Service and our public and private partners to conserve the sagebrush ecosystem of the American West and the nationally-significant biological, cultural and economic resources it supports. Working across 13 Western States and multiple jurisdictions, this partnership is using leading-edge science and a Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) approach to identify the most pressing threats to a sustainable sagebrush ecosystem, such as invasive species and wildfire, and investing in tangible, measurable actions to address those threats in the face of a changing climate.

Operating on a landscape that comprises one-third of the contiguous United States, the Service and our partners such as the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service and the States, are deploying innovative technical tools to highlight the most intact, climate-resilient “core” geographies within sagebrush and target on-the-ground habitat conservation projects to defend those cores and the natural resources values they support. In so doing, this partnership is (1) employing a strategic, cross-cutting, and accountable business model; (2) promoting viable rural economies, e.g., public lands outdoor recreation and sustainable livestock production; and (3) reducing the need for future Federal regulatory intervention for declining native wildlife populations ranging from resident game species (e.g., Greater sage-grouse) to non-game migratory birds (e.g., Sagebrush sparrow).

The additional funding made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will accelerate and scale up the work of this partnership. Through the Service’s Sagebrush Ecosystem Team (SET) – a cross-programmatic, multi-region working group – the Service will use cooperative agreements and related mechanisms to acquire mission-critical science and to deliver voluntary habitat conservation projects through Private Landowner Agreements, Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances and other partnership-driven work. These projects will focus on (a) protecting sagebrush habitat against the spread of invasive annual grasses and the destructive wildfires they fuel; (b) removing encroaching conifers from sagebrush habitat for the benefit of



migratory birds and other native wildlife species; and (c) restoring mesic (wet) habitat to combat the effects of extreme drought. The combined effect of these strategic investments in the “ecological infrastructure” will help mitigate the onset of climate change in this vital and uniquely American landscape, protect existing livelihoods and create new job opportunities through on-the-ground restoration work, and further demonstrate the Service’s commitment to good government through close and transparent coordination with our Federal, State, Tribal, and private partners.

The Service and our partners have developed a prioritization framework to target funding for on-the-ground projects in core sagebrush geographies, with a focus on habitat for declining sagebrush-obligate migratory bird species and an emphasis on slowing or stopping the spread of invasive annual grasses (e.g., cheatgrass) and the destructive wildfire these grasses fuel. Other, related prioritization criteria include conifer removal; mesic restoration; partner funding leverage and feasibility; and, mission-critical science acquisition. We will use this same proven framework and associated processes to implement the funds made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law during FY 2023. In addition, the FY 2023 process will have the benefit of lessons learned in the FY 2022 funding cycle.

Delaware River Basin Restoration

Program Managers

Northeast Regional Director, Executive Lead
Landscape Partnership Coordinator, Staff Lead

Program Description and Objectives

The Delaware River Basin program provides competitive matching grants for habitat conservation to State and local governments, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and other eligible entities in the Delaware River Basin in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Delaware River Watershed Conservation Collaborative includes more than 40 partner agencies and organizations. Since 2018, the fund has awarded \$26.6 million to 123 projects, which generated \$46 million in match, for a total conservation impact of \$72.6 million. The Delaware River Basin Conservation Act (DRBCA) is synchronized with a complementary funding program, the Delaware River Restoration Fund, which is sponsored by the William Penn Foundation and invests an additional \$2 million to \$3 million annually in clean water programs.

The Service’s Delaware River Basin Restoration Program (DRBRP) will set priorities for advancing green infrastructure in the Delaware River watershed to guide strategic investment of \$26 million (over 5 years) in infrastructure funding that will be available in this region. The Service will also work with the Department to deploy this funding in support of President Biden’s America the Beautiful initiative.



Together with our partners at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the Delaware River Watershed Conservation Collaborative (Collaborative) Steering Committee, the Service will set priority actions to be funded in the 2023 Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF) request for proposals. With \$5.2 million in Federal funding allocated in FY 2023 from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law we will fund projects that make natural systems, and the human and natural communities that depend upon them, more resilient to change, and protect ecosystem services, like clean water and flood protection. Priority will be given to projects that support the four main priorities of the DWCF program: fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flow management, and equitable access to nature for all communities.

The Steering Committee for this effort comprises geographic proportional representation and diverse group representation. Tribal representation on the Steering Committee will include three members of federally recognized Tribal Nations descended from the indigenous Lenape people of the Delaware River watershed (Delaware Nation and Delaware Tribe in Oklahoma, and the Stockbridge Munsee Mohican Nation in Wisconsin).

National Fish Passage Program

Program Managers

Assistant Director Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Executive Lead
Branch of Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation, Staff Lead

Program Description and Objectives

The National Fish Passage Program (NFPP) is an existing program that relies on a network of Service biologists and engineers stationed throughout the country to provide technical expertise, financial assistance, and coordination support to complete aquatic ecosystem restoration projects. The Service works with Federal agencies, State governments, private landowners, Tribes, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to restore fish passage and aquatic connectivity by removing or bypassing barriers. Projects range in size from large-scale dam removals, to the repair or removal of culverts at road-stream crossings, to the installation of fish screens at agricultural water diversions. The NFPP has reopened access to thousands of miles of habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms.

The NFPP is an essential element of Service efforts to tackle climate change, deliver environmental justice, and build our economy. In addition to providing benefits for fish and aquatic species, the NFPP's work to restore degraded and fragmented aquatic habitats decreases public safety hazards and improves infrastructure resilience by reducing flood risks, removing obsolete dams, and improving water delivery for local agriculture irrigation districts. This important work also creates construction, engineering, and other jobs, stimulating the local economy.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires that NFPP funds be utilized "for restoring fish and wildlife passage by removing in-stream barriers and providing technical assistance." A portion



of the funding provided each year will be used to provide technical assistance (e.g., project management, biological expertise, engineering support, environmental compliance, and monitoring). Funding to external partners will be distributed via cooperative agreements and grants.

In the coming months, we intend to refine the current approach for selecting and implementing individual projects to ensure these funds are being directed to the highest priority projects nationwide that will maximize benefits for high priority species and aquatic habitats. In FY 2023 we will use that refined approach and incorporate project selection criteria that reflect the Administration's broader programmatic goals, including in support of President Biden's America the Beautiful initiative.

The development and implementation of individual projects will also continue to engage and leverage resources of our many and diverse partners, including other Federal agencies, State governments, private landowners, Tribes, and NGOs. This will include engaging the existing network of partnerships under the National Fish Habitat Partnership program. In addition, we intend to work with other State and Federal agencies (e.g. NOAA Fisheries, Federal Highway Administration) to ensure that other Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding also aimed at improving fish passage is implemented in a coordinated fashion.

Funding through the NFPP represents a critical investment opportunity to protect Tribal resources, improve Tribal relations, and uphold the Service's Tribal trust responsibility. The NFPP is a voluntary, non-regulatory program that provides technical and financial assistance to Federal, State, local, Tribal, and private partners to implement cooperative and environmentally sound fish passage projects that benefit Federal trust species. Tribes aiming to implement fish passage projects in collaboration with the Service will be eligible for funding made available to the NFPP through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

In addition to our work with a variety of partners on individual projects, we intend to work with other State and Federal agencies (e.g. NOAA Fisheries, Federal Highway Administration) to ensure that other Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding also aimed at improving fish passage is implemented in a coordinated fashion.

Projects for FY 2023 will be submitted in January 2023 with project selection occurring in the spring of that year.