

# RESOURCE PROTECTION



*We can be stewards of the land...we can put policies in place that will benefit the environment, and at the same time, benefit people. And that is really important.*

*President George W. Bush, August 22, 2002*

The Department of the Interior manages 507 million acres, one-fifth of the Nation's land. Among its central responsibilities is the protection of the Nation's natural and cultural resources. Successful conservation requires a partnership between the American people and their governments.

## RESOURCE PROTECTION MISSION

**Protect public and environmental health by protecting, preserving, and restoring the Nation's cultural and natural resources.**

The Interior Department is building those partnerships through Secretary Norton's vision of the Four C's: consultation, cooperation, and communication in service of conservation. Partnering with States, Tribes, local governments, private groups, and citizens, the Department can fulfill its conservation mission. Through these partnerships, Interior Department seeks to foster a Nation of citizen stewards and create a climate of environmental innovation. The Department also seeks common ground by supplementing our scientific knowledge with local, place-based information and ideas about how to address complex issues.

The 2004 President's budget request reflects this vision of partnerships and cooperative problem-solving. The budget proposes \$2.6 billion for resource protection, including new investments to improve the health of landscapes, sustain biological communities, and protect natural and cultural resources. Major budget initiatives include:

- The Cooperative Conservation Initiative addresses the tremendous untapped potential realized through cooperative conservation efforts. The budget includes \$113.2 million to continue this initiative.
- The Private Stewardship grants and the Landowner Incentive program recognizes continuing opportunities for conservation of endangered and threatened species through partnerships with private landowners. The budget request includes \$50.0 million for Private Stewardship grants and the Landowner Incentive program.
- Continued efforts will advance the President's commitment to taking better care of our Nation's parks, enhancing both resource protection and recreational enjoyment. As one part of this effort, the budget includes an increase of \$17.2 million for preventive maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of park facilities.

- The centennial anniversary of the national wildlife refuge system on March 14, 2003 marks a milestone in the history of wildlife conservation in America. The budget request includes an increase of \$25.5 million to improve resource protection on refuges.
- The influx of invasive species on public lands has significant impacts on the U.S. economy. The budget includes an increase of \$9.0 million to enhance efforts to sustain biological communities on Federal lands, including invasive species prevention, early detection and rapid response, and control and management.

*If we challenge the American people, we will create a new generation of citizen conservationists, people who know the land, love the land, and take care of the land in the greatest tradition of our Nation. Working together, we will get the job done.*

*Secretary Gale A. Norton, February 20, 2002*

## CHALLENGING A NEW GENERATION OF CITIZEN CONSERVATIONISTS

The Interior budget reflects Secretary Norton’s appeal to citizen conservationists through a strong commitment to a second year of the Cooperative Conservation Initiative. That initiative emphasizes building partnerships for the conservation of natural resources and provides expanded opportunities for land managers to work with landowners and others to participate in creative conservation partnerships.

Nature knows no jurisdictional boundaries. Through partnerships, Interior’s land managers can work with landowners and other citizen stewards to tackle invasive species, reduce erosion along stream banks, or enhance habitat for threatened and endangered species. Through partnerships, Interior can build the new environmentalism called for by President Bush. The CCI is a cornerstone of this vision.

Interior has a long history of working cooperatively with others to achieve its conservation mission. Yet the resources available to land managers to foster innovation and creative, collaborative conservation pale in comparison to the demand.

Revised from last year’s proposal, the initiative builds on existing conservation partnership programs that have successfully established productive relationships with local communities and citizens. Included within CCI are the existing challenge cost share programs of the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service, as well as FWS’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, Coastal program, and Migratory Bird Joint Ventures. This initiative also includes funds for a program of volunteers that will increase public awareness of and appreciation for, natural and cultural resource protection. The NPS Land and Water Conservation Fund State grants program is not included within CCI as it was in 2003.

**Challenge Cost Share** – Nearly half of CCI will be implemented through the challenge cost share programs of the three land management agencies – BLM, FWS, and NPS. A total of \$34.1 million in increases above the 2002 enacted level will be dedicated to projects that focus on CCI natural resource restoration. These projects require a one-to-one match or better, thereby at least doubling the impact of Federal dollars. The remaining \$19.8 million continues the funding of traditional projects that focus on recre-

### PROTECTION GOALS

**Improve health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources**

**Sustain biological communities**

**Protect cultural and heritage resources**

In Alaska the Partners program will work with the Chickaloon Village to restore fish passage within the Moose Creek watershed. Moose Creek, a tributary to the Matanuska River, was once the historic fishing grounds for the Chickaloon Tribe. Prior to World War II, a railroad



constructed Moose Creek Valley spur to access coal mines in the area. During track construction, natural meanders were eliminated, and the creek was “relocated” in various places. One of these “relocations” created a 12-foot waterfall that has completely blocked the ability of native salmon to migrate upstream. According to tribal elders, all five species of Pacific salmon once inhabited the watershed. The Partners program, working with the Tribe, will relocate the stream back to its original channel and original meanders, to provide salmon access to approximately 25 miles of spawning and rearing habitat.

ation and resource protection. Demand for cost shared programs on Federal lands is high. Over 900 project proposals were submitted by BLM State field offices for cooperative initiatives.

**Partners for Fish and Wildlife** – In 1987, FWS began a voluntary partnership program with landowners interested in restoring wetlands and other wildlife habitats on their lands. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners through voluntary cooperative agreements.

State resource agencies work closely with FWS to help establish priorities and identify focus areas emphasizing the restoration of degraded wetlands, native grasslands, streams, riparian areas, and other habitats. Through the program, FWS works with private landowners for the mutual benefit of declining Federal trust species and the interests of the landowners involved. Usually, a dollar-for-dollar cost share is achieved by work-

ing with landowners and a host of national and local entities. Landowners sign an agreement to retain the restoration projects for the life of the agreement which is at least 10 years.

The 2004 budget includes an increase of \$9.1 million for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, the largest ever provided to this program. This increase recognizes the success of the program in achieving its program goals, as highlighted during the Administration’s performance assessment rating. With the \$9.1 million increase, the FWS will partner with 2,500 additional landowners on the program’s waiting list. These new partnerships will restore an additional 19,298 acres of wetlands; 83,601 acres of native grasslands, forests, and other uplands; and 241 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat over 2003 levels.

**PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE RESTORATION  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 1987 – 2002**

- 639,560 acres of wetlands
- 1,069,660 acres of prairie, native grassland, and other uplands
- 4,740 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat
- 28,725 landowner agreements

**Migratory Bird Joint Ventures** – Through Joint Ventures, self-directed partnerships involving Federal and local governments, States and Tribes, corpora-



**COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE**  
(dollars in thousands)

BLM	
Challenge Cost Share .....	20,973
FWS	
Refuge Challenge Cost Share .....	11,876
Partners for Fish and Wildlife .....	38,378
Coastal Programs .....	9,639
Migratory Bird Joint Venture .....	10,355
NPS	
Challenge Cost Share .....	20,980
Public Lands Volunteers .....	<u>1,000</u>
Total .....	113,201

Joint Ventures by 40 percent, from \$7.4 million to \$10.4 million.

**Coastal Program** – The budget includes \$9.6 million for the Coastal program, the same as 2003, maintaining this key partnership program. The Coastal program conserves healthy coastal ecosystems for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and people, through cooperative partnerships that identify, restore, and protect habitat in 16 high-priority coastal areas.

**Public Lands Volunteers** – In 1985, President Reagan instituted Take Pride in America, a grassroots program designed to rally citizen commitment of time and service to restoring resources in local communities. The impact of this initiative,

tions, and a wide range of conservation organizations, partners contribute to the recovery of declining bird populations. Joint Ventures partners have protected, restored, or enhanced more than five million acres of wetlands, grasslands, forests, and riparian habitats in the U.S.

Joint Ventures, originally formed to implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, have broadened to partner in other bird conservation initiatives, such as Partners in Flight, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. Most project funds are raised by partners who often use grants from the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund to leverage non-Federal dollars. This successful model for achieving migratory bird conservation goals through cooperation and consultation with partners and coordinated project implementation has increased the interest and number of potential partnerships for important habitat conservation projects.

The FWS provides financial assistance to 12 habitat and three species joint ventures for base operations, including planning, communication and outreach, and monitoring and evaluation. This budget increases support for



teaming up public and private partners, was felt nationwide. Volunteers donated over 10 million hours at an estimated value of \$140 million. The

**COASTAL PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 1994 – 2002**

- Restored 89,107 acres of coastal wetlands
- Restored 24,076 acres of coastal upland habitat
- Protected over 1,132,724 acres through conservation easements
- Restored 912 miles of coastal riparian habitat
- Reopened 3,608 miles of coastal streams for anadromous fish passage

2004 budget creates new capacity for volunteers to participate in enhancing public land management across America. This commitment responds to the President's call for a reinvigorated public service campaign to tackle continuing threats to America's resources and widen volunteer opportu-



## WILDLAND FIRE

The Department of the Interior's Wildland Fire Management program focuses on improving the effectiveness of our fire fighting capability, protecting lives and property, and reducing the risk of catastrophic fires through active forest and rangeland management. The 2004 budget proposal includes \$698.7 million for the fire program, an increase of \$45.0 million over the 2003 request. A total of \$24.5 million supports the resource protection mission goal of improving the health of the land through the rehabilitation of severely burned areas to fire-adapted conditions. The 2004 budget request includes an increase of \$4.5 million for the Fire program's burned-area rehabilitation activities. A more comprehensive discussion of the fire program is included under the "Serving Communities" mission goal.

nities for those who want to lend a hand to protect natural and cultural resources.

In the 2004 budget, the Department is requesting \$1.0 million in funding as seed money to increase public awareness about our volunteerism campaign and encourage financing through private donations and in-kind efforts to foster resource restoration and conservation programs and activities. Our expanded volunteer program can help address and correct many problems that beset the Nation's recreational, historical, and cultural resources.

**Landowner Incentive Program** – The 2004 budget includes \$40.0 million for these competitive matching grants to States, Territories, and Tribes to create, supplement, or expand upon programs to protect and manage habitats on private lands that benefit listed species or species at risk. Interest in the State portion of the program is high, with over 80 grant requests totaling \$61.0 million for the program's first year.

**Private Stewardship Grants Program** – Another Presidential initiative, this program provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in local, private, and voluntary conservation efforts that benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate spe-

cies, or other at-risk species. Typical projects may include managing non-native, competing species; implementing measures to minimize risk from disease; restoring streams that support imperiled species; or planting native vegetation to restore a rare plant community.

**North American Wetlands Conservation Fund** – This successful partnership program, supports wetlands and migratory bird conservation activities by providing matching grants to private landowners, States, non-governmental conservation organizations, Tribes, trusts, corporations, and other Federal agencies for acquisition, restoration, and enhancement of wetland habitat. The 2004 budget includes \$49.6 million for NAWCF, an increase of \$6.0 million over the 2003 request.

## SUSTAINING BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

An integrated initiative for resource protection will expand the biological capability in national parks, improve the conservation and restoration of inter-jurisdictional fishery resources, and strengthen BLM resource protection capabilities.

**Fisheries** – The Nation's fish and other aquatic resources are among the richest and most diverse in the world. These resources provide ecological, social, and economic benefits. Aquatic resources are declining at alarming rates. Loss of habitat and encroachment of invasive species are the two most significant threats to the diversity of aquatic systems. One-third of the Nation's freshwater fish species are threatened or endangered, 72 percent of freshwater mussels are imperiled, and the num-



ber of threatened and endangered species has tripled in the last 20 years.

The FWS fisheries program has played a vital role in conserving and managing fish and other aquatic resources since 1871. Today, the fisheries program is a critical partner with States, Tribes, and others in an effort to better conserve and manage fish and other aquatic resources. The FWS has worked with its partners over the last two years to refocus the fisheries program and develop a strategic vision for the future.

The 2004 budget provides an \$8.0 million increase for operations and maintenance of the national fish hatchery system and a \$1.0 million increase to support inter-departmental efforts to combat aquatic nuisance species. The fish hatchery system increase responds to the program's progress in developing its strategic vision and performance measures for gauging success, as highlighted during the Administration's PART review. The fish hatchery system, through its hatcheries and fish health and technology centers, has vast experience culturing more than 100 aquatic species, including fish, mussels, plants, amphibians, and invertebrates. By sharing capabilities and facilities with States and partners, biologists can lead or participate in cooperative programs related to fish health, nutrition, and water use technology.

**Natural Resource Challenge** – The NPS has initiated the Natural Resource Challenge to help park managers protect natural resources while ensuring that natural resources are available to the public for recreational enjoyment well into the future. This program is an integral component of President Bush's ongoing commitment to improving natural resource management in parks.

## RESTORING COASTER BROOK TROUT IN THE GREAT LAKES

Coaster brook trout, historically widespread and abundant in the near-shore waters of Lake Superior and portions of Lakes Michigan and Huron, have declined to only a few wild source populations.

The Fish and Wildlife Service works with its partners to implement the brook trout rehabilitation plan for Lake Superior. Developed in 1999 in cooperation with the National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ontario, and six Tribes, the plan calls for:

- Rehabilitating degraded stream habitats;
- Controlling fisheries to prevent over exploitation;
- Identifying suitable rehabilitation sites; and
- Reintroducing genetically appropriate strains to historically important habitats.

In 2004, the FWS will accelerate restoration of coaster brook trout in the upper Great Lakes. The Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin will utilize its isolation facility to develop disease-free brood stocks, and the Iron River National Fish Hatchery also in Wisconsin will develop two genetic strains and produce coaster brook trout for interagency reintroduction programs.



The Natural Resource Challenge seeks to provide expanded partnerships while also improving natural resource management by strengthening the scientific base of knowledge about plants, animals, ecosystems, and their inter-relationships. This scientific base of knowledge creates a framework for measuring performance based on how well natural conditions are preserved in parks.



*Fisheries programs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are about far more than just fish. They are about clean water, good habitat, protecting native species, battling invasive species and disease, tracking fish health, and working to keep endangered aquatic species off the endangered species list. They are also about economics and jobs. Recreational anglers and angling generate more than \$35 billion in spending each year and leave a big imprint on our national economy.*

*Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steven A. Williams, August 19, 2002*

The Natural Resource Challenge makes possible performance-based management practices. Funding for the Natural Resource Challenge is primarily allocated through a competitive process. Proposals are peer reviewed, ensuring that only high-priority, well-planned projects receive funding. Approved study plans are required before funds are released, and progress and completion reports are required after a project is initiated.

Program initiatives critical to the continued success of the Natural Resource Challenge include vital signs monitoring and water quality monitoring. Vital signs monitoring tracks measurable features of the environment that indicate the health of park ecosystems, as well as individual plant and animal species. Water quality monitoring, a key component of vital signs monitoring, documents water conditions to preserve pristine park waters and improve impaired park waters. The 2004 request includes a total of \$76.1 million for the Natural Resource Challenge, an increase of \$8.5 million over 2003. The Park Service is allocating \$7.9 million of this total increase to vital signs monitoring and \$600,000 to fund the third year of the water quality monitoring program. Cumulative increases in Natural Resource Challenge funding will total \$104.5 million over three years, based on increases provided over the 2001 level.

**Resource Protection** – The 2004 budget request includes an increase of \$3.3 million to strengthen BLM resource protection capabilities. The proposed increases, spread among BLM's numerous resource inventory, monitoring, and restoration

programs, will help the bureau protect and restore vital natural and cultural resources.

Of the total increase, \$2.3 million will support a number of on-the-ground protection and restoration projects. For example, BLM will direct \$500,000 to eradicate and control tamarisk in the Southwest; \$350,000 to accelerate implementation of species recovery plans and conservation strategies; \$300,000 to restore additional miles and acres of stream and wetland habitat; and \$800,000 for resource protection and restoration in

the National Landscape Conservation System. The BLM will use the remaining \$1.0 million to conduct long-term, large-scale, "cumulative effects" resource monitoring. This type of monitoring will help determine if management changes are needed to reach land use plan objectives.

## A NEW CENTURY OF CONSERVATION ON OUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

Across the Nation, America's wildlife refuges will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the refuge system in 2003. Over 39 million people visit refuges each year. Embarking on its second century, the 540-unit national wildlife refuge system spans 95 million acres across all 50 States, providing sanctuary for 700 species of birds, 200 species of fish,





## NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES – OLD AND NEW

America's commitment to protecting wildlife has continued unabated for a century. Passage of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act in 1929 marked the beginning of an expansive growth period for the national wildlife refuge system. During the 1930's, 16 refuges were established, representing one-third of the total acreage of national wildlife refuges in the Southeast today, including the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi. In the last 10 years of its first century, 58 new units were added to the system, including the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota and Iowa.



The 2004 budget includes new resources to better manage these refuges and to manage new refuges. A project at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge will enhance water-level management in the seasonally flooded bottomland hardwoods of the lower Mississippi River ecosystem. Improved water-level management will provide appropriate habitat for numerous trust species. The 2004 budget includes funding to hire a resource specialist to conduct and coordinate prairie ecology activities for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. These activities will provide improved habitat for wildlife.

220 species of mammals, and 250 reptile and amphibian species. These species include more than 250 threatened and endangered plants and animals, including manatees, the California jewelflower, and Florida panther.

The 2004 budget builds on last year's historic \$56.5 million budget increase for the national wildlife refuge system by requesting a total of \$402.0 million for refuge operations and maintenance, an increase of \$25.5 million over 2003. The increase includes \$16.6 million for high-priority operating needs including funding for recently established or expanded refuges and land research management demonstration sites. The increase recognizes the high costs of operating recently established and expanded refuges by providing a \$5.0 million increase for priority refuge operations at recently established and expanded refuges.

The 2004 budget includes a \$2.0 million increase for refuge comprehensive conservation planning and \$2.0 million for annual maintenance for continued implementation of the new maintenance management system. The 2004 request includes

\$109.1 million for refuge maintenance to continue progress in addressing deferred maintenance.

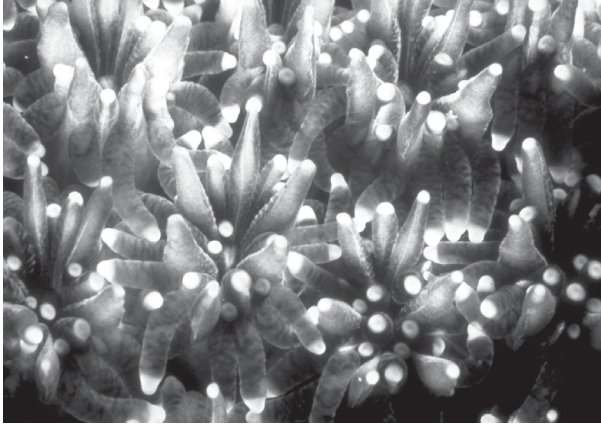
## INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species pose an enormous threat to the ecological and economic health of the Nation, harming native ecosystems and threatened and endangered species. The economic costs associated with invasive species are enormous and increasing. An estimated 5,000 – 6,000 invasive species have become established in the U.S.

Threats posed by the uncontrolled spread of invasive species include native species diversity loss and ecological structure and function alteration. Invasive species eradication is difficult, and in many cases requires traditional approaches as well as molecular, biological, and chemical defenses that have yet to be discovered. Strategies for the early detection of invasive species, spread prediction, and constricting pathways to introduction are important. Monitoring, prevention,

## CORAL REEFS

Coral reefs and associated seagrass and mangrove communities are among the most biologically complex and diverse ecosystems. Although these areas cover less than one percent of the earth's surface, they provide habitat to one-third of all marine fish species, build tropical islands, protect



coasts from waves and storms, are a source of pharmaceuticals, and support tourism and fishing industries worth billions of dollars. However, approximately 27 percent of the world's reefs have been lost due to destructive fishing practices, pollution, shoreline development, climate change, and poor water quality. Without action to reduce or eliminate these impacts, it is estimated that 60 percent of the world's coral reefs could be lost by 2030.

The Coral Reef Task Force was established in 1988 to help strengthen the Federal government's efforts to conserve and sustain these ecosystems. The Task Force is co-chaired by the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce and includes

the heads of eleven Federal agencies, the governors of seven States and Territories, and leaders of the Freely Associated States of Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Interior has responsibility for 3.6 million acres of coral reef habitat at two dozen parks and refuges across the Nation and in the Territories. Interior also conducts pioneering scientific research to determine the structure, function, status, and condition of the Nation's coral reefs.

In 2004, Interior will dedicate a total of \$10.1 million for coral reef protection, continuing its efforts to protect coral reefs. Interior will inventory, map, and assess the condition of coral reef resources; support directed research that will give managers the knowledge and tools they need to protect coral reefs; and implement actions needed for conservation and restoration of these ecosystems.

and control of invasive species all depend on a thorough understanding of their ecology, dispersal mechanisms, and interactions. This information is currently only available for a handful of species that threaten America's grasslands, mountains, forests, and aquatic ecosystems in the Nation's interior and coastal regions, as well as its Territories. Increased public awareness to foster cultural and behavioral changes is essential in combating invasive species problems. Appendix H includes detail information on funding and performance for the invasive species program.

One example is a project at Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Florida's Everglades where the exotic melaleuca tree and the Old World climbing fern have infested thousands of acres of the refuge, out-competing native vegetation and effectively eliminating wildlife-dependent habitat. With effective treat-

ments FWS eliminated melaleuca and other invasives on 18,750 acres at the refuge.

To promote inter-agency coordination and focus resources on the highest priority needs, the National Invasive Species Council, co-chaired by the Secretary of the Interior, developed the first inter-agency example of a performance-based budget. The Council selected topical and geographical focus areas in 2004, and based on common goal statements, strategies, actions, and performance measures, member agencies developed coordinated budget requests for 2004. The Interior Department is developing an inter-agency activity-based costing pilot to track invasive species program effectiveness.

The 2004 budget supports Interior's partnership with Agriculture, NOAA, EPA, and the Army

Corps of Engineers to conduct ballast water monitoring and early detection of invasive species. Interior requests an increase of \$9.0 million for these invasive species efforts.

## EMERGING DISEASES AND SPECIES HEALTH

Each year, across the U.S. disease outbreaks threaten wildlife populations and impact threatened and endangered species recovery programs. Minimizing wildlife losses requires effective technical support and timely intervention. Interior's bureaus are working with other Federal and non-Federal partners to effectively respond to challenges such as those posed by chronic wasting disease and West Nile virus.

Chronic wasting disease, a fatal disease affecting elk and deer and once limited to captive animals and free-ranging animals in Wyoming and Colorado, is now a national issue. The disease has recently been found in wild deer in Wisconsin and New Mexico, and in transported exposed captive elk in numerous States across the country. There is also concern that the disease may continue to spread, as transmission pathways among individuals, across species, and between the environment and animals are not yet defined. Other unknown factors include the nature of the disease, the persistence of the disease outside of the affected animal, and the course the disease takes within the animal. The 2004 budget includes \$2.2 million to increase research on these issues.

The West Nile virus has been reported in 44 States and the District of Columbia. The epidemic has become one of the largest in the Western Hemisphere, with almost 4,000 people, almost 15,000 horses, and more than 14,000 birds infected. In December 2002, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture declared it an endemic disease.

The 2004 budget for the U.S. Geological Survey includes \$500,000 for West Nile virus research. Interior will continue to assist the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and State and Federal agencies in the national West Nile virus surveillance program by conducting viral testing of wildlife specimens, primarily birds, at diagnos-

tic laboratories. To increase the understanding of the epidemic, the Department, in collaboration with these agencies will document the geographic spread of the virus across the U.S., and work with State and Federal natural resource and wildlife agencies to investigate regional wildlife mortality events associated with the West Nile virus.

## MAINTAINING CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

**Park Maintenance Backlog** – The national park system comprising 387 units, incorporates some of the most spectacular natural resources found anywhere on earth. President Bush committed to preserving these natural and cultural treasures for the enjoyment and inspiration of current and future generations. Pointing to an extensive maintenance backlog, the President committed to bringing our park facilities and resources into good condition. Past Federal investments have not kept

<b>NPS MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION FUNDING REQUEST</b>			
(dollars in millions)			
	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>Change</u>
<b>Facility Maintenance ....</b>	341	379	+38
<b>Construction .....</b>	<u>320</u>	<u>327</u>	<u>+7</u>
<b>Subtotal .....</b>	661	706	+45
<b>Recreation Fees .....</b>	75	75	0
<b>Highway Trust Fund for park roads .....</b>	165	300	+135
<b>Total .....</b>	<u>901</u>	<u>1,081</u>	<u>+180</u>

pace with the challenges posed by aging and deteriorating facilities. Nor had the Park Service adequately tracked the condition of its facilities to identify the full scope of maintenance needs.

Building upon the President's commitment to address these maintenance problems, the 2004 budget proposes \$705.8 million for park facility maintenance and construction, maintaining the historically high level commitment in the President's budget over the last two years.



The President's 2004 request also provides critical tools to improve accountability and expedite the completion of maintenance projects. In 2004, for the first time ever, annual condition assessments of all park facilities will be completed. The Program Assessment Rating Tool review of NPS facility management underscored the need for better performance measures. Data collected through the condition assessments process are the basis for performance measures that will be used to evaluate progress in eliminating the deferred maintenance backlog.

The budget includes a \$9.0 million increase for the cyclic maintenance program, to ensure that routine maintenance work occurs in a timely, planned fashion. Through its cyclic maintenance program, the Park Service is creating significant savings by keeping its facilities in good condition, and avoiding the kinds of expensive repairs that result when facilities deteriorate to poor condition.

**Park Roads and Roadways Program** – There are over 5,400 miles of paved roads providing access to or within national parks, recreation areas, historic areas, and other units of the Park Service. A large portion of the maintenance back-

log consists of park roads and bridges that deteriorated during years when funds were insufficient to maintain those facilities adequately. The President's commitment to bring roads and bridges as well as facilities to good condition is particularly important given the role automobile travel plays in visitation to and within the national parks.

In 2004 and beyond, the budget builds on progress made to improve road and bridge conditions through funding from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. As the authorization for TEA-21 expires at the end of 2003, the President's budget proposes a dramatic increase in funding for park roads through the successor to TEA-21,



from the funding of \$165.0 million per year to \$300.0 million in 2004, \$310.0 million in 2005, and \$320.0 million per year for the remainder of the lifetime of the legislation. The NPS has in place the necessary management tools to track the condition of its roads and is working

with the Federal Highway Administration on best management practices to ensure the optimal use of funding.

## EVERGLADES RESTORATION

The South Florida Everglades ecosystem is an 18,000 square-mile network of land and water extending from the Chain of Lakes south of Orlando to the coral reefs off the Florida Keys. The ecosystem hosts a wide array of upland, lowland, and marine habitats that support thousands of species of plants and animals, including numerous threatened and endangered species.

Flood control, water supply systems, agriculture, and development have disrupted the region's natural hydrological patterns. Half of the original Everglades ecosystem has been drained.

As stewards for about one-half of the remaining Everglades ecosystem, the Interior Department is a major partner in Everglades restoration. The Department is building partnerships to implement the restoration program, including:

- Forming an advisory committee for public input to Interior land managers in South Florida on a wide range of Everglades restoration issues;
- Providing scientific expertise to the State and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to meet the objectives in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan; and
- Ensuring that appropriate quantities of clean water are distributed at the right times and in the right places to restore the unique Everglades ecosystem.



The Department is also focusing on maintaining and improving its stewardship responsibilities in the

Everglades. In 2004, the President's budget includes \$111.8 million for Interior's Everglades restoration activities, an increase of \$15.7 million above the 2003 request. This includes \$40.0 million to protect the Big Cypress National Preserve by acquiring the Collier family's oil and gas holdings, and will acquire 250 acres at the National Key Deer Refuge and seven acres at the Key West Refuge for a total of \$2.0 million.