



# Resource Protection

*We need to reach out to harness innovation and enthusiasm. We need to tap into American ingenuity and the community spirit to care for our land, water, air, and wildlife.*

*Secretary Gale A. Norton, December 12, 2003*

The Department of the Interior is the Nation's premier Federal conservation agency, overseeing 507 million acres, one-fifth of America's land. Since its creation in 1849, the Department has evolved from serving as a general custodian for the Federal government to its role as preeminent steward of the Nation's natural and cultural resources. As the resources under Interior's purview become more complex, so too do the accompanying management issues pertaining to the conservation of these natural and cultural resources.

## RESOURCE PROTECTION MISSION

**Protect the Nation's natural, cultural, and heritage resources**

The Department administers resource protection programs on thousands of upland, wetland, and aquatic parcels within its direct jurisdiction, while providing multifaceted resources for conservation activities on non-Federal lands as well. It protects thousands of native plant and animal species, including more than 1,200 with special status under the Endangered Species Act. In addition, Interior is a guardian of the Nation's cultural heritage, with assets ranging from Native American archeological and cultural sites to national icons such as the Statue of Liberty and the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial.

The Department fulfills its resource protection mandate through dynamic partnerships with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, as well as with engaged citizens who help leverage available public resources.

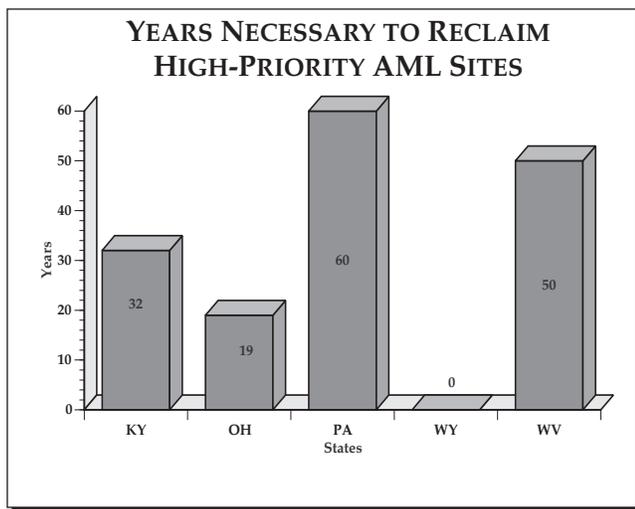
The 2005 President's budget is \$2.9 billion for resource protection. Major budget initiatives include:

- Revamping Abandoned Mine Land grants to better address serious resource and life-threatening hazards resulting from abandoned mine lands.
- Leveraging private resources through the Cooperative Conservation Initiative.
- Maintaining the President's commitment to address the deferred maintenance backlog in parks.
- Continuing the National Park Service's Natural Resource Challenge and creating a comprehensive resource monitoring program in the Bureau of Land Management to develop sustainability indicators, conduct condition assessments to establish baseline conditions, and monitor these indicators regularly.

- Increasing the Landowner Incentive Program to provide competitive matching grants to private landowners who are protecting and restoring habitat for threatened species.
- Supporting the protection of endangered species by providing a programmatic increase of \$5.0 million for the listing program.
- Increasing support for the Department's interagency efforts to curtail invasive species and create and maintain desirable habitat for biological communities to flourish.

## RECLAIMING ABANDONED COAL MINES

The 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act established the Office of Surface Mining and authorized the office to collect fees to finance reclamation of abandoned mine lands. Through the AML program, problems at many high-priority sites have been addressed. However, when AML coal user fee collection authority expires in September 2004, more than \$3 billion in significant health and safety problems will still remain, along with another \$3.6 billion of other high priority problems affecting the general welfare of individuals living in coalfield areas. These are not merely "ugly landscapes" that need to be cleaned up; these are serious health and safety hazards. A recent study conducted by OSM found that 3.5 million Americans live less than one mile from health and safety hazards created by abandoned coal mines.



There is a fundamental imbalance between the goals established by the 1977 Act and the requirements for allocating funds under the Act. The statutory allocation formula limits the ability of the AML program to meet its primary objective of abating AML problems on a priority basis. The majority



of grant funding, or 71 percent, is distributed to States on the basis of current production. Yet there is no relationship between current production and



the magnitude of the AML problem in each State. As a result, some States have completed reclamation on all of the abandoned coal mine sites or are working on low-priority sites, while others are still decades away from completing reclamation of the most critical high-priority sites.

*While there are no easy answers, I believe that we can find common ground that will result in an efficient and effective program that refocuses reclamation towards the highest priority work, yet honors the commitments and obligations under SMCRA.*

*Office of Surface Mining Director Jeff Jarrett, July 24, 2003*

Interwoven with the allocation issue is the need to address States and Indian Tribes that have been certified as having completed the reclamation of coal mining related AML sites. Unappropriated balances in the AML fund that would be available under the 1977 Act to certified States and Tribes are expected to reach about \$530 million by the end of September 2004.

An Administration legislative proposal accompanying the 2005 budget will correct the fundamental imbalance in the current law. The reauthorization proposal will direct resources to sites where the danger is greatest, with 80 percent of grants allocated solely on a historic production basis. The reauthorization proposal would provide sufficient funding to eliminate significant health and safety problems within 25 years, removing 142,000 people from risk annually. States and Tribes having certified as to the completion of all high priority projects will not receive additional allocations under the proposal, but will receive unappropriated balances due them on an expedited basis, over a ten-year period, at a rate of \$53.0 million per year.

The budget supports the reauthorization proposal, providing \$149.6 million in the AML fund to continue reclamation activities and \$53.0 million for the first payment of unappropriated balances to the certified States and Tribes.

AML ACCOMPLISHMENTS		
	Current	Legislative Proposal
Acres Reclaimed	6,900	8,200
People Removed from Risk Annually	76,00	140,000
Years to eliminate existing health and safety problem	47	25
Corrects Allocation Problem	No	Yes

## LANDSCAPE AND WATERSHED RESTORATION

The Department is committed to working in partnership with others to reach landscape and watershed restoration goals. The 2005 budget emphasizes environmental innovations, supplementing scientific knowledge with local, place-based information and ideas about how to address complex issues. Working on a landscape scale to resolve issues and leverage Federal funds with a broad array of States, local governments, watershed groups, and private citizens, the Department is protecting and restoring habitats and improving the quality of life for local communities. For example, funding is requested to invest in these efforts in the Klamath River basin, the High Plains region, the Everglades, and across the Nation.

### KLAMATH RESTORATION

This landscape scale approach is exemplified by the efforts taking place in the Klamath River basin where farmers, local communities, and Tribes are working collaboratively to achieve results. The President created the Klamath basin working group in March 2002 to provide advice "on immediate steps and long-term solutions to enhance water quality and quantity and to address other complex issues." This group and others are working in an ongoing cooperative effort involving numerous Federal, State and local agencies, tribal governments, public organizations, and individuals to restore the Klamath basin ecosystem while fostering economic vitality.

The 2005 budget request includes \$67.2 million for the Klamath River basin restoration initiative. This is an increase of \$17.5 million and, with funds available in 2004, will be used to restore streams and wetlands in the upstream and downstream reaches of the Klamath River and its tributaries. Projects include removing Chiloquin dam, which impedes passage of endangered suckers and other fish to spawning habitat on the Sprague River and



acquiring land adjacent to Agency Lake Ranch for increased water storage and restoration to increase fisheries habitat. The funding will also support water banking, water supply enhancement, and water quality improvement.

The \$6.2 million increase in the FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife program will support an ongoing cooperative watershed restoration effort among Federal, State and local agencies, tribal governments, public organizations, and individuals. The Partners cooperative effort emphasizes on-the-ground activities including erecting fences to control cattle grazing, excavating swales to re-connect oxbows to the river, planting native trees and shrubs for shade and stream bank stabilization. These projects directly restore habitats for the federally endangered Lost River and shortnose suckers, and the sensitive redband trout.

The 2005 funding increase will enhance FWS's ability to restore high priority habitats while working with stakeholders to resolve natural resource issues. Through partnership agreements, the

	2004	2005
BOR .....	29.8	32.4
USGS .....	1.0	3.7
FWS .....	6.0	17.0
NPS .....	0.3	0.3
BIA .....	5.4	6.6
BLM .....	<u>7.2</u>	<u>7.2</u>
Total .....	49.7	67.2

Partners program will restore 1,555 acres of wetlands and 55 miles of stream and shoreline in the upper Klamath basin. The FWS will also be able to provide additional technical assistance to private landowners, which will result in improved water quality, and could potentially lead to an increase in water quantity as well.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE KLAMATH BASIN WORKING GROUP**

- A proactive Trinity River flow release of 33,000 acre-feet of water in the fall of 2003 to aid salmon migration.
- A commitment to expand the water bank in 2004 and 2005.
- In conjunction with the Klamath Basin Rangeland Trust, a pilot project to test potential water savings and water quality improvement from irrigation reductions and cattle management in the Wood River valley.
- Studies to evaluate options for increasing water storage capacity and installation of fish screens to prevent entrainment.
- Research to improve understanding of the behavior and environmental needs of threatened and endangered species.

#### **BLM WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM**

Approximately 39,000 wild horses and burros roam on the public lands. Current levels of removal and adoption are not keeping pace with the growth in the population. The BLM predicts a unsustainable and unmanageable rise in the population based on current management regimes, creating the potential for ecological imbalance and the degradation of rangeland, forage resources, and wildlife habitat.

To meet its responsibility to manage these resources, the Department needs to make immediate investments to establish appropriate management levels for wild horse and burro populations and implement long-term strategies for more efficient removal, adoption, and habitat management.

## HEALTHY FORESTS

Catastrophic fires pose severe and unprecedented risks to our Nation's forests and rangelands and the communities alongside them. An estimated 190 million acres of Federal forests and rangelands in the United States—an area twice the size of California—face high risk of catastrophic fire. Years of buildup of brush and unnaturally dense tree stands, coupled with drought, insect infestation, and disease have made our forests highly vulnerable to environmentally destructive fires. Many ponderosa pine forests are 15 times denser than they were a century ago. Where 25 to 35 trees once grew per acre, now more than 500 trees are crowded together in unhealthy conditions. As a result, there is an increasing trend of catastrophic forest and rangeland devastation. In 2000, the United States suffered its worst wildland fires in 50 years. The 2002 fire season, among the worst in the last 40 years, saw 88,458 fires burn 6.9 million acres, or an area larger than Maryland and Rhode Island combined.

In 2002, Oregon, Colorado, and Arizona experienced their worst fires in history and in 2003 terrible fires raged through California. On December 3, 2003, President Bush signed into law the bipartisan Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to reduce the threat of catastrophic



wildfires, enhance forest and rangeland health, and encourage public participation in project selection and implementation. This law builds upon the foundations of the Healthy Forests Initiative announced by the President on August 22, 2002.

The 2005 budget provides significant new funding to carry out the Healthy Forests Initiative, providing both protection for natural resources and service to communities adjacent to fire-prone landscapes. The details of the 2005 proposal are discussed in the Serving Communities chapter.

*The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 gives the land management agencies new tools to help protect families and habitat from the enormous risk of devastating wildland fires through a collaborative process.*

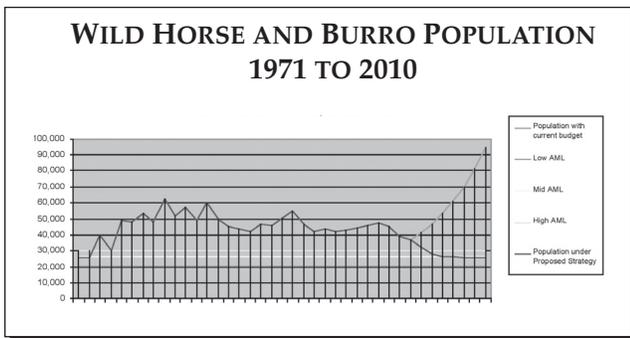
*Secretary Gale A. Norton, November 21, 2003*

Funding would also be used for improved monitoring, population census, and fertility control. Efforts would engage States in habitat and population management activities.

The budget includes an increase of \$12.8 million for the wild horse and burro program to achieve and maintain appropriate management levels and to implement the long-term strategy. Of this increase, \$10.5 million will be offset with decreases to programs that will benefit from achievement of appropriate management levels and with reductions to lower-priority activities. An estimated \$2.3 million will be provided by an amendment to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act to allow use of land sales receipts for wild horse and burro management in Nevada.



Significant progress has been made toward completion of the modified water delivery project. Once completed, this project will improve the timing and quantity of water deliveries to Everglades National Park, restore more natural hydrologic conditions, and provide for flood mitigation. The 2005 budget includes \$8.1 million for work on the project.



The single largest request in Federal land acquisition in the 2005 budget is \$40.0 million to acquire the mineral rights currently owned by the Collier family in the Big Cypress National Preserve. This request signals the Department's continued commitment to prevent new exploration or oil production in the Big Cypress Preserve, which is part of the larger Everglades ecosystem. Although an agreement between the Department and the Collier family for the acquisition of the mineral rights has expired, Interior is prepared to continue to work with the family using the Department's new guidelines and procedures for appraisals for land acquisitions and exchanges.

## EVERGLADES RESTORATION

The south Florida Everglades is a complex ecosystem that 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. Since the early 1900s, 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.

The Department is committed to maintaining and improving its stewardship responsibilities in the Everglades. The 2005 budget request in support of Everglades restoration totals \$105.9 million, a \$36.8 million increase over the 2004 enacted level. With these funds, NPS, FWS, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and U.S. Geological Survey will continue efforts to preserve and improve natural habitat; protect and recover endangered and threatened species; support tribal partners; and obtain the best available science to guide decisionmaking.

## NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT AND RESTORATION

The Department's Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program seeks recoveries from responsible parties to restore natural resources that have been damaged by releases of hazardous substances or oil. The 2005 budget request includes \$371,000 that will enable the Department to accelerate restoration of injured trust resources using \$250 million that has been recovered from past releases of oil or hazardous substances. The proposed increase of \$124,000 will be used for essential restoration support services such as contracting, realty, project management, and partnership coordination. The program will focus on projects with strong ties to restoration opportunities in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration, Army Corps of Engineers, other Federal and State agencies, and non-governmental partners. Achievement of Restoration program goals depends upon partnerships developed with tribal, State, and other Federal co-trustees, as well as with non-governmental conservation organizations and industry. Every damage assessment and



restoration case is conducted in partnership with co-trustees and all restoration plans must undergo public review and be approved by affected State and tribal governments.

## COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

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, the Department is building the new environmentalism called for by President Bush. The Department's Cooperative Conservation Initiative is a cornerstone of this vision.

The Department's 2005 proposal expands opportunities for conservation partnerships with citizens, organizations, and communities throughout the Nation. The budget includes \$507.3 million for cooperative conservation programs, including \$129.5 million for the Cooperative Conservation Initiative. This initiative leverages funds with private citizens, States, Tribes, communities, and businesses to protect and restore habitats, wildlife, and plants through our cooperative conservation programs. The initiative builds on existing conservation partnership programs that have successfully established productive relationships with local communities and citizens. The request reflects a total increase of \$25.5 million above the 2004 enacted level in seven programs: BLM, FWS, and NPS challenge cost share; FWS coastal program; FWS Migratory Bird Joint Ventures; FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife; and Take Pride in America, a public lands volunteer program.

The Interior Department has a long history of working cooperatively with others to achieve its conservation mission. Yet the resources available to land managers to foster innovative and collaborative conservation have historically fallen short of the demand.

### CHALLENGE COST SHARE

Nationwide, CCI funds a wide variety of projects including restoring wetland prairie habitat in Oregon, building water catchments for endangered species in New Mexico, and restoring forested wetlands damaged by a tornado in Maryland. Over 40 percent, or \$54.0 million, of CCI funding will be directed to the challenge cost share programs in BLM, FWS, and NPS.

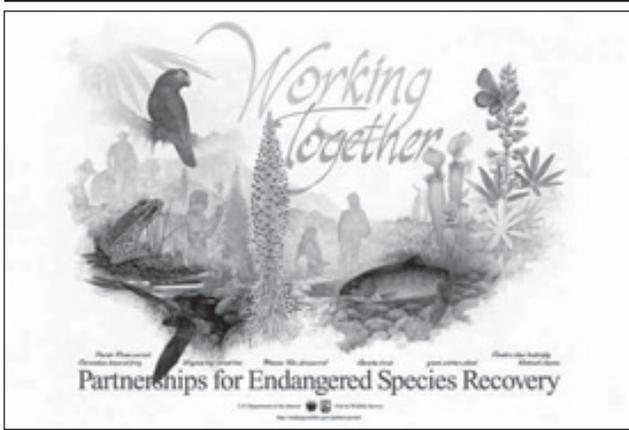
The 2005 President's budget proposes \$29.6 million for the resource restoration portion of the challenge cost share program, an increase of \$8.5 million over the 2004 level. This program provides funding for natural resource restoration and species protection. Dynamic partnerships with individuals, Tribes,

*Through the Cooperative Conservation Initiative, the Department of the Interior will support local partnerships that conserve open spaces. CCI expands the President's commitment to conservation through partnership, civic involvement, and economic incentives.*

*First Lady Laura Bush, March 3, 2003*

*Citizen-stewards often are our most effective conservationists. President Bush's goal—and our goal at the Interior Department—is to empower these citizens to do what the government cannot do alone.*

*Secretary Gale A. Norton, September 16, 2003*



State and local governments, non-profit organizations, and others support an array of projects that restore damaged habitats and lands and achieve the conservation goals of the Department's land management agencies. Projects require a one-to-one match or better, thereby at least doubling the impact of Federal dollars. This program is complemented by the \$24.4 million request for the bureau traditional challenge cost share programs that focus on cultural, recreation, and resource protection.

In 2003, the conservation challenge cost share program funded 256 projects with more than 700 partners in 40 States and Puerto Rico. The ratio of matching non-Federal funds to Federal funds was nearly two-to-one, with the Federal portion at \$12.9 million and total funding at \$36.0 million.

COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE (dollars in millions)	
BLM	
Challenge Cost Share.....	21.0
FWS	
Refuge Challenge Cost Share .....	12.0
Partners for Fish and Wildlife .....	50.0
Coastal Programs .....	13.1
Migratory Bird Joint Venture.....	11.4
NPS	
Challenge Cost Share.....	21.0
Take Pride in America .....	1.0
Total.....	129.5

### PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE

Through the Partners program, FWS has successfully established productive relationships with

communities and over 30,000 landowners, providing financial and technical assistance and restoration expertise to private landowners, Tribes, and other conservation partners. The program works with private landowners in mutually beneficial partnerships that help protect declining Federal trust species.

State resource agencies work closely with FWS to help establish priorities and identify focus areas. These partnerships emphasize restoration of degraded wetlands, native grasslands, streams, riparian areas, and other habitats to conditions that mimic natural ecosystems as closely as possible. Usually, a dollar-for-dollar cost share is achieved by working with landowners and other Federal, State, local, and private organizations.

The 2005 budget is \$50.0 million for the Partners program, including an increase of \$5.0 million for the new High Plains partnership and an increase of \$6.2 million for ongoing upper Klamath River basin watersheds restoration.

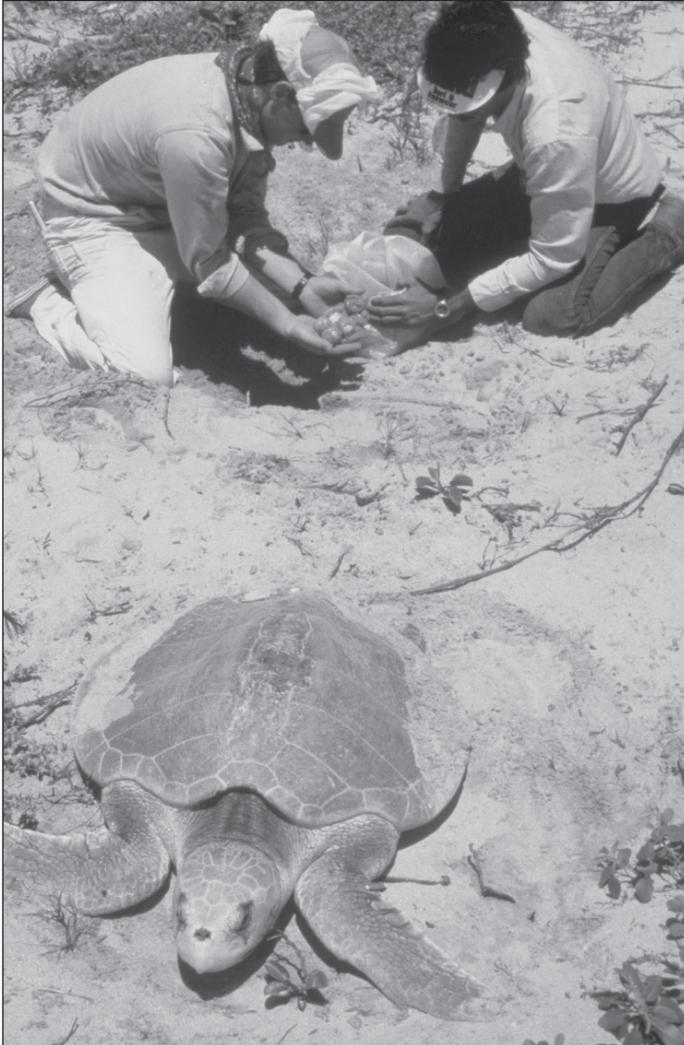
### HIGH PLAINS PARTNERSHIP

Since more than 90 percent of the High Plains region is privately owned, public/private partnerships are essential to meet the shared goals of conserving declining and at-risk species, while preserving and maintaining working landscapes on private lands. The High Plains partnership is a public/private initiative across the 11-State High Plains region to conserve declining species and habitats on private lands. In the spirit of the Secretary's Four C's, this partnership is a cooperative effort among FWS, State fish and wildlife agencies, several agencies within the Department of Agriculture, private conservation organizations, and private landowners.

The Partners program will leverage the \$5.0 million High Plains increase and in cooperation with landowners and other partners focus conservation efforts on restoring, enhancing, and protecting two million acres over the next ten years. In 2005, Partners program biologists will restore approximately 34,000 additional acres of uplands, 1,000 acres of wetlands, and 1,000 acres of riparian habitat within the High Plains region. Working with other agencies and private organizations, FWS will enroll approximately 50,000 acres into conservation agreements in 2005. Ultimately, this program will reduce the potential for listing candidate species, assist in recovering or downlisting

## CCI SUCCESS STORIES

The city of Eugene, Oregon matched BLM's \$150,000 in Cooperative Conservation funds with \$525,000 that is used to restore the Willow Corner historic wetland and upland prairie habitat. Willow Corner is owned by the city, is in a BLM conservation easement, and contains the largest known populations of the Fenders' blue butterfly and its host plant the Kincaid's lupine, both federally listed species. The project activities will remove fill from 8.9 acres of historic prairie wetlands, grade it to its natural levels, and plant the area with native seeds. This restored habitat also will benefit a variety of wildlife species including neotropical migratory birds, the camas pocket gopher, the gray-tailed vole, the chorus frog, and the western pond turtle.



The recently acquired 160 acre Wilgoose tract on the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in New York provides an opportunity for restoration of early successional grassland habitat through a partnership between FWS, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex. The partners matched FWS's \$35,000 Cooperative Conservation project funds on a one-to-one basis, providing a total of \$70,000 to improve vegetation height diversity, density, and species composition to provide enhanced habitat conditions for several species of grassland nesting birds. Nearly two miles of brush and tree hedgerows were removed this past summer to increase the overall size of the restored contiguous grasslands. Then the ground was prepared, through plowing and discing, for late spring 2004 planting of six warm-season grass and several native forb species. This will benefit many grassland wildlife species on the New York State list of endangered, threatened, and special concern species including the short-eared owl, the northern harrier, the sedge wren, and Henslow's sparrow.

The NPS partnered in a CCI project to restore the endangered Kemp's Ridley and other sea turtles at the Padre Island National Seashore in Texas. Partners including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Shell Oil Company, USGS, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Unilever, H.E.B., National Park Foundation, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Western National Parks Association, Alvin and Lucy Owsley Foundation, Help Endangered Animals, Ridley Turtles and Norcross Wildlife Foundation, College of Charleston, and volunteers cost-shared this \$489,000 project on a one-to-one ratio. The project resulted in the release of 1,299 endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtle hatchlings at the most important nesting beach in the United States.



species, and preclude the need to list grassland species in decline.

### **FWS COASTAL PROGRAM**

The Coastal program leads FWS conservation efforts in bays, estuaries, and watersheds around the U.S. coastline. Through this program, FWS and its partners work to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats to support healthy coastal ecosystems by:

- Providing assessment and planning tools to identify priority habitats that should be protected and restored.
- Conserving coastal habitats through voluntary conservation easements and locally initiated land acquisition.
- Restoring degraded coastal wetland, upland, and stream habitats by working with partners to implement on-the-ground projects.
- Focusing resources through conservation alliances that leverage financial and technical resources and multiply the impact of the taxpayer's dollar.

On average, the Coastal program leverages Federal funding at a rate of 4:1. The 2005 budget includes \$13.1 million for the Coastal program, a \$2.9 mil-

lion increase above the 2004 level. This increase will enhance the Coastal program's ability to protect and restore high priority coastal habitats. Controlling invasive species will be a significant focus of this program in 2005.

### **FWS MIGRATORY BIRD JOINT VENTURES**

The 2005 budget includes \$11.4 million, a \$1.2 million increase, for the Joint Ventures program. This program, originally formed to implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, has broadened to include other conservation partnership initiatives, such as Partners in Flight, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. 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 2005 budget will allow FWS to accelerate operations at 15 existing Joint Ventures and fund the Northern Great Plains and Central Hardwoods Joint Ventures.

### **COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAMS**

In addition to CCI, the Department's cooperative conservation efforts include a number of grant programs that provide expanded opportunities for State, tribal, local, and private partners to participate in the conservation of natural resources.

### **LANDOWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

The Landowner Incentive Program provides 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. In 2004, these cost-share grants will support

*The goal of government must be to empower people to be citizen conservationists while respecting the need to make a living off the land. America's future must include both a healthy environment and a dynamic economy.*

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

*For wildlife conservation to be successful, it must be a partnership between the government and the people. This is especially true with threatened and endangered species, half of which depend on private lands for the majority of their habitat. These Landowner Incentive Program grants will enable states to work with landowners and to defray the costs of habitat improvements for imperiled species on their land.*

*Secretary Gale A. Norton, February 25, 2003*

innovative partnerships in 42 States. For example, the Colorado Division of Wildlife plans to use its LIP funds in 2004 to establish management agreements and seek conservation easements with private landowners to protect and restore Front Range habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, eastern short-grass prairie habitat for the black-tailed prairie dog and several bird species, and the Gunnison basin for the Gunnison sage grouse. The 2005 budget includes \$50.0 million to assist private landowners in conserving and restoring habitat for endangered species and other at-risk plants and animals. This is an increase of \$20.4 million over 2004.

#### **PRIVATE STEWARDSHIP GRANTS**

The Private Stewardship Grants program helps communities and landowners conserve species. The 2005 budget proposes \$10.0 million, a \$2.6 million increase over 2004, for this program. Through this program, FWS provides competitive grants and other assistance to individuals and groups engaged in local, private, and voluntary conservation efforts that benefit federally listed, proposed, candidate, or other at-risk species. A diverse panel of representatives from State and Federal governments, agricultural and private development interests, and the scientific and conservation communities assess and make recommendations regarding the funding for these awards.

Under this program, FWS provided a \$100,000 grant to the Comanche Pool Prairie Resource Foundation to help continue a rancher-led initiative that has successfully enhanced mixed-grass and prairie stream habitat for at-risk species, such

as the black-tailed prairie dog, the lesser prairie chicken, and the federally listed Arkansas River shiner fish and Arkansas darter fish. Participating ranchers will use a variety of resource management tools, such as altered grazing management, prescribed burning, cutting of invasive woody species, and stream restoration to improve habitat for these species.

#### **STATE AND TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS**

The 2005 budget proposes a total of \$80.0 million for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program. This program helps develop and implement State and tribal programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitats, not limited to species that are hunted or fished. It allows States and federally recognized Tribes to focus attention on species with the greatest conservation need based on State or tribal priorities.



This program exemplifies the Secretary's cooperative conservation vision, allowing States and Tribes to tailor their conservation efforts in a manner that best fits local conditions. The \$10.9 million increase in the budget will significantly advance efforts of State and tribal fish and game agencies to address on-the-ground wildlife needs. Based on the high level of interest in this program, FWS expects that this program will have a positive, lasting impact on fish and wildlife, while fostering stronger working relationships between Federal, State, and tribal governments.

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund provides grants to States and Territories to participate in projects to conserve candidate, proposed, and threatened and endangered

species. The 2005 request is described in detail in the Sustaining Biological Communities section.

## MAINTAINING PARKS AND PRESERVING HERITAGE

The National Park Service manages national treasures ranging from the inspiring grandeur of the Grand Canyon to the symbols of America's hope and aspirations represented by the Liberty Bell and other national icons. With a commitment to be stewards of these resources, NPS utilizes innovative approaches to conserve, protect, and restore natural and cultural resources.

### PARK MAINTENANCE BACKLOG

The NPS maintains over 40,000 buildings, roads, water treatment facilities, and other assets in 388 national park units. Past Federal investments have not been systematically linked to the challenges posed by increasing park visitation or aging and deteriorating facilities. The President pledged to bring park facilities and resources into good condition and is committing \$4.9 billion over five years for park facility maintenance and construction.

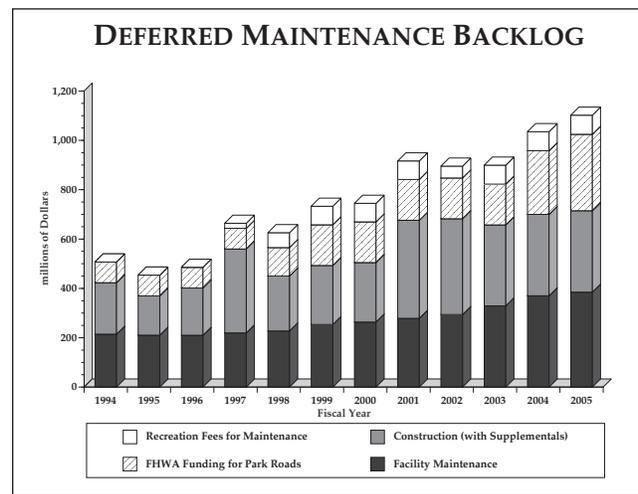
When this funding commitment was made in 2000, NPS had not adequately identified the full scope of its maintenance needs. The NPS has now implemented a management reform process to provide a comprehensive inventory and condition assessment of facilities.

The President's 2005 request continues to provide critical tools to improve accountability and expedite the completion of maintenance projects. The 2005 budget proposes \$724.7 million for park facility maintenance and construction, an increase of \$24.7 million. An increase of \$13.2 million is provided for the repair and rehabilitation program. Utilizing data from annual condition assessments completed for almost all of its regular assets, NPS has developed an estimated baseline facility condition index, an industry standard for quantifying the condition of a structure. The estimated FCI for each asset is the starting point for determining the investment required as well as establishing performance goals to achieve an acceptable condition over time. The baseline provides NPS with a launching point for monitoring and addressing the maintenance backlog. In 2005, \$8.2 million of the funding increase for repair and rehabilitation

is targeted at improving the condition of priority buildings to good condition. This focus will allow NPS to demonstrate the effectiveness of its maintenance program by quickly showing near-term results on a single-asset category. The NPS will monitor improvements in the FCI average as the principal performance measures and indicators in determining the efficacy of NPS regional maintenance programs.



Within the \$13.2 million increase for the repair and rehabilitation program, \$3.0 million focuses on the demolition and removal of hazardous structures. Hazardous structures are not only a safety liability but also a financial drain on NPS and its ability to effectively reduce the maintenance backlog. This increase in demolition funds will enhance the ability of NPS to streamline and reduce its substantial portfolio of physical assets and more effectively direct resources to restoring and rehabilitating structures that better suit the NPS mission.



*Our parks are no different from a home in that they need continual maintenance, and priorities must be established and followed. If your roof is leaking, it is important to fix it before you replace your old carpet with a new one. Parks need the same well-planned approach.*

*Secretary Gale A. Norton, July 2, 2003*

The remaining \$2.0 million increase will extend condition assessments to major assets and equipment such as roofs, exterior closures, heating, ventilation and air condition systems, and mechanical systems. These data will provide the basis for the development of a structured program of preventive and recurring maintenance and component renewal that are designed to maximize the life of the capital asset portfolio, with the aim to prevent the reoccurrence of another large deferred maintenance backlog.

Within the total requested increase of \$24.7 million there is an additional \$10.0 million for park-specific operating increases for buildings and roads in the most critical condition in the national park system. These targeted park increases will assist in ensuring that NPS infrastructure does not fall into further disrepair.

#### **PARK ROADS AND ROADWAYS PROGRAM**

In 2005, it is estimated that nearly 260 million people will visit our Nation's national parks, using over 11,900 miles of paved and unpaved roads. In addition, NPS owns and operates about 600 vehicles such as buses, trams, and shuttles that provide alternative transportation in 90 parks.

The 2005 budget assumes an investment of \$310.0 million for park roads and builds on progress made to improve road conditions. The Administration's proposed reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century would provide \$1.85 billion over six years for the park roads and parkways program. This investment would bring over 80 percent of park roads into good or excellent condition and would leave virtually no road in poor condition.

#### **PRESERVE AMERICA**

As Americans travel, they are choosing to reconnect with existing aspects of our Nation's authentic heritage in their journeys. They, and visitors from abroad, are hungry to learn more about this Nation's heritage, to visit its special places, and

understand the events that took place a year ago, a century before, or a millennium in the past.

On March 4, 2003, President and First Lady Bush announced the Preserve America initiative. This initiative calls for enhancing the Federal government's assistance in protecting and supporting the contemporary use of historic properties. Developed in cooperation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and Department of Commerce, this initiative focuses attention on and promotes heritage tourism and wide-ranging partnerships for the use and preservation of historic properties.



The 2005 budget includes \$10.0 million for grants to advance the goals of Preserve America which will support community efforts to demonstrate sustainable uses of their historic and cultural sites, and the economic and educational opportunities related to heritage tourism. Currently, 26 States have some form of heritage tourism program, a strong economic development tool that creates jobs, and increases property values and tax revenues. The grants will be awarded competitively to preservation entities, such as state historic preservation offices, tribal historic preservation offices, and Preserve America communities. The NPS will administer the program in partnership with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

*Our Nation's cultural and natural resources are important parts of our heritage. Preserve America will promote historic and cultural preservation and encourage greater public appreciation of our national treasures.*

*First Lady Laura Bush, March 3, 2003*

Communities may also apply for special designation as a Preserve America community, a designation to recognize communities that protect and celebrate their heritage; use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization; and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs.

On January 15, 2004, the First Lady designated as Preserve America communities: Augusta, Georgia; Versailles, Kentucky; Key West, Florida; Dorchester County, Maryland; Delaware, Ohio; Castroville, Texas; Putnam County, New York; and Steamboat Springs, Colorado.



## DEPARTMENTAL MONITORING PROGRAMS

One of the most crucial components of protecting the Nation's natural resources involves monitoring the health of flora, fauna, water quality, and air quality on public and other lands. The NPS, BLM, FWS, USGS, and BIA monitor and track the health of various plant and animal species and air and water quality on the lands managed by Interior. Monitoring programs assist the Department in identifying and addressing factors that cause detrimental impacts to our Nation's natural resources. These programs also enable Interior natural resource managers to make well-informed decisions while anticipating the potential implications for the vitality of the natural resources under their purview. In 2005, the President's budget request funds monitoring in NPS through the Natural Resource Challenge, provides increased funding for BLM resource monitoring efforts, and increases funding for monitoring through the FWS migratory bird management program.

### NATURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Through the NPS Natural Resource Challenge, the Department monitors conditions within park boundaries. Two key initiatives of the Natural Resource Challenge are 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 the health of individual plant and animal species. Water quality monitoring tracks water conditions to preserve pristine waters and improve impaired waters in parks and surrounding areas. The NPS has developed a system of 32 multi-park, multi-agency vital signs and water quality monitoring networks sharing similar geographical and natural resource characteristics to complete these tasks.

The 2005 budget requests an additional \$4.1 million and \$528,000 for vital signs and water quality monitoring, respectively. The requested increase for vital signs monitoring will provide funding

for six additional networks, or a total of 28 of 32 networks altogether. The 2005 budget increase for water quality monitoring will complete funding for the remaining seven of 32 water quality monitoring networks.



### BLM RESOURCE MONITORING

Monitoring lies at the heart of cost-effective, accountable resource management informed by scientific information. The 2005 BLM budget request proposes a \$4.0 million increase to strengthen and enhance resource monitoring capabilities.

Successful execution of the BLM multiple-use mandate and sustainable management of natural resources requires that BLM maintain information and trends on the health and condition of resources. This information assists in developing and revising long-term resource management plans and forms the basis for day-to-day, on-the-ground operational and permitting decisions. Recurring monitoring enables BLM to ensure that land use plans and management decisions are having their intended effect. It facilitates adaptive management by providing feedback to resource managers so they can adjust actions, as necessary, to achieve the desired outcomes. The 2005 monitoring proposal builds on the \$1.9 million for resource monitoring included in the 2004 President's budget. It will address the weakness identified in the 2004 Program Assessment Rating Tool evaluation—specifically, that comprehensive monitoring of resource conditions is needed to support management decisions and to assess the impacts of restoration activities.

### FWS MIGRATORY BIRD MANAGEMENT

Currently, 38 percent of migratory bird populations face some sort of risk. The President's budget

includes a \$4.4 million programmatic increase for the migratory bird management program to fulfill its leadership role in conserving and managing migratory birds and their habitats at self-sustaining levels.

The year 2005 marks the 50th anniversary of the FWS migratory bird survey program, making these data sets among the longest running for any wildlife species on this continent. The primary purpose of the surveys is to collect information on population status that is necessary to make scientifically based regulatory decisions, especially in establishing annual hunting seasons for migratory game birds. Only through knowledge of the status and trends of a species and its habitats can managers take appropriate actions. Proper management requires information such as population size and trend, geographical distribution, annual breeding effort, the condition of their breeding and wintering habitats, and for hunted species, the number of hunters and the anticipated harvest.

The data collected by the migratory bird management program are widely used by scientists from within and outside FWS to understand how bird populations respond to annual and long-term variations in weather and climate, and the importance of habitat integrity to maintaining healthy bird populations. The long-term nature of these data sets makes them an invaluable tool for monitoring the health of the environment.

DEPARTMENTAL MONITORING FUNDING		
(dollars in millions)		
	2004	2005
NPS	28.6	32.8
FWS	25.3	24.2
BLM	46.0	50.0
USGS	118.8	115.2
BIA	1.2	1.2
Total	219.9	223.4

The 2005 proposal includes a \$2.1 million increase for monitoring activities such as surveying, monitoring and assessing shorebird, water bird, and land bird needs; improving migratory game bird harvest strategies and adaptive harvest management procedures; and expanding national migratory

bird survey, monitoring, and assessment operations.

The budget includes an additional \$1.0 million for development and implementation of environmental impact statements. This proposal will allow FWS to solicit and address public input on significant migratory bird issues, such as issuing annual sport hunting regulations and issuing migratory bird permits. This increase will also allow FWS to expeditiously implement actions recommended by completed or soon to be completed environmental impact statements. Among the highest priority implementation actions are improved monitoring programs for double-crested cormorants and support for States in the Pacific Northwest to facilitate the use of sport hunting to accomplish goose population control objectives.

An additional \$655,000 will allow FWS to fully implement the harvest information program, a cooperative program with the States to collect data on migratory game bird hunting. Since 1998, 49 States have participated in HIP. The FWS has not been able to fully reimburse the States for these data in recent years. With this increase, FWS expects to be able to fully reimburse the States for their efforts on behalf of FWS.

An increase of \$700,000 for the migratory bird permitting program will enhance operations at regional permit offices and implement process improvements identified in a recent workload study. The study identified a variety of time-saving opportunities that, as FWS implements them, will result in a more efficient process, better customer service, and the availability of better information for migratory bird conservation management decisionmaking. This funding will allow FWS to move forward with system development and implementation and will dramatically impact the speed at which permit applications are processed.

A \$1.2 million increase for the Joint Ventures program is discussed with other CCI programs.



## SUSTAINING BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

### INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species threaten the ecological and economic health of the Nation. Threats posed by the uncontrolled spread of invasive species include native species diversity loss and alteration of ecological structure and function. The costs associated with invasive species exceed an estimated \$100 billion per year. Invasive species control is difficult; an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 invasive species have already become established in the United States. In some cases, control will require traditional approaches as well as molecular, biological, or 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 to prevent the establishment of further invasive species.

The 2005 budget request includes \$58.3 million to further interagency coordination in addressing invasive species challenges, focused mainly on National Invasive Species Council priorities. These priorities include: providing \$1.0 million to coordinate and work with State and local governments, private land owners, and private agencies in pursuing an integrated strategic approach to controlling tamarisk in the southwest; control of the brown tree snake population on Guam and prevention of its establishment on other Pacific islands, Hawaii, and the continental United States;

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early detection and rapid response efforts on fish and wildlife refuges and partner lands, including lands managed by Interior, other Federal agencies, and private entities; and research to develop and test methods and strategies for controlling Asian carp species and other established aquatic invaders of fresh water habitats in the Mississippi

River basin, the southeastern United States, and the Great Lakes region.

Working in collaboration with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and other partners, the Department has documented successful control of invasives. These successes provide a model for future efforts.

### **ERADICATION OF THE LAST AFRICAN ORYX FROM WHITE SANDS, NEW MEXICO**

After four years of effort at White Sands National Monument, the last of 253 African oryx was removed from a 225 square-mile fenced area. The African oryx, a 450-pound African antelope, were released in the 1960s by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to establish a population for public hunting on military land. With a high birth and survival rate, the population grew from 100 to over 4,000. They repel predators, do not require drinking water in the desert, and cause damage to soil and vegetation. Partners assisting with this project included the NPS, FWS, Carlsbad Caverns and Mesa Verde National Parks, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and U.S. Army-White Sands Missile Range.

### **BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF SALT CEDAR**

Bureau of Reclamation scientists, working with the USDA, the State of Colorado, and the Consortium for the Biological Control of Salt Cedar, have established an initial demonstration project to evaluate the potential for the biological control of salt cedar using a beetle imported from China. This leaf-eating beetle, *Diorhabda elongata*, has been tested to assure it will only damage salt cedar. Insects were first released into test cages along the Arkansas River in Colorado in 1998, and released into a nearby field site in 2001. During the summer of 2003, the beetles defoliated all salt cedar trees within 100 acres surrounding the original release site. Trees will likely need to be defoliated a number of times before they are finally killed. This project includes monitoring of effects on other vegetation and wildlife as salt cedar is impacted by the beetles. Integration of the beetles with other methods of control (mechanical and herbicides) and re-vegetation of impacted areas will be included as the demonstration progresses.

*Invasive species impact the lands and mission of the Interior Department across the Nation. Invasive weeds cover 1.5 million acres of National Park Service lands alone. Invasive species are a leading cause of species being listed as threatened or endangered with extinction. They diminish the value of BLM grazing lands, destroy wetlands in our national wildlife refuge system, and disrupt water delivery by the Bureau of Reclamation. They also impact our ability to enjoy recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing both on public and private lands.*

*Secretary Gale A. Norton, October 30, 2003*

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## FWS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAMS

Along with State, tribal, local, and other public and private conservationists, the Department shares a common goal of protecting threatened, endangered, and other at-risk species, and ensuring that Federal activities do not further endanger these species while fostering dynamic local economies. In support of this goal, the 2005 budget includes \$266.2 million for endangered species programs, a net increase of \$4.4 million compared to 2004. This includes \$129.4 million for endangered species programs within the Resource Management account, as well as \$90.0 million in appropriated funds and an estimated \$36.7 million in permanent funds for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund. The budget also includes \$10.0 million for the Private Stewardship Grant program.

The FWS, acting on behalf of the Department, has a number of specific duties under the Endangered Species Act, which include listing threatened or endangered species; working to recover species to healthy, self-sustaining levels; protecting species that are candidates to be listed; consulting with other Federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize listed species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat; and developing habitat conservation plans with non-Federal landowners to offset the potentially negative effects that development may have on threatened or endangered species.



Within the proposed 2005 increase for endangered species activities is a \$5.0 million programmatic increase for the listing program. This activity is an important part of Interior's Resource Protection mission. Through the listing process, FWS initiates the protections of the Endangered Species



Act to protect species in danger of extinction or likely to become in danger of extinction. This program has been the subject of a great deal of litigation in recent years, particularly in regards to designation of critical habitat for already listed species. This significant increase will address litigation-driven workloads and should also provide additional funding to address other high-priority actions that are not the subject of ongoing litigation.

Because more than half of all species currently listed as endangered or threatened spend at least part of their life cycle on privately owned lands, FWS recognizes that success in conserving species will ultimately depend on working cooperatively with landowners, communities, and Tribes to foster voluntary stewardship efforts on private land. The 2005 budget includes increases to fund partnership programs for the protection of at-risk species.

### COOPERATIVE ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund provides grants to States and Territories to participate in an array of voluntary conservation projects for candidate, proposed, and listed species. These funds may in turn be awarded to private landowners and groups for conservation projects. These grants include funding for States and Territories to implement conservation projects to support the development of habitat conservation plans and to acquire habitat for threatened or endangered species. The budget proposes an increase of \$8.4 million for the appropriated portion of this program.

One example is a \$75,000 grant in 2003 to help fund development and implementation of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway habitat conservation plan in Glacier and Flathead Counties, Montana. This project provides a unique opportunity to benefit a large number of species in a geographic area that includes a wild and scenic

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river corridor and is adjacent to Glacier National Park and the Great Bear Wilderness. Project focus is on minimizing and mitigating the effects of railroad operations on grizzly bears. In addition, these efforts will also minimize effects on other predators, including gray wolves, wolverines, black bears, and mountain lions. Additionally, efforts to enhance habitat will benefit a variety of other species, including bald eagles, bull trout, west slope

cutthroat trout, moose, elk, mule deer, whitetail deer, beaver, mink, otter, and waterfowl.

The Private Stewardship grants program also helps communities and landowners conserve federally listed, proposed, candidate, or other at-risk species. This program is described in greater detail under the Conservation Grants section.

*Conservation, and especially the conservation of imperiled species, must be a partnership between the American people and their government. By making these grants, we are empowering citizens to restore habitat on their land and take other steps to protect and recover endangered, threatened, and at-risk species.*

*Secretary Gale A. Norton, May 28, 2003*

## EFFORTS TO REINTRODUCE MIGRATORY WHOOPING CRANES IN EASTERN U.S.

The whooping crane, one of North America's rarest birds, has benefited from a vibrant partnership to bring them back to the flyways of the United States. In spring 2003, 16 whooping crane chicks hatched at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland. Following their transfer to Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin, the chicks spent the summer training behind ultralight aircraft, and on October 16, 2003, they began their ultralight-led migration south to Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. The birds and their human support team completed the migration on December 8, 2003.

This was the third group of juvenile whooping cranes to take part in a project designed to reintroduce a migratory flock of whooping cranes to a portion of their former range in eastern North America. The unassisted fall migration of 20 whooping cranes from the 2001 and 2002 reintroduction programs was less orderly, but much faster. The first of these cranes began their migration on November 8 and arrived in Florida on the 15th. The eastern migratory flock of whooping cranes now has 20 adult and juvenile whooping cranes and 16 new cranes from this year's reintroduction. All of these whooping cranes are wintering in Florida.

The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership – a coalition of non-profit organizations, individuals, flyway State agencies, FWS, and USGS – coordinates this unprecedented reintroduction effort. More than 60 percent of the estimated \$1.8 million budget comes from private sources in the form of grants, donations, and corporate sponsors.

