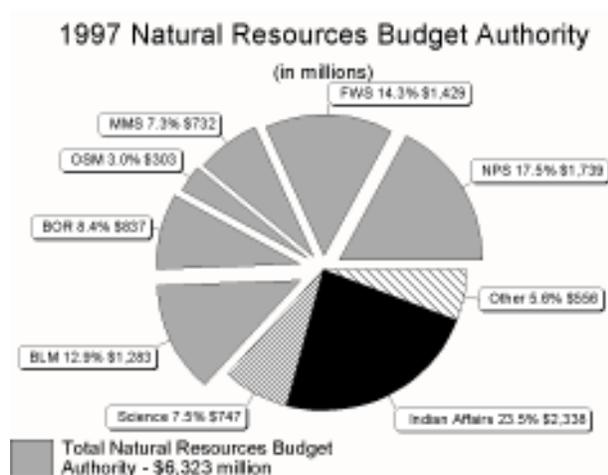


NATURAL RESOURCES

A major responsibility of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage. Managing the Nation's public lands and resources is the combined responsibility of the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Minerals Management Service, the Office of Surface Mining (Reclamation and Enforcement), and the Bureau of Reclamation. *Figure 1* provides 1997 budget authority amounts for Interior's natural resource agencies.

Figure 1



The **Bureau of Land Management** is responsible for managing 264 million acres of public lands and an additional 300 million acres of subsurface minerals estate. The Bureau is charged with sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The **National Park Service** is responsible for conserving unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System. The National Park System comprises 375 units that encompass over 83 million acres, of which approximately 5.8 million acres is non-federal land. The largest area is Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska, at 13.2 million acres while the smallest unit in the National Park System is Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial, Pennsylvania, at two-hundredths of an acre.

The **Fish and Wildlife Service** is charged with conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Fish and Wildlife Service administers the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest and most diverse collection of lands set aside specifically for wildlife. The refuge system protects those lands dedicated for fish and wildlife, sustains habitats of endangered species, and provides a network of key stepping stones for migratory species.

The **Minerals Management Service** is charged with collecting, accounting for, and distributing revenues owed by holders of mineral leases on Federal onshore and offshore lands and Indian lands, and managing the energy and mineral resources on the Nation's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in an environmentally sound and safe manner. The Minerals Management Service administers over 112,000 mineral leases that supply over 25 percent of the natural gas and 15 percent of the oil produced in the United States. Revenues from these leases support a broad constituency of 38 States, 42 Tribes, and about 20,000 individual Indian mineral owners. During 1997, the Minerals Management Service collected over \$6.27 billion in rents, royalties, and bonuses from its mineral lease program. This represents an increase of approximately \$1.3 billion, or 26 percent, compared to 1996. The primary reason for the large increase is the tremendous growth in sales in the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico. This growth is attributable to new technology which allows for both deep-water production and the recovery of oil and gas beneath the subsalt in shallow waters, and recently enacted legislation that encourages deep-water production.

The **Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement** is responsible for ensuring that coal mines are operated in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, ensuring that the land is restored to beneficial use following mining, and mitigating the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing the reclamation of abandoned mines. The programs and operations of the Office of Surface Mining span across 39 states and depend on strong, mutually supportive relationships with the States, Indian tribes, industry, and citizen groups.

The **Bureau of Reclamation** is charged with managing, developing, and protecting water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the best interest of the American people. The Bureau's projects supply water and provide flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Reclamation's responsibilities include the Dam Safety Program involving 464 dams and dikes, of which 378 could endanger people and property downstream if a failure occurred. Reclamation is the largest supplier and manager of water in the 17 western States, delivering water to 31 million people for agriculture, municipal, industrial, and domestic uses, and is also the fifth largest producer of electric power in those States, generating nearly \$1 billion in annual power revenues.

In addition, the Department also administers more than 43 million acres of land owned by Indian Tribes and 10 million acres of individually-owned Indian land held in trust status. This responsibility is discharged by the **Bureau of Indian Affairs**.

Partnerships

In balancing the goals of public access and preservation, the Department is committed to bringing all interested parties into the decision-making process and to finding new ways of achieving these goals. To this end, the Department has forged strong partnerships with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, community groups, and the private sector to address a number of regional environmental issues. Some of the largest partnership efforts include:

Everglades Watershed Restoration (South Florida)

The restoration of the Everglades and the South Florida ecosystem continues to be a critical environmental ini-

1997 Natural Resource Highlights

- *Provided oversight and policy guidance on implementing the Central Valley Project Improvement Act and the State-Federal comprehensive strategy to conserve San Francisco Bay-Sacramento River Delta resources.*
- *Dedicated and opened the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C., resulting in a total of 375 park units in the National Park System.*
- *Received one of the first Ford Foundation "Innovations in American Government" awards ever won by a Federal agency for the Bureau of Reclamation's efforts to reinvent itself as a water resources management entity.*
- *Chartered an advisory committee of local citizens to determine the best course for developing the substantial natural gas reserves beneath the Green River Basin area of Wyoming and Colorado while protecting the public lands and other natural resources of this area for the future.*
- *Developed and began implementing pilot programs at Yosemite, Zion and Grand Canyon National Parks in response to President Clinton's 1966 Earth Day request to enhance resource protection and the quality of visitor experiences in national parks through innovative solutions to park transportation, including clean-fuel shuttle systems.*
- *Added three new wildlife refuges and five new water production areas to the National Wildlife Refuge System.*
- *Unveiled the draft Valley Implementation Plan for Yosemite National Park which is designed to reduce traffic and congestion to manageable levels; return some developed land to its natural condition; and remove some bridges, roads, lodging and cabin units, buildings, and parking lots to reduce the human "foot print" on the Valley.*

tiative for the Department and the Administration. This vast region is home to over 6 million Americans and seven of the ten fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country. In addition, the region supports a large tourism industry and significant agriculture, and it is one of the world's unique environmental treasures, as evidenced by the presence of four national parks and three national wildlife refuges in the region.

Restoring the Everglades watershed while maintaining sustainable development in South Florida requires a partnership effort that transcends political boundaries and agency jurisdictions. The Department has worked closely with Congress to enact two statutes that have done much to further Everglades restoration. During 1997, over 120,000 acres of land was acquired for restoration purposes, including a 50,000 acre sugar plantation and 31,000 acres of prime Florida panther habitat.

California Bay-Delta Ecosystem Restoration

The California Bay-Delta, the region where the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers meet the San Francisco Bay, is the largest estuary on the west coast of North America. The region is critical to California's economy, providing water to two-thirds of all homes and businesses in the State and irrigating more than 4 million acres of farmland where, among other crops, 45 percent of the Nation's fruits and vegetables grow.

In December 1994, Federal and State officials signed the historic Bay-Delta Accord encompassing a comprehensive package of actions designed to restore and protect the Bay-Delta ecosystem while strengthening the State's long-term economic health. Implementation of the accord is coordinated by CALFED, a consortium of Federal and State agencies with management and regulatory responsibilities for the Bay-Delta ecosystem.

Habitat Conservation Plans

The Department is committed to working closely with private landowners, local governments, and other groups to develop Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) that allow economic development activities without harming listed, proposed, and candidate species. The Department has forged strong partnerships with private, local, and State landowners to find endangered species habitat solutions that are biologically and economically feasible for all parties. These partnerships have become an immensely popular approach for protecting threatened and endangered species while allowing economic development to proceed. In addition to successful HCPs in the Pacific Northwest, two other examples of successes in this area are agreements in the Southeast with States and the private sector, and the Department of Defense to protect the red-cockaded woodpecker and to provide habitat for the desert tortoise in Utah. The Department has

1997 Restoring the Environment Highlights

- *As part of the Everglades Restoration Plan, announced the acquisition of over 100,000 acres for restoration purposes, including the purchase of a 50,000-acre sugar plantation and 31,000 acres of prime Florida panther habitat that was once slated to become a residential subdivision; also participated in multi-agency decisions involving environmental concerns related to the transfer of the Homestead Air Reserve Base.*
- *Worked with Congress and constituent groups to enact the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. This Act is the first major revision of Refuge System legislation in 30 years and formally establishes wildlife conservation as the mission of the refuge system while establishing certain wildlife-related activities as priority uses.*
- *Oversaw the return of endangered California condors to the Grand Canyon for the first time in 72 years.*
- *Led planning efforts to reintroduce grizzly bears to the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem in central Idaho and western Montana.*
- *Led activities that completed the Arizona-Florida Land Exchange, which involved Florida lands integral to efforts to restore the Everglades and south Florida ecosystem.*
- *Helped further the Exxon Valdez ecosystem restoration program through the acquisition of over 30,000 acres of land in Kenai Fjords National Park and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.*
- *Sponsored the 1997 Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Awards, which recognize employees, bureaus, and contractors for their exceptional achievements and contributions in pollution prevention, waste reduction, recycling, and acquisition of environmentally preferred products and services. Lever Brothers Company was selected for work done to improve visitor access and reduce environmental degradation at Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park.*

made great strides over the last four years in developing and approving HCPs. From 1982 to 1992, only 14 HCPs were approved. In comparison, as of June 30, 1997, the Department had approved 217 HCPs.

During 1997, the Central Valley Improvement Act and the State-Federal comprehensive strategy to conserve San Francisco Bay-Sacramento River Delta resources were also implemented.

Northwest Forest Plan

The Northwest Forest Plan is a comprehensive inter-agency blueprint to strengthen the economic and environmental health of the Pacific Northwest. This innovative plan provides for sustainable timber production on Federal lands while protecting critical wildlife and

fish species and habitats on Federal, State, local, and private lands.

This plan has refilled the timber pipeline by allowing over 1.7 billion board feet of timber to be offered for sale from Federal forest lands in Washington, Oregon, and Northern California. The plan has helped streamline the Section 7 consultation process of the Endangered Species Act, reducing average consultation from 135 days to 35 days, and has promoted the establishment and signing of Habitat Conservation Plans to find habitat solutions that are biologically and economically feasible for State, local, and private landowners. In addition, four Adaptive Management Areas have been developed to demonstrate new ways to integrate ecological and economic objectives, and to establish a comprehensive system of old-growth preserves.

Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative

Within the Appalachian region, the most serious water quality problem is pollution caused by acid mine drainage resulting from coal mining. To date, over 7,000 miles of streams have been devastated by the effects of this drainage, which causes direct human health effects and kills fish and wildlife. As the environmental and recreational value of the region's streams have deteriorated, local economies that depend on these natural resources for jobs and tourism have suffered. While this is a regional problem, the cost to correct the problem exceeds regional capabilities.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement has established the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative as a focal point for Federal action. This initiative involves key partnerships with Federal agencies, State coal regulatory authorities, fish and wildlife agencies, local water conservation districts, the mining industry, environmental groups, and coal field residents to use the latest technology to address acid mine drainage and restore and enhance high priority streams in the region.



Canoeing (photo by Department of the Interior).

Clean Streams Team

The Clean Streams Team, composed of 16 Office of Surface Mining employees and 3 employees from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, was honored in 1997 for reinventing the process OSM and other federal agencies use to clean up more than 7,000 miles of streams in nine Appalachian states that are polluted by acid mine drainage from abandoned mines. Students from Chartiers Valley High School, partners in the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative, were recognized for spearheading the clean-up effort at Scrubgrass Run. Secretary Babbitt visited the Scrubgrass Run site last spring, describing it as a national model for the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative.

The work of the Clean Streams team has resulted in an unprecedented degree of cooperation by Federal, State, and local government agencies, as well as non-government partners, making this a unique initiative to reclaim the environment in the most cost-effective manner, with the best on-the-ground results for the American people. Thanks to all the public and private cooperation and support the program has received over the past year, the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative has the potential to be one of the Federal government's most successful activities in 1997 and beyond.