

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 01

**Project / Unit:** Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** CT, MA, NH, VT

**Congressional District(s):** CT-1, CT-2, CT-3; MA-1, MA-2; NH-2; VT-AL

**Location:**

The Refuge boundary encompasses the Connecticut River Watershed

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	2,686	\$5,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	38,692	\$40,002,563
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	56,453	\$83,997,437

**Project Description:**

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was authorized in 1991 as a landscape scale, watershed based, climate resilient, and partnership empowered land conservation collaboration to protect the Connecticut River Watershed. Land protection promotes ecological integrity, species diversity and reinforce ecosystem structure and function. The Refuge purpose is to conserve, protect, and enhance the Connecticut River valley populations of Atlantic Salmon, American shad, river herring, short-nosed sturgeon, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, osprey, black ducks, and other native species of plants, fish, and wildlife. Refuge Divisions span the rural to suburban to urban gradient, creating opportunities to connect with underserved communities as well as economically depressed areas. The diverse array of compatible public access opportunities provided within the Watershed offer an array of avenues to connect people with nature. The Refuge participates in the Springfield Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership and Springfield Urban Bird Treaty Area and established “Conte Corners” in the Springfield, MA, and Hartford, CT, urban areas. The Refuge includes two universally accessible National Recreation Trails. Protected lands contribute to the Appalachian and New England National Scenic Trails, as well as National Scenic Rivers, and the Connecticut River and Northern Forest Paddler Trails.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire 2,686 acres in focus areas within Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

The Salmon River Division (CT) is considered a priority by The Nature Conservancy, the State of Connecticut, and local constituencies because of its tidal freshwater wetlands and the location of the division at the confluence of the Salmon and Connecticut Rivers. The targeted 582-acre property is bounded on two sides by the tidally influenced freshwater wetland portion of the Salmon River and the

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main stem of the Connecticut River. The Service will acquire a conservation easement that will allow the Service to manage the habitat and administer public access opportunities. Habitat conservation in this division will allow for the landward migration of the coastal wetland complex (salt-, brackish-, and freshwater tidally influenced wetlands) to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The Dead Branch Division (MA) is part of an area identified by the State of Massachusetts as a priority for conservation with opportunities to conserve and restore forested habitat and protect small dispersed wetlands. This Division helps conserve lands along a high-quality segment of the Dead Branch Brook within the Westfield River watershed that supports an eastern brook trout fishery. The Service will acquire a 179-acre tract that is bounded on two sides by the Dead Branch and Pittsinger Brook and is dominated by mixed forest and scattered wetlands. The tract is considered by the State to be climate resilient.

Habitats in the Mascoma River Division (NH) have been identified as being of "Highest Quality in New Hampshire" in the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan. The Service will acquire a conservation easement that allows habitat management and administration of public use on 1,135 acres of undeveloped land that contains a mosaic of unfragmented habitat.

The Ompompanoosuc River Division (VT) is dominated by hardwood forests beneficial to wildlife requiring large contiguous forest tracts, such as forest interior-dwelling bird species. The Service will acquire a 789 acre property that provides breeding and stopover habitat for migrating birds. The property is adjacent to Lake Fairlee, which provides foraging for bald eagles and osprey. The forested areas provide breeding habitat for species of conservation concern, such as the wood thrush, blackburnian warbler, Canada warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, and American woodcock. There is also breeding and foraging habitat for American black duck, wood duck, and other waterfowl species within and around the wetlands (conifer swamp, shrub-swamp, floodplain forest, and freshwater marsh) on and near the property.

**Cooperator(s):**

States of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, as well as local communities hosting Refuge divisions. The Friends of Conte, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Kestrel Land Trust, and Middlesex Land Trust.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$7,000	Annual: \$0

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include boundary posting.

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**Priority:** 02

**Project / Unit:** Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** TX

**Congressional District(s):** TX-10

**Location:**

60 miles west of Houston, Texas in Colorado County, Texas near the Community of Eagle Lake

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	1,148	\$3,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	10,541	\$6,459,530
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	13,459	\$67,295,000

**Project Description:**

Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1972 for the protection of the Attwater’s prairie chicken. The recovery program for the endangered Attwater's prairie-chicken has focused on two primary areas - 1) developing a successful and sustainable captive breeding and release program, and 2) protecting and restoring enough native coastal prairie to support a self-sustaining population of birds. In partnership with a number of private and non-profit partners, the Service is releasing several hundred prairie chickens on the core Refuge tract each year. As a birding destination, the Refuge contributes to the economy of nearby Eagle Lake, a small, rural, diverse city. The Refuge partners with schools to provide environmental education to students of all backgrounds and is developing a partnership with the Texas Challenge Academy to provide environmental education, community service, and leadership development opportunities for at-risk teens.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire a 1,148-acre tract that is adjacent to the core Refuge and would significantly expand available release habitat. The tract has primarily been in agricultural production and will be restored to coastal prairie habitat to support Attwater’s prairie chicken and other grassland birds. The habitat will also support many other species that are in decline, such as horned lizard, thirteen-lined ground squirrels, smooth green snakes, Houston toad, and crawfish frogs. Restored native prairie allows for increased infiltration of groundwater and attenuates flood waters. This tract is located along the San Bernard River and will provide flood water storage during high water events, mitigating the effects on downstream communities. Acquisition will increase public wildlife observation, education, and photography opportunities.

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**Cooperator(s):**

The Nature Conservancy; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; the City of Eagle Lake; Houston Zoo; Fossil Rim Wildlife Center; the Caldwell Zoo (Tyler, TX); and the Sutton Avian Research Center (Bartlesville, OK).

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$7,000	Annual: \$50,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include boundary posting, gates, and some road repair. Annual O&M costs include fuel, equipment and personnel expenses for the restoration of agricultural fields to native prairie.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 03

**Project / Unit:** Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** IA, MN

**Congressional District(s):** IA-1, IA-2, IA-3, IA-4, MN-1, MN-7

**Location:**

Located in portions of 37 counties in IA and 48 in MN, the Refuge is bounded by the US-Canada border to the north and Des Moines, IA to the south. The Refuge boundary weaves through the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands and Agassiz Beach Ridges of northwest MN and the Prairie Coteau regions of southwest MN and northwest IA.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	120	\$500,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	12,250	\$8,402,841
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	64,630	\$99,736,125

**Project Description:**

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2000 to address the loss of America’s grasslands and the decline of grassland wildlife. Scientists estimate the original tallgrass prairie in Minnesota and Iowa covered about 25 million acres. Now, there are only about 300,000 acres left in the two states. The Refuge was created to work with individuals, groups, and government agencies to permanently preserve and restore some of the northern tallgrass prairie. The Refuge encompasses all or part of 85 counties in western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa. The Refuge’s long-term goal is to protect 77,000 acres through conservation easements and government ownership. Easements and purchased lands are managed or overseen by the Refuge or wetland management district office covering the area where the lands are located. The Refuge supports the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and migratory birds of conservation concern, including landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds.

Federally threatened and endangered species on the Refuge include four plant and seven animal species, including western prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover, Topeka shiner, rusty patch bumblebee, and piping plover. Several globally rare species can also be found on the Refuge, including the last remaining U.S. populations of the Dakota skipper and regal fritillary butterflies, which are in steep decline. The Refuge consists of many permanent, temporary, and seasonal wetlands crucial to national waterfowl, waterbird, and shorebird populations. These same water resources provide groundwater recharge supply and mitigate the severity and risk of downstream flooding. Refuge acquisitions are historically significant because they lie within evidential areas associated with human presence for the past 12,000 years. The Refuge remains

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active at the ground level by keeping landowners actively involved by working lands when easements are acquired. The Refuge provides public hunting opportunities for migratory birds, small and upland game, and big game species. The Refuge supports and serves isolated and small rural families, farms, ranches, local governments, businesses, states, communities, and schools.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire multiple tracts of land totaling 120 acres of fee title or easement in northwestern Iowa and/or western Minnesota for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge increases public access for recreational opportunities on fee title acquisitions.

Non-government conservation organizations in Iowa and Minnesota will leverage acquisitions by providing matching funds, cost-share opportunities, or donated land. In Iowa, the Service works closely with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to purchase and manage tracts of land. In Minnesota, The Nature Conservancy actively provides funding to help restore recently purchased tracts. Some of these land donations are made possible by State of Minnesota grants and, per State law, are immediately open for public hunting and fishing. Acquisition will increase public wildlife observation, education, and photography opportunities.

**Cooperator(s):**

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR), the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF), Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, county conservation boards, and local Chambers of Commerce.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$1,250	Annual: \$1,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include initial restoration and posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include habitat management and enhancement work (spraying, mowing, and prescribed burns).

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**Priority:** 04

**Project / Unit:** Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** TX

**Congressional District(s):** TX-34

**Location:**

South Texas: Lower Rio Grande Valley—Cameron and Willacy Counties

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	2,000	\$4,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	97,737	\$21,985,732
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	55,263	\$125,727,564

**Project Description:**

Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1946 to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl and other migratory birds, principally redhead ducks. Today, there is an expanded emphasis that includes endangered species conservation and management for shorebirds. Nearly half of all the bird species found in the continental United States rest, feed, nest, or migrate on or through the Refuge’s lands, making it a premiere bird-watching destination. The Refuge contains the largest population of endangered ocelots in the United States and is important for conservation and recovery efforts for this endangered cat. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation, such as wildlife watching, hunting, fishing, photography, and environmental education.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire a 2,000-acre tract. The tract contains approximately 500 acres of excellent Tamaulipan thornscrub, which is habitat necessary for the endangered ocelot. The remainder of the property is composed of coastal prairie, which is beneficial to the endangered northern Aplomado falcon. The tract connects existing Refuge lands and includes 100 acres of a tidally influenced saltwater system. Protecting this water system is necessary to maintain a healthy ecosystem and enhance biodiversity of vegetative and wildlife species. The purchase of the property will not only fill a large gap between Refuge lands but will reduce habitat fragmentation that affects the endangered ocelot, northern Aplomado falcon, and other migratory and native wildlife species. The tract will provide expansion areas for habitat and wildlife in the event of sea-level rise and will mitigate the effects of heavy rainfall or hurricanes on local communities. The acquisition of the property will provide the public with additional areas for wildlife-dependent recreational activities. Public lands are limited in Texas, so additional areas for public use are greatly valued.

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**Cooperator(s):**

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas General Land Office, Texas Department of Transportation, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy-Texas, Ocean Trust, Texas Commission for Environmental Quality, Ducks Unlimited, The Peregrine Fund, Coastal Conservation Association-Texas Chapter, The Rio Grande Valley Nature Coalition, and the Partners for Conservation.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$5,000	Annual: \$300

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include boundary posting. Annual costs include monitoring activities.

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**Priority:** 05

**Project / Unit:** St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** FL

**Congressional District(s):** FL-4

**Location:**

In the Florida Panhandle, 24 miles south of Tallahassee, in Wakulla and Jefferson Counties.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	1,818	\$2,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	82,838	\$21,985,732
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	26,926	\$61,258,715

**Project Description:**

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1931 to provide wintering habitat for migratory birds. It encompasses more than 80,000 acres spread out between Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor counties and includes about 43 miles along the Gulf Coast of northwest Florida. The Refuge contains upland pine forest, wetland, hardwood forest, pine plantation, shrub and brush land, and freshwater marsh habitat. The Refuge is within a designated Important Bird Area and a Land Management and Research Demonstration Site for longleaf pine ecosystems. The Refuge includes coastal marshes, islands, tidal creeks, and estuaries of seven north Florida rivers and is home to a diverse community of plant and animal life. The Refuge also has strong ties to a rich cultural past and is home to the St. Marks Lighthouse, which was built in 1842 (current tower) and is still in use today. More than 17,000 acres are protected under the Federal Wilderness Act and include a designated Globally Important Bird Area.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire an 1,818-acre tract of pine flatwoods habitat. The acquisition will conserve populations of threatened, endangered, rare, and imperiled plants and animals and their native longleaf pine habitats; restore former slash pine plantations to native longleaf pine; provide suitable Florida black bear habitat, including corridors to link critical habitats for major population centers; and provide high-quality habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, waterbirds, and marshbirds. The acquisition will benefit federally listed threatened and endangered species, such as red-cockaded woodpecker, wood stork, and frosted flatwoods salamanders. The acquisition will provide public hunting and other wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities. This is the final-phase acquisition of a large tract of land the landowner has been holding awaiting Service take-out for more than 10 years.

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**Cooperator(s):**

The Sam Shine Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance, Ducks Unlimited, Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society, The Florida Natural Areas Inventory, Florida Trail Association, Apalachee Audubon Society, Florida Wildlife Federation, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Forest Service, and Tall Timbers Research Station.

**Savings/Costs**

**Startup**

**Annual**

**Estimated O&M Savings:**

Startup: \$0

Annual: \$0

**Estimated O&M Costs:**

Startup: \$3,000

Annual: \$11,000

**Describe O&M:**

Annual cost estimates include habitat management and restoration, prescribed burning, hunting, and public use management. Acquisition is expected to produce efficiency improvements in Service law enforcement operations and boundary posting. Costs associated with restoration work could be offset by hunting fees and/or partner funding.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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**Priority:** 06

**Project / Unit:** Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** CA

**Congressional District(s):** CA-1

**Location:**

Tehama County, 18 miles southeast of Redbluff, CA

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	500	\$1,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	11,755	\$29,545,592
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	6,245	62,450,000

**Project Description:**

The Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1989 and is located in multiple units along an 80-mile stretch of the Sacramento River between Red Bluff and Princeton, in Tehama, Butte, Glenn, and Colusa Counties. The Refuge’s 30 properties, or units, total 10,353 acres and consist primarily of restored and remnant riparian habitats but also include grasslands and some orchards. The Refuge is managed to maintain, enhance, and restore riparian, wetland, and upland habitats for birds, fish, and other wildlife. Many of the units have been restored by converting flood-prone agricultural lands into riparian habitats in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, River Partners, and many other partners. The riparian habitat along the Sacramento River is critically important for fish, migratory birds, plants, and river system health. It provides shelter for many songbirds and water-associated animals, including the river otter, turtles, beaver, American pelicans, ospreys, and migratory songbirds. Several threatened, endangered, and sensitive species can be found on the Refuge, including Chinook salmon, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, yellow-billed cuckoos, Swainson’s hawks, and bank swallows. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, wildlife viewing, and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire a 500-acre tract, which is strongly supported by multiple State agencies and by Service partners. The property includes extensive frontage on the Sacramento River and will provide opportunities for public hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, wildlife viewing, photography, and other recreational opportunities. The tract will provide potential habitat for yellow-billed cuckoo, and the riparian forest will provide a shade screen for winter- and spring-run Chinook salmon. This acquisition will provide outdoor recreation and educational opportunities to the residents of Tehama County, which has

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underserved and non-English-speaking communities at risk. The population includes 25 percent Hispanic or Latino persons, and 16.3 percent of the population lives below the poverty level.

**Cooperator(s):**

Tehama County, the Sacramento River Forum, The Nature Conservancy, AltaCal Audubon Society, River Partners, Northern California Water Association, California Dept. of Parks and Recreation, and California Dept. of Water Resources.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$5,000	Annual: \$3,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs will include boundary sign posting and provision of sanitary facilities. Paved road frontage and an excellent internal road will keep annual costs minimal. Annual costs to include maintenance of simple sanitary facilities.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 07

**Project / Unit:** Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

**State(s):** IA, IL, MN, WI

**Congressional District(s):** IA-1, IA-2, IL-17, MN-1, MN-2, WI-3

**Location:**

261 miles along the Mississippi River from Wabasha, MN, to Rock Island, IL

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	500	\$1,500,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	211,864	\$9,590,410
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	19,696	\$24,884,996

**Project Description:**

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge was established in 1924 as a refuge for fish, wildlife, and plants and a breeding place for migratory birds. The Refuge encompasses one of the largest blocks of floodplain habitat in the lower 48 States. Bordered by steep wooded bluffs that rise 100 to 600 feet above the river valley, the Mississippi River corridor and refuge offer scenic beauty and productive fish and wildlife habitat. The Refuge covers just over 240,000 acres and extends 261 river miles from north to south at the confluence of the Chippewa River in Wisconsin to near Rock Island, Illinois. The Mississippi River is an important migratory flyway for Neotropical migrants and waterbirds. The Refuge is designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and a Globally Important Bird Area. The Refuge implements goals as outlined in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and supports migratory birds of conservation concern, including landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds. The acquisitions proposed include lands and islands in and along the Mississippi River, many of which have existing or are suitable to restore to floodplain forest, resulting in less runoff of nutrients and sediment into the Mississippi River and improved water quality. Acquisition and subsequent restoration would contribute to the conservation of the eastern massassagua rattlesnake, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Increasing the size and quality of the contiguous ribbon of forest habitat along the Mississippi River would have direct benefits to the corridor's continental importance as a migratory flyway for Neotropical migrants and waterbirds. The Refuge enhances working lands in the area by supporting local populations and many underserved communities, including southeast Asian immigrants and Amish, who make extensive use of the Refuge and would benefit from further land acquisition. Conservation partners often leverage acquisitions by providing matching funds, cost-share opportunities, or land donations.

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**Purpose / Need:**

The Refuge remains an important priority due to its location in the Mississippi flyway, partnerships, and the ability to reduce fragmentation and encourage connectivity in a riverine system. The Service is working on multiple acquisition projects along the length of the Refuge and will acquire 500 acres in fee title. Priority is given to acquisitions that have railroad access points to the river or are adjacent to existing Refuge lands and State conservation areas so the Service can restore wildlife habitat connectivity and expand public access for wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography.

**Cooperator(s):**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wisconsin DNR, Iowa DNR, Illinois DNR, the Friends of the Refuge Headwaters (Winona District), Friends of the Refuge Mississippi River Pools 7 and 8 (La Crosse District), Friends of Pool 9 (McGregor District), Friends of Pool 10 (McGregor District), Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Savanna District), National Audubon Society, Audubon Minnesota, county conservation boards, and local chambers of commerce.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$12,500	Annual: \$2,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include improvements for public access points and posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include habitat management, such as spraying, mowing, timber stand improvement, and prescribed burns.

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**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 08

**Project / Unit:** Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI

**Congressional District(s):** CT-2,5; MA-9; ME-1; NH-1,2; NY-19; RI-2

**Location:**

Spans 10 focus areas in six northeastern States

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	750	\$2,500,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	222	\$383,000
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	14,778	\$97,617,000

**Project Description:**

Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2016 to manage and protect young forest and shrubland habitat for the New England cottontail rabbit, ruffed grouse, American woodcock, monarch butterfly, box turtle, and other species that depend on young forest and shrubland. The Service plans to conserve 15,000 acres in 10 focus areas across six States. The Refuge is part of a larger landscape effort with State wildlife agencies and other partners in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island to protect and manage lands for young forest and shrubland habitat and the species that depend on those habitats. Habitat restoration also benefits federally listed endangered bog turtles and at-risk migratory birds, including prairie warbler, blue-winged warbler, field sparrow, American woodcock, and brown thrasher. Wildlife-dependent recreation—including wildlife observation, nature interpretation, hunting, and fishing—is allowed on these lands when compatible with Refuge purposes.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire several tracts totaling 750 acres. One tract is in southern New Hampshire, completing a conservation corridor that includes a stronghold for the New England cottontail in Dover and is adjacent to protected lands on the western side. There are several tracts under consideration for Connecticut's Pachaug-Ledyard focus area with known occurrences of cottontail or within dispersal distance (2.5 km) of existing populations. The tracts are all also near private lands currently managed for cottontail habitat by USDA-NRCS. Another tract in eastern New York includes upland fields, emergent wetlands, and forested scrub/shrub habitat. It is situated at the confluence of three streams and could be managed for the federally listed bog turtle as well as the New England cottontail.

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**Cooperator(s):**

States of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island; USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service; The Nature Conservancy; Trust for Public Land; Avalonia Land Conservancy (CT); Open Space Institute; Dutchess Land Conservancy (NY), Housatonic Valley Association; Harlem Valley Conservation Alliance (NY); Open Space Institute (NY); Connecticut Audubon Society; York (ME) Land Trust; Kittery (ME) Land Trust; Great Works Regional Land Trust (ME); Maine Coast Heritage Trust; and Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership (NH).

**Savings/Costs**

**Startup**

**Annual**

**Estimated O&M Savings:**

Startup: \$0

Annual: \$0

**Estimated O&M Costs:**

Startup: \$5,000

Annual: \$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup cost would be used for boundary marking. Annual costs include habitat management.



**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 9

**Project / Unit:** Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** IL, WI

**Congressional District(s):** IL-14, WI-1

**Location:**

Walworth County, Wisconsin and McHenry County, Illinois

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2022	200	\$750,000
Acquired to Date	214	\$365,000
Remaining to Be Acquired	11,192	\$44,616,000

**Project Description:**

Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2012 and is an urban refuge centrally located between the communities of Chicago and Rockford, Illinois and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is a conservation and outreach hub for the 12 million people that reside within these communities. The Refuge purposes include the protection, restoration, and management of remnant oak savannah, tallgrass prairie, riparian corridors, and wetlands. Of the ecosystems that once defined this area, less than 0.01 percent of the tallgrass prairie and 12 percent of remnant oak ecosystems remain. The Refuge complements State and local plans, including the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision; Chicago Wilderness Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan; Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan; Illinois Wildlife Action Plan; Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan; Grassland Bird Conservation Design in the Chicago Region; McHenry County Green Infrastructure Network; and Nippersink Watershed Initiative.

The Refuge provides habitat for breeding migratory birds, such as Henslow’s sparrows, bobolink, and eastern meadowlark and several federally listed endangered and threatened species, including prairie bush clover, eastern prairie fringed orchid, whooping crane, Blanding’s turtle, and rusty patch bumblebee. Public recreational opportunities include migratory bird, small and upland game, and big game hunting as well as fishing, hiking, birding, photography, environmental interpretation, and education.

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**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire several tracts totaling 200 acres in fee title. One targeted tract is near Richmond High School, where the Service is working with the school to incorporate restoration benefits within the high school educational curriculum and engage the youth in restoration planting. Public recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, hiking, birding, photography, environmental interpretation, and education.

State and local agencies and other conservation partners leverage acquisitions by providing matching funds, cost-share opportunities, or land donations. Currently, Openlands and The Land Conservancy of McHenry County are active partners and often bridge acquisitions for the Service.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Openlands, The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Ducks Unlimited, McHenry County Conservation District, McHenry County Conservation Foundation, Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, Geneva Lake Conservancy, Nippersink Watershed Association, Kettle Moraine Land Trust, Illinois Audubon Society, county conservation boards, and local chambers of commerce.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$12,000	Annual: \$2,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs would include restoration, development of public access points, and posting of boundary signs. Annual expenses include habitat management, such as spraying, mowing, brush removal, and prescribed burns.

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**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 10

**Project / Unit:** Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** OR

**Congressional District(s):** OR-5

**Location:**

Marion County, Oregon

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	225	\$1,500,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	2,796	\$895,000
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	225	\$1,500,000

**Project Description:**

Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1965 to provide overwintering habitat for the dusky Canada goose and other migratory waterfowl within the Willamette Valley. The dusky Canada goose is a subspecies of Canada goose that has been in decline since the 1950's. This was primarily due to earthquakes and floods in its nesting habitat on Alaska's Copper River Delta and the urbanization of its wintering habitat in the Willamette Valley.

Today, the Refuge's extensive croplands are managed to provide winter forage for the geese, which reduces depredation of surrounding private fields and promotes a healthy wildlife-landowner relationship as well as providing for the geese. The Refuge also provides wetlands and riparian woodland sanctuary for migratory and resident wildlife which range from the tiny Pacific chorus frog to the black-tailed deer.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire a 225-acre conservation easement. The conservation easement will preserve native prairie and oak savannah habitat that supports multiple species of grassland and oak and associated birds, pollinators, and native amphibians. The tract supports the world's largest known population of the federally listed endangered Willamette daisy as well as populations of the federally listed threatened golden paintbrush and Nelson's checker-mallow. The easement would also protect approximately 1/2 mile of Weaver Gulch (a stream) and a 10-acre irrigation reservoir, thereby conserving water quality and quantity. The geography of the tract allows habitats and species that can move up and down and around as climate driven changes affect the landscape. The tract is adjacent to the Ankeny Nature Center, which participates in Willamette Valley's existing bilingual pre-school outdoor education programs for the minority and

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underserved communities in Salem (State capitol), Turner, Jefferson, and Albany. The preservation of the tract will enhance and expand the programs offered at the Nature Center.

**Cooperator(s):**

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, North Santiam Watershed Council, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Institute for Applied Ecology, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$30,000	Annual: \$17,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include boundary marking and restoration of the agricultural fields to native upland prairie. Annual costs include mowing, burning, and spot spraying to keep the natural habitat from being overwhelmed by invasive species.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 11

**Project / Unit:** William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** OR

**Congressional District(s):** OR-4

**Location:**

Benton County, Oregon

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	695	\$1,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	5,706	\$2,607,000
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	0	\$0

**Project Description:**

William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1964 to provide wintering habitat for dusky Canada geese. Unlike other Canada goose subspecies, dusky geese have limited summer and winter ranges. They nest in Alaska’s Copper River Delta and winter almost exclusively in the wetlands of the Willamette Valley—much of which was drained to provide open fields for agriculture and pasture during the 19th century. The Refuge preserves one of the last remaining intact wet prairies of the valley, which supports endangered plant species such as Bradshaw’s desert parsley. Refuge lowlands also support Muddy Creek’s riparian habitats as well as sprawling wetlands and systems of ponds housing western pond turtles and red-legged frogs. The wetlands provide vital wintering habitat for both Canada geese and many other migratory waterfowl. The Refuge also protects upland Oregon white oak savannas and mixed deciduous forests that support wildlife such as acorn woodpeckers, great-horned owls, and Roosevelt elk. The refuge provides public recreational opportunities such as hiking, hunting, wildlife observation, and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire tracts totaling 695 acres that will protect a large portion of a tributary to Muddy Creek that flows through the Refuge’s wetlands and beaver ponds, helping to preserve water quality, and provide additional habitat for the dusky goose and a naturally occurring population of the Oregon chub, recently removed from the Endangered Species List due to species recovery. Habitat restoration will support recovery goals for the federally listed endangered Willamette Daisy, the endangered Bradshaw’s desert parsley, and the threatened Nelson’s checkermallow. In addition, habitat restoration will include culturally significant plants to the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, such as camas and tarweed.

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The Service is finalizing the planning required to expand the Refuge boundary and include this tract. It is estimated the process will be completed by August 2021.

**Cooperator(s):**

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; Marys River Watershed Council; Cascade Pacific Resource, Conservation, & Development; McKenzie River Trust; Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board; and Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$200,000	Annual: \$15,000

**Describe O&M:**

The startup costs would involve restoration of habitat that would include removal of invasive species and replanting of native habitat. Annual costs would include habitat management. Costs would be covered by Refuge base funding.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 12

**Project / Unit:** Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** IN

**Congressional District(s):** IN-8

**Location:**

Pike and Gibson Counties in southwestern Indiana.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	200	\$1,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	10,625	\$9,210,000
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	13,568	\$30,000,000

**Project Description:**

The Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1994 to protect one of two remaining intact floodplain forest systems within Indiana. The Refuge has focused on acquisition of bottomland forests and wetlands, along with associated upland forests and grasslands that provide a good mix of roosting and foraging habitats for Indiana bats. The Refuge supports goals implemented according to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and supports migratory birds of conservation concern including landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds. The Refuge partners with several organizations, including Ducks Unlimited and the National Wild Turkey Federation, for land acquisition and restoration projects. The Refuge provides public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography, and improves the water quality of the Patoka River. Refuge staff is also working with local communities to develop citizen understanding and support for natural resources.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire multiple tracts totaling 200 acres. The Refuge has focused on the acquisition of bottomland forests and wetlands, along with associated upland forests and grasslands that provide a good mix of roosting and foraging habitats. Acquisition will expand public recreational activities, including hunting and fishing.

There are more than 380 species of wildlife on the Refuge, including the Federally listed endangered Indiana bat. Ensuring a large contiguous forested habitat is critical to maintaining an Indiana bat population. Protected areas provide a natural buffer from soil erosion and other run-off to improve water quality in the watershed of the Patoka River. Acquisition will expand public recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography. Land acquisitions in this area provide recreation

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opportunities to diverse nearby communities including Evansville and Indianapolis, Indiana and Louisville, Kentucky.

**Cooperator(s):**

Ducks Unlimited, Friends of Patoka Refuge, Sycamore Land Trust, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, National Wild Turkey Federation, Indiana Department of Transportation, Duke Energy, Evansville Chapter of the Audubon Society, and USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$10,000	Annual: \$1,500

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include initial restoration and posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include habitat management, enhancement (spraying, mowing, prescribed burns), and law enforcement.



**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 13

**Project / Unit:** Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** IL, MO

**Congressional District(s):** IL-12, MO-1, MO-2, MO-3, MO-8

**Location:**

Situated along the Mississippi River, in Illinois and Missouri, from St. Louis to the Cairo.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2022	500	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	8,215	\$3,040,000
Remaining to Be Acquired	5,417	\$10,000,000

**Project Description:**

The Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2000. Initial land acquisition was in response to the flood of 1993. Refuge lands lie within the uncontrolled portion of the Middle Mississippi River, below the confluence with the Missouri, where river levels are not regulated by the lock and dam system. The Refuge is primarily floodplain hardwood forest, marsh/wetland, and open water. Refuge lands provide access to the floodplain for native fish during high water stages and create a corridor of floodplain forest habitat for migratory birds and resident wildlife. The Refuge was designated as an Important Bird Area in 2008. The Refuge supports goals implemented consistent with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and supports migratory birds of conservation concern including landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, such as hunting and fishing.

The Refuge participates in the Middle Mississippi River Partnership (MMRP). MMRP is a collaboration of 22 Federal and State agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and universities working together since 2004 towards a common goal of restoring and enhancing the natural resources of the river corridor from St. Louis, Missouri to Cairo, Illinois.

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**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire 500 acres from multiple landowners. Acquisitions will facilitate natural river floodplain restoration opportunities, which will support species of concern including pallid sturgeon, least tern, and many mussel species. Water levels may fluctuate greatly in this "open river" section of the Mississippi, and frequent flooding occurs. Acquisition allows for restoration to a naturally functioning floodplain system, which increases water quality and water storage during flood events. Acquired lands will also expand public recreational opportunities.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, local municipal entities, and the States of Missouri and Illinois.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$8,000	Annual: \$2,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include initial restoration and posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include habitat management (spraying, mowing, etc.), law enforcement, and enhancement.

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**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 14

**Project / Unit:** San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** CA

**Congressional District(s):** CA-16

**Location:**

Stanislaus County, approximately 10 miles southwest of Modesto, California

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
Estimate for FY 2022	160	\$2,500,000
Acquired to Date	11,508	\$51,302,794
Remaining to Be Acquired	13,143	98,572,500

**Project Description:**

Established in 1987, the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge is situated where three major rivers (Tuolumne, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin) join in the San Joaquin Valley, creating a mix of habitats that provide ideal conditions for high wildlife and plant diversity. The Refuge was initially established primarily to protect and manage habitat for the Aleutian cackling goose—a then federally listed endangered species. Today, the Refuge is managed with a focus on migratory birds and endangered species that includes Swainson’s hawks who nest in the canopy of tall cottonwood trees; herons and cormorants that form communal nesting colonies within the tops of the large valley oaks; and the endangered riparian brush rabbits that have been re-introduced to this restored habitat from captive-reared populations. These woodlands also support a diversity of breeding songbirds including grosbeaks, orioles, flycatchers, and warblers, as well as the least Bell’s vireo—an endangered species which had last nested in the San Joaquin Valley more than five decades ago. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation, such as wildlife viewing and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire a 160-acre tract that is a key remnant of riparian habitat along the San Joaquin River. Acquisition will benefit federally listed species including endangered riparian brush rabbit, riparian woodrat, least Bell’s vireo, Central Valley spring run Chinook salmon, and giant garter snake. The acquisition supports a number of regional conservation plans including the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program, Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley, Central Valley Joint Venture, Riparian Bird Conservation Plan, and the Least Bell’s Vireo Recovery Plan. Stanislaus County has underserved and non-English speaking communities at risk; the acquisition will provide outdoor recreation and education opportunities to these communities.

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**Cooperator(s):**

California Department of Fish & Wildlife, California State Parks, Oakland Zoo, River Partners, Ducks Unlimited, California Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, and Point Blue Conservation Science.

**Savings/Costs**

**Startup**

**Annual**

**Estimated O&M Savings:**

Startup: \$0

Annual: \$0

**Estimated O&M Costs:**

Startup: \$5,000

Annual: \$1,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include boundary marking. Annual costs include maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 15

**Project / Unit:** Lower Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** TX

**Congressional District(s):** TX-15, TX-28, TX-34

**Location:**

South Texas: Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	357	\$1,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	104,675	\$83,894,343
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	27,568	\$74,528,300

**Project Description:**

Since the 1930s, 95 percent of the native habitat found within the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Valley) has been cleared for agricultural or urban development. This development has relegated native plants and animals to remnant tracts, possibly compromising the genetic integrity of many species. Hoping to connect and protect these isolated tracts of habitat, the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1979 with a management priority to protect biodiversity. As a wildlife corridor, the Refuge follows the Rio Grande along the last 275 river miles, connecting isolated tracts of land managed by private landowners, non-profit organizations, the State of Texas, and two other National Wildlife Refuges, Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana. During migration, birds from the Central and Mississippi flyway converge in the Valley. Where possible, migrating birds avoid flying too far east (over the Gulf Coast) or too far west (over the desert) and end up funneling through this region. Many birds from South and Central America reach the northernmost point of their range on the Rio Grande with some species literally not migrating any farther north than the river. In addition, the Valley is where four climates (temperate, desert, coastal, and sub-tropical) converge. The 365-day growing season and rich soils of the Rio Grande delta have resulted in over 1,200 plant species within the Valley. This plant diversity attracts and supports a diversity of wildlife, birds, and butterflies that depend on the vegetation that can only be found here in the United States. The Refuge also provides public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, such as wildlife viewing, photography, and hunting.

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**Purpose / Need:**

In FY 2022, the Service will acquire the first of two phases beginning with the acquisition of 357 acres of a 1,284-acre tract. Acquisition of the property expands protection for endangered species, such as the ocelot, and for native species, such as white-tailed deer, bobcats, chachalacas, and great kiskadees, along with a variety of migratory bird species. Approximately 120 acres of the 357 acres to be acquired contain undisturbed native brush and the remainder is former farmland, with irrigable acreage. Restored areas will provide increased vegetative and wildlife species while expanding public recreation opportunities in a State with limited public lands.

**Cooperator(s):**

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas General Land Office, Texas Department of Transportation, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy-Texas, Texas Commission for Environmental Quality, Ducks Unlimited, The Peregrine Fund, Coastal Conservation Association-Texas Chapter, The Rio Grande Valley Nature Coalition, and the Partners for Conservation.

**Savings/Costs**

**Startup**

**Annual**

**Estimated O&M Savings:**

Startup: \$0

Annual: \$0

**Estimated O&M Costs:**

Startup: \$10,000

Annual: \$1,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include fencing and posting of Refuge boundaries, which the Service would fund from the Refuge's base funding.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 16

**Project / Unit:** Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** AR

**Congressional District(s):** AR-1

**Location:**

Adjacent to the White and Cache Rivers, 75 miles northeast of Little Rock in Monroe, Prairie, Woodruff, Jackson, Cross, and Poinsett Counties.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	285	\$1,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	72,608	\$72,377,190
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	213,379	\$532,556,155

**Project Description:**

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1986 to protect significant wetland habitats and provide critical feeding and resting areas for migrating and wintering waterfowl. As one of the few remaining areas in the Lower Mississippi River Valley not drastically altered by channelization and drainage, the Cache River basin contains a variety of wetland communities including some of the most intact and least disturbed bottomland hardwood forests in the Mississippi Valley region and is the most important wintering area for mallard ducks in North America. The exemplary quality and diversity of habitats attract a wide variety of fish and wildlife species, including listed species or candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act such as northern long-eared bat, eastern black rail, interior least tern, piping plover, and monarch butterfly. The wetlands have been designated by the Ramsar Convention as "Wetlands of International Importance". The Refuge is a nationally renowned area for waterfowl hunting. The Refuge also provides other public recreation opportunities, such as fishing, boating, wildlife observation, photography, and hiking.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire fee title to approximately 285 acres from willing sellers in the floodplain of the Cache River. Acquisition will conserve important examples of bottomland hardwood ecosystems containing regenerating and existing forest, hardwood swamp, streams, permanent ponds, and herbaceous wetlands. The tracts contain high-value foraging, migrating, and wintering habitats for waterfowl, shorebirds, and waterbirds. Acquisition will help to increase water quality in the Cache River by reducing erosion, sedimentation, and buffering nutrient and chemical runoff. The tracts will provide access from county roads, U.S. highways, and the Cache River, significantly expanding public access and opportunities for hunting and fishing, boating, wildlife observation, photography, and hiking. These properties are located in very

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rural, economically depressed areas of Arkansas that depend on the Refuge for hunting and fishing. Acquisition will also provide future habitat for migratory birds that will need to adjust to loss of wintering habitat in coastal zone areas due to sea level rise.

**Cooperator(s):**

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, Quail Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Arkansas Bow Hunters Association, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, The Conservation Fund, Arbor Day Foundation, and Audubon Arkansas.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$5,000	Annual: \$500

**Describe O&M:**

The Service anticipates initial costs for boundary marking, which the Service would fund from Refuge System base funding. Annual costs are for maintenance.

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**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 17

**Project / Unit:** Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** VA

**Congressional District(s):** VA-1

**Location:** The Rappahannock River watershed, from Skinkers Neck in Caroline County to Belle Isle State Park in Lancaster County.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	500	\$2,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	9,582	\$24,775,570
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	9,918	\$25,638,030

**Project Description:**

The Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1996. The Refuge protects wetlands and their associated uplands along the Rappahannock River and its major tributaries. Refuge units are located in Essex, King George, Caroline, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties and include freshwater tidal marsh, forest swamp, upland deciduous forest, mixed pine forest, and grassland habitats. In 2007, areas of the Refuge were designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. Shorebirds, neotropical migrant songbirds, raptors, and marsh birds rely on the Rappahannock River’s corridors during the spring and fall migration periods. With help from partners and volunteers, Refuge staff are restoring native grasslands and riparian forests along the river and tributary streams to provide additional habitat for these species. Some of the species the Refuge focuses management actions on include bald eagles, forest dwelling species such as wood thrush and scarlet tanager, and grassland nesting birds such as grasshopper sparrow and northern bobwhite.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire 500 acres of a 1,000-acre tract adjacent to existing Refuge lands. The area, known as “Fones Cliff,” has been a top priority for the Refuge and its partners for well over a decade. Fones Cliff is within Audubon’s Lower Rappahannock River Important Bird Area. It supports the densest breeding population of bald eagles in Virginia and is one of the largest summer and winter eagle concentration areas in eastern North America. This area also holds cultural significance for the federally recognized Rappahannock Tribe, which purchased adjacent lands in 2017. Acquisition will provide the opportunity to

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work in partnership with the Tribe as neighbors. The acquisition will also protect potential habitat for federally listed species, such as sensitive joint vetch, Indiana bat, and northern long-eared bat.

**Cooperator(s):**

Rappahannock Tribe, Commonwealth of Virginia, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Chesapeake Conservancy, National Park Service, and The Conservation Fund.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$5,000	Annual: \$3,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary posting and signage. Annual costs include habitat restoration, law enforcement, and maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 18

**Project / Unit:** Bear River Watershed Conservation Area

**State(s):** ID, UT, WY

**Congressional District(s):** ID-2, UT-1, WY-AL

**Location:**

Northeastern corner of Utah, extending into southeastern Idaho and southwestern Wyoming. (Bannock, Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power Counties in Idaho; Box Elder, Cache, Rich, and Summit Counties in Utah; and Lincoln and Uinta Counties in Wyoming).

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	2,980	\$2,316,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	780	\$935,940
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	916,240	\$741,948,060

**Project Description:**

The Bear River Watershed Conservation Area was established in 2016. The Service works with private landowners to help maintain important habitat; maintain major migration corridors connecting the northern and southern Rockies; coordinate watershed-wide conservation efforts; and protect valuable farm and ranch lands. Wetlands and riparian areas in the watershed’s lower elevations provide some of the most important resting, staging, feeding, breeding, and nesting areas for migratory birds in the Pacific and Central Flyways. The watershed also provides critical wildlife habitat linkages and migratory corridors between the northern and southern Rockies and between Idaho and the Greater Yellowstone ecosystems for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, and moose. In addition to supporting big game species, existing national wildlife refuges and adjacent protected lands provide habitat for over 270 other species; easement acquisition would improve connectivity among these protected lands. The watershed supports millions of birds, including 46 percent of the white-faced ibis, 24 percent of the marbled godwit, and 18 percent of the black-necked stilt populations in North America, and also provides habitat for greater sage-grouse and Bonneville cutthroat trout. Conservation easements would protect watershed habitat and preserve the agricultural heritage of the landscape.

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**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on approximately 2,980 acres. Acquisition will protect key wintering areas and migration corridors for elk, mule deer, moose, and pronghorn within the Great Salt Lake and Bear Lake watersheds. Wetlands and riparian areas in the Bear River watershed's lower elevations also provide some of the most important resting, staging, feeding, breeding, and nesting areas for migratory birds in the Pacific and Central Flyways. Acquiring conservation easements from willing sellers allows landowners to continue historic ranching and hunting activities. The easements will also protect genetically pure populations of Bonneville cutthroat trout and may prevent future listing under ESA.

**Cooperator(s):**

Bear River Land Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust, Western Rivers Conservancy, and the Intermountain West Joint Venture.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Annual costs include easement monitoring and enforcement.

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**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 19

**Project / Unit:** Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge

**State(s):** AR

**Congressional District(s):** AR-4

**Location:**

Ashley County in southeast Arkansas.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	2,143	\$4,500,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	67,725	\$3,825,188
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	26,173	\$49,955,272

**Project Description:**

Established in 1975, Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge is located in southeast Arkansas, approximately eight miles west of the town of Crossett. Named for a small community located at its southwest corner, this 65,000 acre refuge contains an abundance of water resources dominated by the Ouachita and Saline Rivers and the Felsenthal Pool. The low-lying areas are dissected by an intricate system of rivers, creeks, sloughs, buttonbush swamps, and lakes throughout a vast bottomland hardwood forest that gradually rises to an upland forest community. Historically, periodic flooding of the "bottoms" during winter and spring provided excellent wintering waterfowl habitat. These wetlands, in combination with the pine and upland hardwood forest on the higher ridges, support a wide diversity of native plants and animals. The Refuge provides wintering habitat for hundreds of thousands of migrating waterfowl. Refuge lands are also used by neotropical migratory birds following the Ouachita River during their spring and fall migrations. The Refuge provides nesting habitat for prothonotary, Swainson's and worm-eating warblers, Mississippi kites, and wood ducks. The Refuge also provides habitat for priority species such as black bear, Rafinesque's big-eared bat, southeastern myotis, and the Federally listed red-cockaded woodpecker. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation, such as wildlife-viewing, hunting, fishing, boating, and camping.

**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire fee title to a 2,143-acre tract from a willing seller. The acquisition of this tract will increase the core forest block of the Refuge and associated natural habitats dominated by bottomland hardwood forest, upland pine forest, and backwater sloughs. The bottomland hardwood forests and other wetlands are influenced by the Ouachita River and Saline River watersheds as well as the Felsenthal lock and dam. Much of the Refuge currently has restricted access due to adjacent private land holdings. This acquisition will enhance public access and increase recreational use on existing Refuge lands that are currently inaccessible. The proposed acquisition within the floodplain of the Ouachita River will help protect

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the natural flooding that is occurring and subsequently facilitate seed dispersal, sediment deposition, nitrogen, and carbon storage, nutrient recycling, and vegetation reestablishment.

**Cooperator(s):**

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Arkansas Bow Hunters Association, The Conservation Fund, The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, Friends of Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and local hunting and fishing groups.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$10,000	Annual: \$2,500

**Describe O&M:**

The Service anticipates initial costs associated with boundary marking to be derived from refuge base funding. Annual costs include law enforcement and maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2022

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**Priority:** 20

**Project / Unit:** Montana National Wildlife Refuges and Conservation Areas (Charles M. Russell NWR/Rocky Mountain Front CA/Blackfoot Valley CA/ Lost Trail CA/ Swan Valley CA)

**State(s):** MT

**Congressional District(s):** MT-AL

**Location:**

Western and north-central Montana.

Land/Cost	Acres	\$
<b>Estimate for FY 2022</b>	18,000	\$12,000,000
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	1,088,959	\$62,414,357
<b>Remaining to Be Acquired</b>	303,751	\$132,131,547

**Project Description:**

The Lost Trail, Rocky Mountain Front, Blackfoot Valley, and Swan Valley Conservation Areas surround one of the largest wilderness areas in the continental United States. The Conservation Areas protect a wild landscape of sage steppe, mixed grass prairie, montane forest, lakes, and rivers.

As one of the newest units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the Lost Trail Conservation Area (LTCA) represents state-of-the-art conservation design. LTCA encompasses 100,000 acres of private forestland surrounding Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge. The LTCA boundary was drawn to include the migration corridor for an elk herd that winters on the Flathead Indian Reservation and is significant to the Confederated Tribes of the Salish and Kootenai. LTCA also includes a federally identified grizzly bear migration corridor, allowing for critical movement and genetic diversity identified in the species recovery report.

The Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area (RMFCA) adjoins one of the largest wilderness areas in the continental United States. The RMFCA protects a wild landscape of sage steppe, mixed grass prairie, montane forest, lakes, and rivers. This working landscape supports massive herds of big game species through every stage of their life cycles and is vital breeding habitat for grassland birds and waterfowl.

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**Purpose / Need:**

The Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on approximately 18,000 acres in two project areas. The first acquisition, a 14,000 acre working timberland and recreational access easement, will be the first acquisition at LTCA and will establish the Conservation Area as a new unit of the NWRS. The proposed conservation easement will protect critical habitat and migration corridors for grizzly bear, elk, and other iconic species, as well as guarantee continued public recreational access and traditional native uses in perpetuity, something that has drawn near universal support from Tribal partners, local government officials, hunting groups, conservation groups, and residents. The second acquisition is a 4,000 acre working ranch conservation easement within the RMFCA. The proposed conservation easement acquisition is in the "Continental Divide to Rocky Mountain Front East" priority area identified in the Montana State Wildlife Action Plan and protects critical elk, deer, and pronghorn antelope wintering habitat and migration corridors. The proposed easement acquisition buffers public lands open to hunting and bolsters the rural ranching economy.

**Cooperator(s):**

Mule Deer Foundation; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Trout Unlimited; The Conservation Fund; The Richard King Mellon Foundation; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation; The Nature Conservancy; Confederated Tribes of the Salish and Kootenai; Rocky Mountain Front Landowner Advisory Group; Lewis & Clark, Powell, and Missoula County Commissioners; and Montana Wilderness Association.

<b>Savings/Costs</b>	<b>Startup</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	Startup: \$500	Annual: \$1,500

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include monitoring of conservation easements and maintenances of roads and trails.

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