

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2021

Project / Unit: Green River National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 01

State(s): KY

Congressional District(s): KY-1

Location:

Henderson County, adjacent to the Ohio River at its confluence with the Green River; approximately 3 miles from Henderson

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
727	\$4,000,000
Acquired to Date	
10	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	
23,263	\$123,000,000

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire 727 fee acres for Green River National Wildlife Refuge in Henderson County, Kentucky. The purposes of the Refuge are to conserve habitat for waterfowl, nongame birds, fish, and other wildlife; provide high-quality hunting and sport fishing opportunities; provide opportunities for public use and environmental education and interpretation; work with conservation partners to enhance the ecological function of the area; and ensure healthy wildlife populations for the benefit of the community, State, and Nation. The tract is low-lying farmland in the floodplain of the Ohio River, located within the Horseshoe Bend Unit of the Refuge. The property has frontage on the Ohio River and experiences regular backwater flooding. The property is west of the John J. Audubon State Park. Acquisition will augment conservation efforts by the State and the Service.

Purpose / Need:

To protect, restore, and enhance waterfowl habitat and to provide public outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing.

Cooperator(s):

Kentucky Division of Forestry, Kentucky Department of Parks, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Louisville District of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Henderson County Tourism, Southern Conservation Corporation, Ducks Unlimited, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$10,000	Annual: \$1,000

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include boundary posting and signage. Annual costs include maintenance and law enforcement.

Project / Unit: Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 02

State(s): IA, MN

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

Location:

Located in portions of 48 counties in MN and 37 in IA, 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.

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
175	\$500,000
Acquired to Date	
11,858	\$7,530,991
Remaining to be Acquired	
64,967	\$100,607,975

Project Description:

With the requested funding, the Service will acquire approximately 175 fee acres in western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge conserves the rarest and most fragmented prairie/grassland ecosystem in America that is also one of the most important waterfowl production areas. The Service's goal for the Refuge is to conserve 77,000 acres, or about 25 percent of the remaining grassland ecosystem. The Refuge provides opportunities for public hunting of migratory birds and small, upland, and big game species.

Land acquisition enables the Service to protect, restore, and manage the critical remaining prairie grasslands within the Refuge's approved acquisition boundary and increases opportunities for public wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and hiking. Conservation partners in Minnesota and Iowa will leverage acquisitions by providing matching funds or donating land. Some of the land donations are made possible by State of Minnesota grants and are immediately open for public hunting and fishing.

The Refuge has nationally significant habitat for breeding migratory birds, such as the marbled godwit and yellow rail, and for waterfowl, including mallards and northern pintail. The Refuge is also important habitat for blue-winged teal, Canada goose, canvasback, gadwall, lesser scaup, redhead, and green-winged teal. Approximately 243 species of birds are known to regularly use the Northern Tallgrass Prairie region at some period during the year, including 152 breeding species. Grassland nesting birds at the Refuge include black-billed cuckoo, bobolink, Connecticut warbler, dickcissel, and upland sandpiper. The grasslands also support native pollinators, such as bumblebees and monarch butterflies. Federally threatened and endangered species on the Refuge include four plant and seven animal species, including western prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover, and piping plover. Several globally rare species can also be found there, including the last remaining U.S. populations of the Dakota skipper and regal fritillary butterflies, whose numbers are in steep decline.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of these lands would allow the Service to protect, restore, and enhance the remaining Northern Tallgrass Prairie habitat, one of the most rare and fragmented ecosystems in America; conserve associated prairie wildlife species; and provide public outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing.

Cooperator(s): Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, county conservation boards, and local Chambers of Commerce

Estimated O&M Savings:	Start-up: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Start-up: \$1,250	Annual: \$1,000

Describe O&M:

Initial restoration and enhancement work (spraying, mowing, prescribed burns, public access signs).

Project / Unit: Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 03

State(s): LA

Congressional District(s): LA-2

Location:
Orleans Parish

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
800	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
24,651	\$12,190,100
Remaining to be Acquired	
8,917	\$17,834,000

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire 800 fee acres for phased acquisition of a 2,703-acre tract for Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, an urban refuge in Orleans Parish, Louisiana. The tract is situated within the city limits of New Orleans and will provide direct access to the Refuge from the I-10 corridor. Known as "Little Pine Island," the tract consists of open water, marsh, and forested ridges that provide habitat for wintering waterfowl and migratory birds. In addition, the tract has a 4-acre Native American archaeological site. Acquisition will improve public access to wildlife-dependent recreation, such as fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation, especially for nearby communities.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition will provide residents of and visitors to the City of New Orleans—particularly underserved communities—access to the Refuge for outdoor and wildlife-dependent recreation. The tract will also provide additional habitat for wintering waterfowl and migratory birds and will allow the Service to manage desired vegetative communities through prescribed fires and hazardous fuel reduction.

Cooperator(s):

The Conservation Fund, City of New Orleans, Audubon of New Orleans

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$20,000	Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M:

The startup costs for this acquisition would include installation of boundary signs.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2021

Project / Unit: Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 04

State: WV

Congressional District(s): WV-1

Location:
Tucker County

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
1,000	\$3,500,000
Acquired to Date	
16,959	\$39,748,564
Remaining to be Acquired	
10,040	\$18,582,436

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire 1,000 fee acres for Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The acquisition is the first phase of a multiyear project to acquire a 3,301-acre tract of wetland and forest habitats. The initial phase would enable the Service to connect two public use trails on the eastern end of the Refuge, creating one longer, looped trail. The acquisition will also connect 412 acres of existing Refuge lands to county roads, allowing for public access for wildlife-dependent recreational activities—including hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation—and mountain biking, and horseback riding. Acquisition would allow the Service to manage for early successional habitat, which would benefit turkey and deer populations. Public hunting opportunities include turkey, white-tailed deer, and black bear.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of the 3,301-acre tract would connect an existing 412-acre isolated tract to the rest of the Refuge's 16,500 acres and would provide connectivity for public recreation, wildlife corridors, and resource management.

Cooperator(s):

West Virginia Department of Natural Resources; Ruffed Grouse Society; The Nature Conservancy; The Conservation Fund; and West Virginia Land Trust

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$14,000	Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M:

An existing parking lot and a recently improved access road will minimize startup and annual costs. About \$4,000 will be needed to remove old signs and install new ones. Another \$10,000 will initially be needed for inventory, survey, and removal of invasive species, and associated costs may extend to subsequent years.

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2021

Project / Unit: Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 05

State(s): WA

Congressional District(s): WA-3

Location:

Pacific County, near the community of Long Beach

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
914	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
17,269	\$16,692,928
Remaining to be Acquired	
6,124	\$15,310,000

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire 914 fee acres for Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge protects many diverse ecosystems, including salt marsh, muddy tidelands, forest, freshwater wetlands, streams, grasslands, coastal dunes, and beaches. This rich mix of habitats provides places for more than 200 bird species to rest, nest, and winter and also benefits chum salmon, river otter, Roosevelt elk, bobcat, and more than a dozen species of amphibians.

Funding would be used to acquire the last three large ownerships within the Nemah unit of the Refuge. The tracts would contribute to the protection and overall health and function of the watershed, which supports a healthy Willapa Bay and the aquatic species within it. The acquisitions would also create an opportunity to restore and enhance western red cedar forests to reestablish late successional old-growth function for the benefit of many migratory birds, big game species, and other species listed as threatened and endangered. These acquisitions would enhance and expand public access to existing Refuge lands for hunting and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of these lands would allow the Service to protect, restore, and manage areas of forests, streams, and wetlands; provide refuge for breeding and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds; contribute to the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species; and provide increased opportunities for wildlife-dependent public recreation, hunting, education, and research.

Cooperator(s):

The Nature Conservancy, Columbia Land Trust, and Forterra.

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$30,000	Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M:

Startup costs would include boundary marking.

Project / Unit: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 06

State(s): FL

Congressional District(s): FL-4

Location:

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

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
1,333	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
82,838	\$18,449,023
Remaining to be Acquired	
28,070	\$88,874,842

Project Description:

The Service will acquire 1,333 fee acres for St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. The acquisition will benefit federally listed threatened and endangered species such as red-cockaded woodpecker, wood stork, and frosted flatwoods salamanders as well as a variety of other resident and migratory species. The acquisition will help conserve a tapestry of Federal, State, and private forest lands that provide more than 1 million acres of unfragmented wildlife habitat. The entire project is in a designated Important Bird Area and a Land Management and Research Demonstration Site for Longleaf Pine Ecosystems, and it contains a key segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail. The acquisition will provide public hunting (white-tailed deer, turkey, feral hog, and small game) and other wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities.

Purpose / Need:

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; provide high-quality habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, waterbirds, and marsh birds; and provide public opportunities for hunting and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

Cooperator(s):

Sam Shine Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Florida Natural Areas Inventory, St. Marks Refuge Association, Florida Trail Association, Apalachee Audubon Society, Florida Wildlife Federation, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Division of Forestry, and National Wildlife Refuge Association

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 or partner funding.

Project / Unit: Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 07

State(s): TX

Congressional District(s): TX-34

Location:

South Texas: Lower Rio Grande Valley, in Cameron and Willacy Counties

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
1,687	4,500,000
Acquired to Date	
93,255	19,997,732
Remaining to be Acquired	
60,058	127,215,564

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire a 1,687-acre tract of native Tamaulipan brush and wetland habitats for Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is in deep South Texas, which is considered one of the most biologically diverse regions in North America. The Refuge was established in 1946 to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl and other migratory birds, principally redhead ducks. Today, an expanded emphasis includes endangered species conservation and management for shorebirds. The Refuge is a premiere birdwatching destination and supports 417 species of birds, 45 mammals, 44 kinds of reptiles, 130 butterflies and 450 plant species.

The acquisition supports a multiagency effort to create a wildlife corridor along the Laguna Madre from the Rio Grande to the northern ranchland areas, a distance of approximately 40 miles from the river. The tract will reduce habitat fragmentation by linking lands of Laguna Atascosa and Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuges. The tract also provides additional public access points to the 20,000+-acre Bahia Grande Unit. Acquisition will expand public access to wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, including wildlife observation and photography, hunting, hiking, and biking.

Purpose / Need:

Public use areas are limited in Texas, and acquisition will expand public access for wildlife-dependent recreation. Acquisition of the tract supports the State and the Service's coastal wildlife corridor objectives and enables the Service to protect habitat beneficial for a multitude of migratory and resident wildlife species.

Cooperator(s):

County of Cameron, Town of Laguna Vista, City of Brownsville, and The Conservation Fund

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$5,000	Annual: \$300

Describe O&M:

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

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

Priority: 08

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

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
190	\$750,000
Acquired to Date	
211,674	\$8,916,410
Remaining to be Acquired	
20,196	\$26,308,996

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire approximately 190 fee acres from willing sellers for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The Refuge is located along the Mississippi River and extends 261 river miles from the confluence of the Chippewa River in Wisconsin to near Rock Island, Illinois. The Refuge is designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and a Globally Important Bird Area. It is nationally known for waterfowl hunting and walleye, largemouth bass, crappie, catfish, and bluegill fishing. The Refuge provides year-round public fishing opportunities, including many ice fishing locations, and public hunting opportunities for white-tailed deer, turkey, and squirrel.

The Service is working on multiple acquisition projects along the length of the Refuge. Much of the land along the Mississippi River has limited access due to railroad trespass laws. The Service prioritizes acquisitions that have railroad access points or are adjacent to existing Refuge lands and State conservation areas so that the Service can restore wildlife habitat connectivity. The acquisitions will enable the Service to expand and enhance public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of this property will provide a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds, fish, other wildlife, and plants; conserve wildlife and plant species; and provide public recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing.

Cooperator(s):

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wisconsin DNR, Iowa DNR, Illinois DNR, 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

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	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.

Project / Unit: Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area

Priority: 09

Priority: 07

State(s): FL

Congressional District(s): FL-12, FL-15, FL-16

Location: Approximately 50 miles south of Orlando and 75 miles east of Tampa, in Okeechobee County

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
2,000	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
8,994	\$20,539,594
Remaining to be Acquired	
141,082	\$445,774,697

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire approximately 2,000 acres in fee for the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area in Central Florida. This acquisition will (1) support efforts to provide excellent public outdoor recreational opportunities, including hunting; (2) protect wildlife corridors; (3) promote groundwater recharge and protect watershed systems of the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee that provide the freshwater drinking supply for millions of Floridians; (4) protect significant dry prairie habitat—a globally imperiled natural community that supports myriad rare species; and (5) protect Florida’s cattle-ranching heritage.

The acquisition is part of a multiphase, multipartner project that has widespread stakeholder support, including the Florida Sportsmen’s Land Trust, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FLDEP), Florida Forest Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FLFWC), and ranching and environmental communities. In this next phase, the Service, in partnership with FLDEP, will acquire property adjacent to and within the Prairie South landscape to provide public outdoor recreational opportunities and contribute to wildlife corridor protection over one contiguous landscape. The acquisition will support the goals of the Department of Defense’s Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) program for Avon Park Air Force Range and will enable the Service and the State of Florida to provide the public with opportunities to hunt big game, upland game, and waterfowl.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition will provide public outdoor recreation opportunities and protect habitat and wildlife corridors used by game species and numerous Federal- and State-listed threatened and endangered species. The acquisition will also protect surface and groundwater recharge systems used by millions of south Floridians, including the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Kissimmee River, and Lake Okeechobee and will support the goals of the Department of Defense’s Avon Park Sentinel Landscape Partnership.

Cooperator(s):

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Florida Sportsman’s Trust; Florida Cattlemen’s Association; National Wildlife Refuge Association; Open Space Institute; Ducks Unlimited; U.S. Department of Defense; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Okeechobee, Osceola, Highlands, and Polk Counties; and The Nature Conservancy

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year: 2021

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: 12,000	Annual: \$10,000

Describe O&M:

The Service anticipates annual costs for habitat management efforts, including prescribed burning. Annual costs also include maintenance of infrastructure that supports public hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities.

Project / Unit: Dakota Grassland Conservation Area

Priority: 10

State(s): ND, SD

Congressional District(s): SD-AL, ND-AL

Location:

South Dakota and North Dakota, east of the Missouri River

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
5,720	\$4,000,000
Acquired to Date	
87,197	\$43,926,806
Remaining to be Acquired	
1,847,083	\$949,097,509

Project Description:

The Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) ecosystem consists of large, unique grassland and wetland complexes that provide critical habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, grassland birds, and other wildlife. Known as America’s “duck factory,” the PPR supports more than 50 percent of the total breeding population of North America’s migratory waterfowl. The prime breeding habitat for millions of ducks, the PPR includes parts of Iowa, the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Montana and can support upwards of 100 breeding duck pairs (200 breeding ducks) per square mile. The Dakota Grassland Conservation Area is part of a large-scale habitat conservation effort to protect this highly diverse and endangered ecosystem across the North and South Dakota portions of the PPR.

The Service has made significant progress in protecting priority waterfowl habitat in the PPR, but further habitat fragmentation and degradation continues at an alarming rate. Approximately 81 percent of the remaining grassland and 65 percent of wetlands in the PPR have no form of permanent protection.

The Service’s conservation easement acquisition program offers landowners a nonregulatory, financial incentive to permanently protect wildlife habitat on private lands in the PPR. The Service will use the proposed funding to acquire conservation easements from willing sellers on approximately 5,720 acres of grassland and wetland habitat in South Dakota and North Dakota. The funding leverages additional funding from Ducks Unlimited and other conservation partners.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of perpetual wetland and grassland conservation easements from willing sellers in the PPR will help reduce habitat fragmentation and protect important habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

Cooperator(s):

North Dakota Game and Fish Department; North Dakota Natural Resources Trust; Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; The Nature Conservancy; South Dakota Grassland Coalition; and private landowners

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0

Describe O&M:

The Service is already monitoring existing easements; the additional costs would be minimal.

Project / Unit: Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 11

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

Congressional District(s): CT-2, ME-2

Location:

Two of the properties are in New London County, CT, in the southeast corner of the State; a third property is in York County, ME, in the southern portion of that State

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
250	\$1,750,000
Acquired to Date	
144	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	
14,686	\$98,750,000

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire three tracts totaling 250 fee acres for Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge was established in 2016 with the purpose of conserving up to 15,000 acres of shrubland habitat in six states for the benefit of migratory birds and wildlife, including the New England cottontail. The Service will acquire one tract in Maine and two tracts in Connecticut that would be managed for early successional habitat, supporting healthy white-tailed deer and turkey populations and allowing for the expansion of public hunting opportunities.

The availability of public hunting in southern Maine is limited and acquisition of a 100-acre tract would provide a much-needed opportunity for local hunting. The tract has existing infrastructure that would support public archery and shotgun deer hunting as well as turkey hunting. The accessibility of the tract would make it ideal for junior and ADA-accessible hunting events.

One of the Connecticut tracts is adjacent to a State park that allows saltwater fishing and shell fishing, creating opportunities to work with our State partners to protect habitat and expand public recreational opportunities. The second targeted Connecticut tract is adjacent to a pending acquisition and is bordered by protected lands to the north and south, providing connectivity for wildlife and public recreation. The tract is also within a Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan focus area for conservation of habitat.

New England cottontail is either present on all tracts or located on adjacent or nearby lands. Existing infrastructure on all tracts could easily be converted to public trails and offer excellent opportunities for wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition supports State and Service goals for the perpetuation of shrubland habitat for the benefit of early successional-dependent migratory birds and other wildlife in decline, such as the New England cottontail. Acquisition will also provide public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing.

Cooperator(s):

State of Connecticut, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Audubon Society, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, York Land Trust, Kittery Land Trust, Great Works Land Trust, and Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$50,000	Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M:

Startup cost of \$50,000 would be used for boundary marking and to construct a public parking lot on the Maine tract.

Project / Unit: Bear River Watershed Conservation Area

Priority: 12

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)

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
800	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	
780	\$935,940
Remaining to be Acquired	
918,420	\$743,264,060

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on approximately 800 acres for the Bear River Watershed Conservation Area. 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 more than 270 other species; easement acquisition would improve connectivity between 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. It 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.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of easements will allow the Service to protect aquatic, riparian, wetland, and upland habitats; provide wildlife habitat connectivity and migratory corridors; maintain healthy populations of native wildlife species; protect and maintain water quality and quantity; increase the watershed’s resiliency during climate and land use changes; conserve the area’s working landscapes; and promote partnerships for a coordinated, watershed-level conservation effort.

Cooperator(s):

Idaho Fish and Game, Mule Deer Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Idaho Transportation Department, The Conservation Fund, Environment Coordination Committee, Western Rivers Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M:

Annual costs include easement monitoring and enforcement.

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

Priority: 13

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 entire Connecticut River Watershed.

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
1,891	\$2,750,000
Acquired to Date	
37,794	\$37,449,581
Remaining to be Acquired	
56,246	\$86,589,419

Project Description:

The Service will use the requested funding to acquire 321 fee acres and 1,570 acres of conservation easements for Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. Targeted properties include 22 acres of riparian habitat within the Fort River Division (MA); a 70-acre conservation easement within the Westfield River Division (MA); 100 acres of floodplain at the Fannie Stebbins Unit (MA); 35 acres at the Dead Branch Division (MA); 13 acres at the Salmon River Division (CT); 16 acres at the Maromas Division (CT); 20 acres at the Pondicherry Division (NH); 115 acres of grasslands at the Blueberry Swamp Division (NH); a 1,500-acre conservation easement at the Mascoma River Division (NH); and 11 acres at the Nulhegan Basin Division (VT).

Acquisition of the tracts will enhance connectivity across area, elevation, and latitude within the 7.2 million-acre Connecticut River watershed. Improving connectivity across the landscape will help waterfowl (27 species), other migratory birds (247 species), and threatened and endangered species (9 species) be resilient to temperature, precipitation, and water level changes in their habitats. The conservation easement in New Hampshire provides public access while allowing for continuation of working forestlands. The tracts are adjacent to existing Refuge lands and will enhance and expand public access to wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. Many of the tracts are suitable for youth and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-accessible hunting events.

Purpose / Need:

The purpose of this acquisition is to protect fisheries and wildlife resources and provide public access for a range of recreational opportunities on Refuge lands.

Cooperator(s):

States of Connecticut and Massachusetts and local communities hosting Refuge divisions; Friends of Conte; The Nature Conservancy; The Conservation Fund; Kestrel Land Trust; and Middlesex Land Trust. The four-state congressional delegation provides letters of support annually.

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$7,000	Annual: \$0

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include boundary posting.

Project / Unit: Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area

Priority: 14

State(s): KS

Congressional District(s): KS-1, KS-2, KS-4

Location:

The Flint Hills of eastern Kansas run north-south in a long, narrow band and include portions of 21 counties.

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
2,500	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	
9,054	\$3,016,450
Remaining to be Acquired	
1,088,446	\$435,983,550

Project Description:

Tallgrass prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States, with less than 4 percent of the original acreage remaining. Residential, commercial, and industrial development, as well as woody vegetation encroachment, have fragmented tallgrass prairie wildlife habitat. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism supports acquisitions for the Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area because it fulfills State goals to "maintain the integrity of tallgrass prairie wildlife habitat, stream water quality, and rich agricultural heritage of the Flint Hills."

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on 2,500 acres of tallgrass prairie for the Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area. These easements will permanently protect tallgrass prairie while allowing traditional ranching to continue. They will protect habitat for a wide variety of grassland-dependent birds and for the threatened Topeka shiner.

Landowner interest in selling is high, and the Service will focus on lands with high-quality tallgrass habitat and minimal fragmentation and woody vegetation encroachment. The Service will use the proposed easement acquisitions ultimately to protect 1,100,000 acres of the remaining Flint Hills tallgrass prairie.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of these easements will allow the Service to protect the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie ecosystem and associated grassland-dependent wildlife species while allowing traditional ranching and farming operations to continue.

Cooperator(s):

The Nature Conservancy; Kansas Land Trust; Ranchland Trust of Kansas; Tallgrass Legacy Alliance; Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism; The Conservation Fund; and the local community

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$500

Describe O&M:

Annual costs include monitoring of conservation easements.

Project / Unit: Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 15

State(s): CA

Congressional District(s): CA-1

Location:

An 80-mile stretch of the Sacramento River between Red Bluff and Princeton, in Tehama, Butte, Glenn, and Colusa Counties

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
691	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	
11,755	\$29,545,592
Remaining to be Acquired	
5,554	\$40,454,408

Project Description:

The Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1989, is on an 80-mile stretch of the Sacramento River between Red Bluff and Princeton, California. Refuge units are located along both sides of the river and serve to protect and provide a wide variety of riparian habitats. 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.

The Service proposes to acquire 691 fee acres on the west bank of the Sacramento River in Tehama County. The tract has more than 2 miles of frontage on the Sacramento River, and acquisition will provide public recreational opportunities for fishing, boating, and waterfowl hunting. The tract has an existing road network that will provide access for deer and small game hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, and biking. The tract is adjacent to a state recreation area, providing connectivity for public recreation and wildlife corridors.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of this land will enable the Service to maintain, enhance, and restore riparian habitat, wetlands, and uplands for the benefit of migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, and wildlife. It will also provide public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting and fishing.

Cooperator(s):

Tehama County; the Sacramento River Forum; The Nature Conservancy; AltaCal Audubon Society; California Department of Parks and Recreation; California Department of Water Resources

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	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 will include maintenance of simple sanitary facilities.

Project / Unit: Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 16

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

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
667	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
73,143,41	\$71,759,845
Remaining to be Acquired	
213,203	\$532,173,500

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire 667 fee acres for Cache River National Wildlife Refuge. The tracts are in the floodplain of the Cache River and contain regenerating and existing bottomland hardwood forest, hardwood swamp, streams, permanent ponds, and herbaceous wetlands subject to annual flooding. The diversity of habitats attracts and supports a wide variety of fish and wildlife species and is the most important wintering area for mallards in North America. The tract contains high-value habitats for waterfowl and waterbird breeding, migrating, foraging, and wintering. In addition, the tract hosts wood duck breeding, nesting, and brood-rearing habitats. These tracts are accessible from county roads, U.S. highways, and the Cache River and will significantly expand public access for hunting, fishing, boating, wildlife observation, and photography opportunities. The tract will provide outstanding public hunting opportunities for waterfowl and other migratory birds, upland birds, small game, and white-tailed deer.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition will provide much-needed public access to Refuge lands for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation. The tracts will support an abundance and diversity of waterfowl, other migratory birds, and species of concern identified in the Arkansas Wildlife Action Plan. The Refuge is designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Cooperator(s):

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission; Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Ducks Unlimited; Delta Waterfowl; National Wild Turkey Federation; Arkansas Bow Hunters Association; The Nature Conservancy; Trust for Public Lands; The Conservation Fund; Arbor Day Foundation; Audubon Arkansas; and Friends of Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	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.

Project / Unit: San Diego National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 17

State(s): CA

Congressional District(s): CA-53

Location:

San Diego County, about 15 miles east of the City of San Diego, in the San Miguel Mountains

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
185	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	
12,306	\$37,063,320
Remaining to be Acquired	
25,507	\$55,436,680

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire 185 fee acres for the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge. The tract, which is in the San Miguel Mountains, is surrounded by Refuge land. Acquisition of this tract and access road will eliminate concerns of public trespass on private lands and will improve public access to existing Refuge lands for hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife observation, and photography. Acquisition will also facilitate management efforts to restore and maintain habitat, such as prescribed fire. Acquisition furthers the goals of the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), a multiple-partner, landscape-wide habitat conservation plan to preserve habitat and species while allowing appropriate development in southwestern San Diego County.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of this tract will eliminate concerns of public trespass on private lands and will improve public access to other Refuge lands. Acquisition also supports the goals of the San Diego MSCP. The MSCP was developed to preserve "San Diego's native habitats and wildlife for future generations. It works across political boundaries, providing a unique framework for regionwide conservation efforts—balancing them with streamlined building regulations and permit processes to support healthy community growth."

Cooperator(s):

San Diego County; The Nature Conservancy; and Friends of San Diego National Wildlife Refuge

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$2,000	Annual: \$1,000

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include removal of boundary signs. Annual costs include monitoring and maintenance.

Project / Unit: Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 18

State(s): HI

Congressional District(s): HI-2

Location:

The Kona Forest Unit is near Honaunau on the leeward side of the Island of Hawai'i.

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
1,021	\$3,125,000
Acquired to Date	
48,279	\$47,629,165
Remaining to be Acquired	
24,001	\$24,001,000

Project Description:

Funding will be used to acquire 1,021 fee acres for the Hakalau Forest NWR—Kona Forest Unit, on the leeward side of the Island of Hawai'i. Current access to the Kona Forest Unit is by way of a shared access easement, which limits public access and compromises the effectiveness of habitat restoration activities. Funding would be used to acquire an adjacent parcel that is relatively flat and has frontage on the public highway, thereby improving access, safety, and visibility. The acquisition will enhance public access for recreational opportunities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, and photography.

The parcel is also important for recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered plants and forest birds and their habitats and provides important watershed value, including groundwater recharge and prevention of siltation of nearby marine environments.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition would allow for safe access by Refuge personnel and expand public access for recreational opportunities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, and photography. The acquisition would also protect habitat for populations of numerous federally listed threatened and endangered plant and forest bird species that inhabit higher elevations and would enhance—through connectivity—the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of wet and mesic forest ecosystems.

Cooperator(s):

Mauna Kea Watershed Alliance; Three Mountain Alliance; The Nature Conservancy—Hawaii; Hawaiian Islands Land Trust; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council; and Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$100,000	Annual: \$50,000

Describe O&M:

The Service anticipates an initial expense of \$100,000 for boundary marking and sign postage (high cost is due to terrain and soil conditions). Annual costs include monitoring and maintenance.

Project / Unit: Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 19

State(s): NV

Congressional District(s): NV-2

Location:

Churchill County, south of the Carson Sink, approximately 15 miles east of Fallon and 60 miles east of Reno

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
432	\$3,000,000
Acquired to Date	
81,322	\$5,685,740
Remaining to be Acquired	
81,698	\$22,000,000

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire 432 fee acres for Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, which is in the Lahontan Valley of north-central Nevada. This area has been designated a Site of International Importance by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network because of the hundreds of thousands of shorebirds—such as long-billed dowitcher, black-necked stilt, and American avocet—passing through during migration. The valley is also listed as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy and an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society due to the more than 280 breeding, migrating, and wintering bird species. Rich and diverse wetlands attract more than a quarter million waterfowl, as well as more than 20,000 other waterbirds, including American white pelicans, double-crested cormorants, white-faced ibis, and several species of egrets, herons, gulls, and terns.

The target tract stretches from existing Refuge lands to a paved county road. The tract also has an existing road network that will improve access to 1,500 acres of existing Refuge lands for public recreation including hiking, wildlife viewing, and photography. In addition, the tract contains a stream that flows into the Refuge and includes water rights that will improve water quality and quantity for the benefit of waterfowl and other species in this desert oasis.

Purpose / Need:

Restoration and protection of the targeted tract will improve water quality and quantity for existing Refuge lands and contribute to the conservation of migratory and resident waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway. Acquisition will also expand and enhance public recreational opportunities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, and photography.

Cooperator(s):

Nevada Waterfowl Association; Nevada Department of Wildlife; The Nature Conservancy; Audubon Society

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$10,000	Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include habitat restoration and boundary sign posting. Paved road frontage and excellent internal roads will keep annual costs minimal. Annual costs include maintenance of nominal managed wetland infrastructure (ditches and water control structures), vegetation management, water costs, and water management.

Project / Unit: Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 20

State(s): IL, WI

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

Location:

Walworth County, WI, and McHenry County, IL, from Genoa City, WI, to Wonder Lake, IL

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
150	\$500,000
Acquired to Date	
168	\$103,000
Remaining to be Acquired	
11,282	\$45,128,000

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire approximately 150 acres from willing sellers in northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin for the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is centrally located between the communities of Chicago and Rockford, Illinois, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as a conservation and outreach hub for the 12 million people who reside there. 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 provides habitat for breeding migratory birds—such as Henslow’s sparrows, bobolink, and eastern meadowlark—and several federally listed endangered and threatened species—including prairie bush clover, eastern prairie fringed orchid, whooping crane, and rusty patch bumblebee.

The acquisitions implement or complement State and local plans, including the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision; the Chicago Wilderness Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan; the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan; the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan; Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan; the Grassland Bird Conservation Design in the Chicago Region; the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Network; and the Nippersink Watershed Initiative.

Acquisition of targeted properties would provide the Service and conservation partners the ability to de-channelize and re-meander 2 miles of Nippersink Creek and restore an 880-acre marsh, wet prairie, and sedge meadow complex associated with the Nippersink headwaters. State and local agencies, along with other conservation partners, would further leverage acquisitions to expand conservation efforts through matching funds and donations.

The targeted tracts would provide additional hunting opportunities in northern Illinois, where public hunting is heavily restricted or dominated by private leases. Public recreational opportunities include migratory bird, small and upland game, and big game hunting; fishing; hiking; birding; photography; environmental interpretation; and education.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of this acreage would enable the Service to protect, restore, and enhance remnant oak savannahs, tallgrass prairie, riparian corridors, and wetlands; conserve associated wildlife species; provide education and interpretation opportunities; and enhance public outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing.

Cooperator(s):

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 NWR; Geneva Lake Conservancy; Nippersink

Watershed Association; Kettle Moraine Land Trust; Illinois Audubon Society; county conservation boards; and local Chambers of Commerce

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$12,000	Annual: \$2,000

Describe O&M:

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

Project / Unit: San Luis Valley Conservation Area

Priority: 21

State(s): CO, NM

Congressional District(s): CO-3, NM-3

Location:

South-central Colorado, extending into northern New Mexico and including Alamosa, Archuleta, Conejos, Custer, Hinsdale, Huerfano, Mineral, Saguache, and San Juan Counties in Colorado and Rio Arriba and Taos Counties in New Mexico.

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
1,100	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	
13	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	
242,887	\$201,000,000

Project Description:

The Service proposed the creation of the San Luis Valley Conservation Area (SLVCA) in 2010 to complement governmental and nongovernmental conservation efforts in the San Luis Valley. The valley encompasses more than 9,000 square miles of high-elevation habitat in the Rocky Mountains of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. The complex hydrology of the valley, combined with snowmelt from the surrounding mountains, has created a variety of dynamic wetlands and riparian corridors, including the headwaters of the Rio Grande River. The valley floor provides habitat for many Federal trust species, including the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher, and hosts 95 percent of the Rocky Mountain population of greater sandhill cranes during their annual migration. The SLVCA provides habitat for big game species, including elk, pronghorn, and mule deer.

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire conservation easements on approximately 1,100 acres in the San Luis Valley. Acquisition will focus on the protection of a network of vital wetlands and associated uplands that will benefit the management and objectives of Alamosa, Baca, and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges within the SLVCA. These refuges and adjacent protected lands currently support a variety of unique flora and fauna, and the acquisitions will improve connectivity between these protected lands while helping to preserve the agricultural heritage of the landscape. Due to a strong local conservation partnership, easement acquisitions will often include public access for hunting and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of these easements will allow the Service to protect Federal trust species and other plants and wildlife of the San Luis Valley while ensuring the long-term function and resilience of its diverse ecosystems. Acquisition will be focused on protecting land and water that support riparian areas, wetlands, and key uplands that complement and connect existing protected areas and that enhance public wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities. Acquisition will also focus on preserving habitat and migration corridors habitat for big game species, including elk, pronghorn, and mule deer.

Cooperator(s):

Western Rivers Conservancy; Colorado Parks and Wildlife; The Conservation Fund; The Nature Conservancy; Ute Nation; Trust of Public Land; and Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M:

Annual costs will include monitoring.

Project / Unit: Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 22

State(s): WA

Congressional District(s): WA-5

Location:

Approximately 20 miles southwest of Spokane, on the eastern edge of the Columbia Basin in eastern WA

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
784	\$1,500,000
Acquired to Date	
21,115	\$6,889,113
Remaining to be Acquired	
19,346	\$42,561,200

Project Description:

Funding would be used to acquire 784 fee acres for Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is on the eastern edge of the Columbia Basin in the Channeled Scablands region of Spokane County, Washington. The Channeled Scablands region is an area of regional and national conservation importance, containing a high density of wetland basins similar to the Prairie Pothole Region. The Refuge contains a unique assemblage of habitats, including wetland, aspen, riparian, Palouse steppe, and ponderosa pine.

Funding would be used to acquire two tracts. One tract is near the Refuge headquarters and is nearly surrounded by existing Refuge lands. The second tract is also adjacent to existing Refuge lands and includes several wetland areas and a mix of native grassland and ponderosa pine forest. Both of these areas support breeding waterfowl, including cinnamon, blue-winged, and green-winged teal; mallard; and gadwall. During the spring, flooded meadows and seasonal marshes also support migrating American wigeon and northern pintail. The tracts support nesting waterbirds, including American bitterns, sora, and Virginia rails. Acquisition will allow the Service and partners to restore the hydrology of wetlands, resulting in greater late-season brood water and the development of hemi-marsh that will improve production of all waterfowl species, including nesting redhead, canvasback, and ruddy ducks. Acquisition will enhance connectivity for wildlife corridors and public recreation, including hiking, wildlife observation, photography, interpretation, and hunting.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition will allow for restoration and maintenance of the Channeled Scablands for the benefit of waterfowl, wildlife, and plants. Acquisition will also expand public recreational opportunities, including hunting, hiking, wildlife observation, photography, and interpretation near an urban center.

Cooperator(s):

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge; Ducks Unlimited; Spokane Audubon Society

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$20,000	Annual: \$0

Describe O&M: Startup costs include posting of the boundary. Annual operation and maintenance support will be provided using existing operation and maintenance funds, equipment, and staff.

Project / Unit: Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge

Priority: 23

State(s): AR

Congressional District(s): AR-4

Location:

Union County in southeast Arkansas

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
952	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
66,424	\$2,280,460
Remaining to be Acquired	
29,372	\$54,000,000

Project Description:

The Service proposes to acquire 952 fee acres for Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge was established in 1975 to conserve bottomland hardwoods, backwater sloughs, and open water in the wetlands and upland pine and hardwood that are representative of the West Gulf Coastal Plain and provide wintering habitat for hundreds of thousands of waterfowl. Refuge lands are used by neotropical migratory birds following the Ouachita River during their spring and fall migrations, as well as nesting prothonotary, Swainson’s and worm-eating warblers, Mississippi kites, and wood ducks. The habitat supports priority species such as black bear, Rafinesque’s big-eared and southeastern myotis bats, and red-cockaded woodpeckers. The tract contains mostly bottomland hardwood forest, with some upland hardwood/pine and pine forest. Acquisition will increase the core forest block of the Refuge and provide corridors for migratory birds, bears, and other wildlife. The tract also includes a 200-acre lake that will be opened for public fishing. The acquisition will improve public access to existing Refuge lands and increase opportunities for fishing, hiking, wildlife observation, and hunting (white-tailed deer, turkey, waterfowl, and small game).

Purpose / Need:

The acquisition will protect federally listed endangered red-cockaded woodpecker populations and will enhance habitat for black bear, bats, migratory birds, and other wildlife. Acquisition will improve public access to existing Refuge lands and increase opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, and wildlife observation.

Cooperator(s):

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission; Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission; Ducks Unlimited; National Wild Turkey Federation; The Conservation Fund; Trust for Public Land; The Nature Conservancy; Friends of Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge; and local hunting and fishing groups

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	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 will include maintenance.

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

Priority: 24

State(s): MT

Congressional District(s): MT-AL

Location:
Western and north-central Montana

Estimate for FY 2021	
Acres	\$
2,756	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
1,068,863	\$54,749,357
Remaining to be Acquired	
339,091	\$149,796,547

Project Description:

With the requested funding, the Service will acquire 756 fee acres for Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (CMR) and 2,000 conservation easement acres within Rocky Mountain Front, Blackfoot Valley, and Swan Valley Conservation Areas. The acquisitions are within two of the four areas identified in the Montana Big- Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors Action Plan (“State Action Plan”), prepared under Secretary’s Order 3362, and address the principal threat identified in the State Action Plan: fragmentation of big game habitat. The acquisitions will also expand public recreational opportunities, including hunting; contribute to the recovery of federally listed endangered and threatened species (grizzly bear, prairie dog, grassland nesting birds); and support the economic viability of rural ranching communities.

The CMR in north-central Montana supports nearly 1 million acres of sage steppe, timbered coulees, and riparian habitat crucial for big game wintering and migration. CMR anchors the southern portion of the “Canadian Border to Fort Peck Reservoir” priority area identified in the State Action Plan. Twice a year, thousands of pronghorn antelope travel to and from Canada through the Refuge in what has been recently identified as the longest pronghorn migration corridor in North America. The Refuge is popular for elk, pronghorn antelope, and mule deer public hunting opportunities. The Service will acquire two tracts on the eastern side of the Refuge. The tracts contain habitat for pronghorn, sage grouse, and mule deer. Acquisition will expand public hunting and other recreational opportunities.

The 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. This working landscape supports massive herds of big game species through every stage of their life cycles. The Service’s proposed conservation easement acquisitions are in the heart of the “Continental Divide to Rocky Mountain Front East” priority area identified in the State Action Plan to protect critical elk, deer, and pronghorn antelope wintering habitat and migration corridors. The proposed easement acquisitions buffer public lands open to hunting and bolster the rural ranching economy.

Purpose / Need:

The acquisitions will support long-term viability of wildlife habitat in western and north-central Montana, protecting critical elk, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope wintering habitat and migration corridors and enhancing public wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting.

Cooperator(s):

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

Estimated O&M Savings:	Startup: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Startup: \$500	Annual: \$1,500

Describe O&M:

Startup costs include posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include monitoring of conservation easements and maintenance of roads and trails.