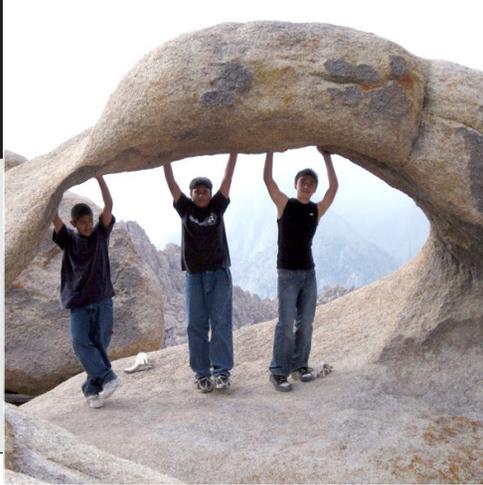


America's Great Outdoors



From restoring national treasures like the Everglades and the Great Lakes to connecting young people with recreational activities, the Administration has pursued a 21st century conservation agenda that builds healthy communities, grows our economy, and safeguards our most cherished natural resources.

*Nancy Sutley, Chair
Council on Environmental Quality
December 4, 2012*

Throughout American history, the great outdoors have shaped the Nation's character and strengthened its economy. In the increasingly urbanized and plugged-in society of the 21st Century, the threat of a diminished connection between people and the outdoors has never been greater. President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors initiative in April 2010 to address this challenge, charging his Cabinet, through the leadership of the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, and the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, with developing a 21st Century conservation agenda. These leaders turned first to the American people to learn which conservation and outdoor recreation issues mattered most. Through over 105,000 written comments and in 51 listening sessions in cities and communities across the Country, Americans collectively expressed they care deeply about enjoying a shared outdoor heritage, and they have a vibrant vision of how best to protect it.

Led by this public dialogue, the Department of the Interior in partnership with other Federal agencies developed an action plan to implement the initiative. Together with farmers, ranchers, outdoor enthusiasts, hunters, anglers, business leaders, Tribes, States, and local governments, Interior is connecting Americans to the outdoors and expanding access; establishing and revitalizing great urban parks and community green spaces; conserving and restoring large landscapes and working lands and waters; and enhancing rivers.



There are few gifts we can give our children and grandchildren that are more important than conserving our Nation's natural, historic and cultural heritage, and providing ample opportunities for them to experience it first-hand. Working hand in hand with communities through the America's Great Outdoors initiative, we have undertaken and completed countless projects to promote conservation efforts, provide more outdoor recreational opportunities, and support economic growth and job creation. I know that, together, we can continue to add to this impressive list of accomplishments in the coming years.

Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior
December 4, 2012

2014 BUDGET SUMMARY

The 2014 President's budget request maintains the Interior Department's commitment to its stewardship of America's Great Outdoors with a current request of \$5.3 billion. In addition to this current request, the Administration will submit a legislative proposal to permanently authorize annual funding, without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation, for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This will provide an additional \$141.0 million for

Interior programs, \$88.0 million for Federal land acquisition, and \$53.0 million for recreational and conservation grants. Together with the current request, a total increase of \$320.8 million will be provided compared to the 2012 enacted level.

Funding in support of the AGO initiative is focused in four areas: land management operations including youth programs; programs funded through the Land

AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS				
(dollars in millions)				
	2012 Enacted	2014 Current Request	2014 Permanent Request	2014 Total
LAND MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS				
Bureau of Land Management.....	1,072.2	1,095.8	0.0	1,095.8
Fish and Wildlife Service.....	1,226.2	1,295.1	0.0	1,295.1
National Park Service	2,236.6	2,284.9	0.0	2,284.9
Subtotal, Land Mgmt Operations	4,535.0	4,675.8	0.0	4,675.8
LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAMS				
Federal Land Acquisition.....	146.6	176.0	88.0	264.0
State Grants	44.9	40.0	20.0	60.0
Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Grants..	0.0	10.0	5.0	15.0
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund*	25.0	56.0	28.0	84.0
Subtotal, LWCF Programs	216.5	282.0	141.0	423.0
OTHER GRANT PROGRAMS				
Partnership Program.....	100.6	104.5	0.0	104.5
Rivers, Trails, Conservation Assistance	9.9	10.1	0.0	10.1
Historic Preservation and Battlefield Grants	57.3	60.3	0.0	60.3
Subtotal, Other Grant Programs	167.8	174.9	0.0	174.9
RECLAMATION RIVER RESTORATION.....	153.8	120.2	0.0	120.2
TOTAL, AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS	5,073.1	5,252.9	141.0	5,393.9

* In 2012, \$25.0 million was appropriated by Congress from the LWCF. The total appropriation for the program was \$47.7 million. The 2014 budget proposes to fund all of the CESCO from the LWCF.

and Water Conservation Fund, including Federal land acquisition and recreation and conservation grant programs in the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service; historic preservation as well as technical assistance programs that promote conservation and improve recreational access, particularly in urban areas; and Reclamation's river restoration activities conducted in collaboration with local and basin-wide watershed partnerships.

Land management operations will receive \$4.7 billion, an increase of \$140.8 million compared to 2012. This request provides \$1.1 billion to the Bureau of Land Management, \$1.3 billion to FWS, and \$2.3 billion to NPS for operations.

The budget includes a total current request of \$400.0 million for LWCF programs that conserve lands and support outdoor recreation within Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. Of this amount, Interior LWCF programs will receive \$282.0 million, a total increase of \$65.5 million compared to the 2012 enacted level. This includes \$176.0 million for Federal land acquisition, \$56.0 million for FWS Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grants, \$40.0 million for NPS State Assistance grants, and \$10.0 million for NPS Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery grants. With the permanent proposal, this is increased to \$264.0 million for Federal land acquisition, \$84.0 million for FWS CESCFC grants, \$60.0 million for NPS State Assistance grants, and \$15.0 million for NPS UPARR grants.

Other assistance programs will receive an increase of \$7.1 million for a total of \$174.9 million: \$104.5 million for FWS conservation grants, \$60.3 million for NPS historic preservation grants, and \$10.1 million for NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance.

Reclamation river restoration projects are funded at \$120.2 million, a decrease of \$33.6 million compared to 2012 and an increase of \$10.7 above the 2013 Continuing Resolution, P.L. 112-175 annualized. This reduction is primarily due to the completion of the Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project.



CONNECTING AMERICANS TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

America's national parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, and national conservation areas and other outdoor spaces are treasured for their beauty, the recreational opportunities they provide, and for their value to our culture and history. Spending time in the outdoors provides Americans with many ways to stay active, allowing people to improve their physical and mental health, have fun and engage in new experiences, while experiencing the importance of conservation. The AGO initiative is increasing opportunities throughout the Country for Americans to connect to the great outdoors. Interior-managed Federal lands and waters offer millions of visitors wide-ranging opportunities to make a personal connection to the outdoors by providing a vast array of trails, roads, and facilities that support and promote a broad range of educational, recreational, and tourism opportunities. Interior is working to better inform the public about national recreational opportunities and make public lands, particularly urban lands and waters, more accessible to visitors. Additionally, engaging young people in conservation and outdoor recreation through employment, education, and volunteer activities continues to be a focal point of AGO that will cultivate a new generation of stewards to protect outdoor places.

In addition to its recreational, cultural, and historic value, America's outdoors provide vital jobs and economic benefits to communities across the Country. In 2012, the Outdoor Industry Association reported that, nationwide, recreation activities including hunting, camping, biking, and boating resulted in \$646 billion in outdoor recreation spending each year, which in turn supported 6.1 million jobs. Much of this is spent in Interior's 401 national park units, 561 national wildlife refuges, and BLM's 21 national conservation areas and similarly designated areas, and 19 national monuments. Looking at data specific to Interior, across all sectors its activities contributed \$384.8 billion to the Nation's economy and supported an estimated 2.4 million jobs. Of this impact, recreation and tourism contributed \$48.7 billion and supported nearly 403,000 jobs.

The 2014 budget includes \$4.7 billion to fund the operations that conserve and maintain these public lands, 41 percent of the Department's 2014 budget request, and an increase of \$140.8 million over 2012 enacted. The following sections highlight

the operational budget for each land management bureau in 2014.

LAND MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

In 2014, the budget features program increases in the application of science on public lands. Across Interior, the budget includes an increase of \$143.6 million for research and development, of which \$45.4 million is funded within the three land management agencies and Reclamation. As a result of these investments, Interior will be able to address critical challenges in energy production and the management of ecosystems, invasive species, public lands, and water.

Specific examples of science increases, including those not identified in the government-wide summary of research and development, include a \$21.1 million increase for invasive species control on Interior lands and waters, such as providing additional funds to control quagga and zebra mussels in parks in the West. The spread of quagga mussels to Lake Mead and Lake Mohave alone will potentially cost millions of dollars by clogging engines and encrusting boats and facility infrastructure, disrupting the food chain, reducing sport fishing, and littering beaches with shell debris. Preventing the further spread of invasive species such as these is a high priority for Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, as well as private landowners and companies.

The budget requests \$4.5 million for the three land management bureaus and Reclamation to fund interagency AGO projects that demonstrate ecosystem and landscape-scale conservation in the Southwest Deserts, Crown of the Continent, and Grasslands of the Northern Great Plains landscapes. This increase supports an Administration initiative to establish regional interagency landscape conservation teams. These landscapes serve as demonstration sites and models for aligning, targeting, and better leveraging Federal resources to achieve more strategic landscape conservation outcomes. This increase will support coordinated research to enhance the models used to guide ecosystem restoration and improve ecosystem services while tackling such issues as invasive plants and species restoration. Coordinating efforts in these ecosystems will greatly contribute to species and habitat preservation in these areas.

Another example of the Administration's landscape-scale conservation efforts are the multi-agency efforts in support of Everglades restoration. Eliminating barriers to overland flow of water in the Everglades is one of the indisputable tenets of restoration; simply providing a particular volume of water to these wetlands will not attain restoration. Flows must mimic the natural water depths and flooding durations, be distributed across this landscape in a manner that best approximates historical flow patterns, and travel at sufficient speed to maintain the characteristic Everglades landscape, which is composed of dense sawgrass ridges next to broad sloughs. Only when all of these conditions are met will the natural system respond in a manner that will promote marsh conditions capable of supporting the unique flora and fauna of the Everglades.

United States Highway 41, the Tamiami Trail, has long been recognized as one of the primary barriers to flow of water through the ecosystem. The Modified Water Deliveries project provides modifications to Tamiami Trail through a one-mile bridging component, which will begin restoring more natural flow, but is insufficient to achieve restoration.

In 2010, NPS evaluated the feasibility of additional bridging for the Tamiami Trail in order to achieve more natural water flow and habitat restoration within the Everglades. In response to the NPS evaluation, Congress authorized NPS to implement this additional bridging, consistent with the feasibility study. The 2014 budget proposes that NPS make a one-time contribution of \$30.0 million within its construction account to leverage funds from other sources to cover the remaining costs for the highest priority bridging component. The 2.6 miles of bridging is located at the deepest portion of Shark Valley Slough, an intermittent grass riverway that historically carried the largest volume of water into the Everglades National Park.

In 2014 Interior will continue its focus on engaging youth and young adults in land stewardship, recreation, and conservation. This initiative strives to employ, educate, and engage young people from all backgrounds to explore, connect with and preserve America's natural and cultural heritage. Secretary Salazar established youth employment as a Goal within the Department.

Bureau of Land Management – The 2014 BLM budget request for land management operations is \$1.1 billion, a total increase of \$23.5 million above the 2012 enacted level.

PROTECTING BATS FROM WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

The white-nose syndrome is a disease responsible for unprecedented mortality for at least six ecologically and economically important species of bats in 22 U.S. eastern States and five Canadian provinces. Mortality from the disease at many sites reaches 95 percent. Named for the visible white fungus around the muzzles, ears, and wings of affected bats, this disease is caused by a previously unknown species of fungus *Geomyces destructans* that thrives in places of low temperature and high humidity such as caves where bats hibernate. While there is no evidence that *G. destructans* is pathogenic to humans, human activity can quickly spread this disease among bat populations.

Recent scientific research indicates that white-nose syndrome can easily expand its current range to affect bat populations throughout the Country.

Bats play an important role in North American ecosystems by consuming large amounts of insect populations. Bats also reproduce slowly; most species have only one pup per year. A reduction in bat populations could lead to increased numbers of insect pests resulting in damage to forests and agriculture, higher loads of environmental pesticides, and increased public health risks associated with diseases transmitted by insects.

The Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, and other Federal agencies have been working together with their tribal, provincial, State, and private sector partners to address this critical issue. In 2011, a national white-nose syndrome plan was published to mount a coordinated response. This plan outlines seven key elements: communications, data and technical information management, diagnostics, disease management, epidemiological and ecological research, disease surveillance, and conservation and recovery.

Scientists have increased their understanding of this new disease, but significant knowledge gaps remain. Current responses are focused on containing infestations through public education, restrictions on cave use, and implementing prevention and sanitation practices. There are no known treatments for white-nose syndrome. Populations that are free of the disease must be protected.

In 2014, an increase of \$3.5 million for FWS and NPS will increase prevention and containment strategies. An increase of \$1.5 million for USGS will enhance surveillance and diagnostic detection as well as develop management tools and a vaccine.

White-nose syndrome in bats, first documented in the winter of 2006-2007, has spread rapidly across the eastern United States and Canada, and has killed millions of bats in eastern North America. The fungus that causes the disease has been detected as far west as Oklahoma.



The 2014 BLM budget request includes important funding increases to help advance key goals of the President’s AGO initiative. The request includes \$8.0 million in programmatic increases to enhance BLM’s recreation management program and operations in its National Landscape Conservation System. This includes a \$2.0 million program increase in the Recreation Resources Management program for science support to improve recreation management practices and policies. A \$6.0 million program increase in the National Monuments and National Conservation Areas program will allow BLM to strengthen law enforcement, enhance visitor safety and experiences, increase habitat conservation and restoration, and expand interpretation programs and products. These investments enhance and improve recreational access and opportunities, raise awareness of the value and benefits of AGO, and conserve and restore valuable natural and cultural resources.

The 2014 budget request also includes an increase of \$1.1 million for BLM to participate in inter-agency AGO projects to demonstrate ecosystem and landscape-scale conservation. The BLM will collaborate with other AGO partners to advance community-based landscape-scale conservation in the Southwest Deserts, Crown of the Continent, and the Grasslands of the Northern Great Plains landscapes. In the Southwest Desert landscapes, the BLM will focus on restoring the Aravaipa Creek watershed and improve wildlife habitat values along the borderlands in southwestern New Mexico. For the Crown of the Continent landscape, BLM will support the work of the Crown Management Partnership to control invasive weeds. In the Grasslands of the Northern Great Plains landscape, BLM will work with partners to initiate projects to improve wildlife habitat, such as crested wheatgrass fields, to improve habitat for greater sage grouse, pronghorn antelope, and imperiled grassland birds.

YOUTH IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The Department of the Interior manages America’s backyard, making sure that it is available for all young people to enjoy. The Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative employs, educates, and engages young people from all backgrounds in exploring, connecting with, and preserving America’s natural and cultural heritage. In 2014, Interior will continue its focus on engaging youth and young adults in land stewardship, recreation, and conservation. The budget requests an increase of \$12.6 million across the Department for the Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative.

Through employment and educational opportunities offered by the Department, youth has a key role in creating a new energy frontier, tackling climate change issues, empowering Native communities, building trails, enhancing wildlife habitat, and restoring cultural and historic landmarks. As stewards of the Nation’s lands, waters, cultural heritage, and tribal customs, Interior has a unique opportunity to reach out to underserved populations to ensure these natural and cultural resources are enjoyed by all Americans. By investing in youth today, Interior can transform the lives of millions of young Americans while growing the next generation of conservation and community leaders.

YOUTH IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS (dollars in millions)

	2012 Enacted	2014 Request	Change
Bureau of Land Management.....	8.6	11.4	+2.8
Bureau of Reclamation	3.8	3.8	0.0
U.S. Geological Service.....	2.2	3.2	+1.0
Fish and Wildlife Service.....	13.5	15.9	+2.4
National Park Service	13.6	14.7	+1.0
Indian Affairs	0.0	5.5	+5.5
TOTAL, DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR.....	41.8	54.4	+12.6
<i>[Recreational Fee Program]</i>	<i>[6.4]</i>	<i>[6.4]</i>	<i>[0]</i>

The BLM will use a \$1.0 million increase in Administrative Support to fund the start up costs for a new congressionally-chartered charitable, non-profit foundation. A legislative proposal to establish the National BLM Foundation is being submitted with the President's budget. The Foundation will help leverage private funding to support and supplement BLM management of public lands.

Fish and Wildlife Service—The 2014 budget request for the Resource Management account is \$1.3 billion, a total increase of \$68.9 million above the 2012 level. The budget request continues to advance key goals of the AGO initiative. The national wildlife refuge system has unique authorities and flexible programs that deliver landscape level conservation while at the same time providing outdoor recreation, hunting and fishing opportunities, and protecting wildlife populations. Annually, more than 47 million visitors come to refuges to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and participate in environmental education and interpretive programs. The FWS operations generate nearly \$4.2 billion in economic activity and create more than 34,000 private sector jobs nationwide. Millions of acres of refuge lands are owned outright and managed wholly by FWS to restore and protect habitat for fish and wildlife for the enjoyment of the American people.

The 2014 budget includes increases for the refuge system totaling \$13.5 million above 2012 to enhance cooperative efforts to conserve wildlife and habitat. The refuges will use cost-sharing partnerships and other collaborations to support the recovery of species facing extinction while improving habitat for thousands of plants and animals. Partnerships have been instrumental to the success of the refuge system since its creation by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. In 2012, partnerships were critical to establishing the Nation's 556th refuge, the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area in Florida. The new refuge will eventually span 150,000 acres, help restore the flow of freshwater into the Everglades, and conserve habitat for charismatic species like the Florida panther.

The 2014 budget includes \$9.4 million for a cross-programmatic partnership approach to complete planning, restoration, and management actions addressing current threats to endangered species on and around wildlife refuges. The Cooperative Recovery initiative works across FWS to better leverage and coordinate efforts to implement recovery actions more broadly to improve, recover, and ultimately remove species from the threatened and

endangered species list. With nearly 300 listed species located in or around units of the refuge system, the ecosystems surrounding them provide important habitat for listed species and can provide essential connectivity for species conservation. The focus will be on implementing recovery actions for species near delisting, reclassifying species from endangered to threatened, or undertaking immediate actions that are needed for critically endangered species. The Endangered Species program will work with other FWS programs to identify, fund, and implement high-priority recovery projects, which will benefit multiple facets of its mission.

The FWS will administer funds to support a landscape level conservation approach to river systems throughout the Country under the Administration's National Blueways System. Rivers play a vital role in connecting Americans with the lands and waters that provide economic, recreational, social, cultural, and ecological value to their communities. The National Blueways System will provide a new emphasis on the unique value and significance of a locally-led headwaters to mouth approach to river management and create a mechanism to encourage stakeholders to integrate their land and water stewardship efforts. The budget request includes an increase of \$3.3 million for the Cooperative Watershed Management program, an Administration-wide, collaborative program. For ease of administration, the new funding is requested in the FWS budget, however, Blueways projects will be selected through a multi-agency, joint decisionmaking process and will support conservation and outdoor recreation efforts to advance watershed stewardship. Also included for the refuge system is a program increase of \$3.6 million for Challenge Cost Share projects to implement habitat restoration projects with local partners and volunteer groups. These funds will be used by refuges to conduct projects, small in cost, but with a big impact to improve habitat for wildlife use and remove barriers to species recovery.

The budget includes an increase of \$16.6 million to develop scientific data to support landscape level conservation. Based on the latest science available, FWS will implement on-the-ground applications of scientific findings to address resource management challenges to develop successful wildlife and habitat management protocols. Information derived from inventory and monitoring efforts on wildlife refuges will help to establish baselines and determine the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants. Research funds will also be used to answer imminent and important natural resource management

questions and provide near-term solutions to urgent and emerging issues such as the white-nose syndrome devastating bat populations across the Country. To effectively deliver its mission, FWS needs focused, applied science directed at high impact threats to natural resources to manage species to healthy and sustainable levels. The budget includes an increase of \$1.5 million to address and mitigate the threats posed by white-nose syndrome. An additional \$1.4 million is requested to research the impacts and identify mitigation strategies related to energy transmission corridors in the American West. This research will identify impacts to sage grouse and desert tortoise from foundational energy infrastructure such as overhead transmission lines and solar arrays.

The 2014 budget request continues support for visitor services at the 2012 level, to provide an essential connection for people to the great outdoors. Visitors will continue to enjoy premier outdoor recreation opportunities, such as fishing and wildlife photography, prevalent as a result of ongoing science-based wildlife and habitat management. The refuge system is among the Nation's treasures and its interpretive and environmental education programs provide visitors a deeper understanding of their natural surroundings and the role of the refuge system in landscape level conservation.

The FWS continues its effort to implement the important provisions of the Lacey Act. As the Nation's first Federal wildlife protection law, the Lacey Act remains an important tool in supporting conservation through reducing the importation and interstate transfer of injurious or illegal plants and animals. The request includes a program increase of \$4.2 million for enforcement of the Lacey Act, to address technical challenges in wildlife science forensics, and support partnerships with foreign governments to reduce demand for illegal wildlife products.

National Park Service – The 2014 NPS budget request for operations is \$2.3 billion, a total increase of \$48.4 million above the 2012 enacted level. The 2014 request for operations funds fixed costs of \$28.9 million and \$40.0 million in program increases for NPS operations. These increases are partially offset with \$20.6 million in program reductions to park operations and related programs. With these funds, NPS conserves and interprets resources as breathtaking as Grand Canyon National Park, thought provoking as the Manassas National Battlefield Park, and uplifting as the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site. The NPS shared the stories

and breathtaking beauty of these sites with nearly 287 million visitors in 2012. These visitors, in turn, provide economic benefits to local communities and the Nation as a whole. A recent study, prepared by Michigan State University, found that visitors to national parks generated \$30.1 billion in economic activity, and supported an estimated 252,000 jobs nationwide.

In 2014, NPS will continue to engage visitors in the great outdoors and protect and interpret cultural and natural resources. Highlights of the 2014 budget request include program increases that will enhance critical resource stewardship activities, including an additional \$5.2 million to control exotic and invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels and \$6.0 million for Cooperative Landscape Conservation, for a total request of \$8.9 million. This Cooperative Landscape Conservation increase includes \$5.0 million for climate change adaptive management tools and \$1.0 million as part of a multi-bureau focus on biological carbon sequestration. The budget also provides a \$2.0 million increase to the Repair and Rehabilitation program, for projects that improve the accessibility of NPS infrastructure, and that lead to greater water and energy efficiency at park units. A separate increase of \$920,000 will provide additional educational and informational opportunities for visitors with visual or hearing impairments by creating accessible interpretive exhibits. The budget also proposes a \$1.0 million increase to engage youth in the great outdoors through a combination of additional employment and educational opportunities. Other emerging management needs addressed in the 2014 budget include a \$2.0 million program increase to enhance internal controls and improve accountability throughout the park system, and a \$2.1 million program increase to fund operational



needs at new or recently expanded national park units such as César E. Chávez National Memorial, which was established in October 2012 to recognize the leadership of a man who brought sustained international attention to the plight of U.S. farm workers, and secured for them higher wages and safer working conditions through the establishment of the Country's first permanent agricultural union.

SPURRING GROWTH AND INNOVATION THROUGH SCIENCE

The 2014 budget for the Department of the Interior provides strong support for basic and applied science that addresses Interior's mission priorities, including \$963.1 million for research and development, a 17.5 percent increase over the 2012 enacted level. This funding supports scientific monitoring, research, and analysis to assist decisionmaking in resource management and the special trust responsibilities of Interior and other federally-mandated and nationally significant programs. Investments in science promote economic growth and innovation, ensure American competitiveness in a global market, improve natural hazard preparedness, and improve the knowledge of U.S. strategic mineral supplies and water use and availability. Sustainable stewardship of natural resources requires strong investments in natural sciences research and development.

Science underpins all of Interior's efforts and provides the basis for informed resource management decisions and the protection of life and property. Specific activities supported include energy permitting, ecosystem management, oil spill restoration, Earth observations, such as water and wildlife monitoring, invasive species control, and tribal natural resource management. The budget for research and development includes increases totaling \$143.6 million above 2012 enacted, across the Department.

Interior's mission requires a careful balance between development and conservation. The Department works to achieve this balance collaborating closely with its diverse stakeholders and partners to ensure its actions provide the greatest benefit to the American people. Central to this dialogue is scientific information. Research and development play a vital role in delivering Interior's mission and Interior maintains a robust capability in the natural sciences, primarily in USGS. An example of how this expertise is applied is USGS's current work as part of an interagency collaboration investigating the potential effect of hydraulic fracturing on water

quality and inducement of seismic activity, to produce decision-ready information and tools.

The USGS provides exceptional support to Interior bureaus, however USGS alone cannot provide for all of Interior's scientific needs. The USGS and other Interior bureaus must work collaboratively to find the answers needed for important natural resource management questions. Science funding at the bureau and office level allows bureaus and offices to participate more fully in that collaboration, providing required resources to purchase studies, models, and expertise, and to hire scientists to help managers interpret the vast body of knowledge generated by USGS, universities, and other scientific institutions. This science helps answer imminent and important natural resource management questions and provides near-term solutions to address urgent and emerging issues such as the white-nose syndrome in bats.

Interior agencies work collaboratively to bridge gaps in knowledge leveraging the complementary skills and capacity to advance the use of science to support management decisionmaking, ensure independent review of key decisions and science integrity, and adaptively use data to assist States, Tribes, and communities throughout the Nation.

Bureau of Reclamation – Reclamation's mission to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner requires significant technical and scientific resources. For example, the 2014 budget provides \$2.0 million for financial and technical support to the California Bay-Delta Federal Science Task Force. Funding will be used to address science gaps and to respond to issues raised by the National Academy of Sciences relating to FWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service biological opinions for the water operations in the Central Valley. The funds will be used to implement a collaborative science process that includes agencies as well as stakeholders in the development of adaptive management processes to support implementation of and possible revision to existing biological opinions. This collaboration and adaptive management will inform the Integrated Bay-Delta Conservation Plan biological opinion.

Bureau of Indian Affairs – The 2014 budget includes a \$24.5 million increase in Natural Resources Management programs for analysis, and technical support activities to support the sustainable management of alternative and conventional energy

sources and natural resources such as land, water, oceans, endangered and invasive species, and to support adaptation to a changing climate. An increase of \$9.0 million for Cooperative Landscape Conservation will fund a wide array of conservation activities related to the management of Indian trust land and natural resource assets. Of the increase, \$7.0 million will provide funding for coordination, technical support, and tools to enable tribal and trust land managers to analyze, evaluate, and participate in landscape-level conservation and management activities, utilize science to more effectively manage resources, and to develop reservation climate adaptation plans. Another \$2.0 million of the increase will support the development of a tribal oceans program, including a competitive grant program to enable Tribes with ocean and coastal trust resources or harvest rights to more effectively manage those resources and perform ocean inventory and species vulnerability assessments, identify critical indicator species, establish monitoring protocols, and implement pilot mitigation and recovery projects. These tools are critically important for Tribes that rely on fisheries and other aquatic resources for their food and livelihoods, and ways of life.

In the Pacific Northwest, Tribes are witnessing declining fish returns in the upper reaches of rivers. In 1986 only six spring chinook returned to the White River, putting the viability of the run in question. The Puyallup Tribe has taken action to ensure juvenile spring chinook will find their way to the upper White River each year. The Puyallup Tribe is raising 250,000 spring chinook at their hatchery so they can stock acclimation ponds in the upper White River. The juvenile spring chinook will be fed by the Tribe for eight weeks while they are imprinted on the upper watershed creeks and then released to begin their journey to the ocean. The acclimation pond program has played a large role in the recovery of the spring chinook stock in the White River. Because of diligent hatchery management, the spring chinook population on the White River has slowly increased, with returns now normally in the thousands.

National Park Service – Long-term conservation of the critically endangered Kemp’s Ridley sea turtle in relation to the effects of climate change is one facet of the NPS applied research efforts at Padre Island National Seashore, Texas. As the most important nesting beach for the Kemp’s Ridley in the U.S. and part of the bi-national U.S.-Mexico Kemp’s Ridley Recovery Plan, the NPS has the responsibility for protecting nesting females, nests, and hatchlings at

the national seashore. Research at Padre Island focuses on providing park managers with information on the potential erosion of turtle nesting beaches and more frequent tidal inundation of nests associated



with climate change induced sea level rise that will impair progress in the recovery of this high-priority iconic park species. This project provides essential monitoring information on the Kemp’s Ridley’s use of park beaches and the turtle’s reproduction within the park. The Kemp’s Ridley is a native reptile to the park’s marine waters and efforts to improve sea turtle protection are consistent with the NPS Ocean Park Stewardship Action Plan’s strategy to improve the protection of ocean park resources.

Fish and Wildlife Service – Ensuring that the growth of wind power and natural gas and oil drilling is done in a manner that minimizes impacts to wildlife and their habitats requires knowledge about the project impacts to species of concern, including migratory birds, bats, bald and golden eagles, and other birds of prey. The FWS will invest resources in tools, methods, and techniques to improve decisionmaking about siting, designing, monitoring, and operating energy projects in ways that can best reduce mortality and other impacts on wildlife. Resources will be applied to determine the best mitigation methods, manage energy development-related data, determine how to monitor changes to species and habitats as a result of energy developments, and explore landscape-level cumulative effects. For example, FWS will fund development of geospatial information system applications to support risk analyses that will help to predict impacts on eagles relating to wind energy projects. These tools will assist FWS to better assess the effect of the project relative to other previously authorized projects in the local area.

NORTH ATLANTIC LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVES

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives have, by design, a potentially large and beneficial role guiding strategic investments in conservation, restoration, and infrastructure. The Cooperatives are developing shared science capacity to make better conservation decisions in the face of change, including prioritization of projects to increase resiliency against impacts caused by major storm events, sea-level rise, and other climate-related changes.

These Cooperatives are self-directed, regional collaborations of agencies and organizations that have recognized the importance of working together and utilizing science to design landscapes that can sustain natural and cultural resources. The North Atlantic LCC encompasses the Atlantic seaboard and Atlantic coastal watersheds from Virginia north to Maine and the Atlantic Provinces of Canada and southern Quebec. The partnership includes 13 States plus the District of Columbia, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Canadian Wildlife Service, United South and Eastern Tribes, and several non-governmental organizations. The North Atlantic LCC also coordinates with and integrates the priorities of existing regional partnerships such as the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership, Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Oceans.

These partners and partnerships, working through the North Atlantic LCC, have invested in the development of a number of tools to assess the impacts of various stressors on species, habitats, systems, and ecological functions, such as stream flow. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, these and other tools will help to guide decisions about actions to improve the resiliency of natural systems and communities. The LCC partners, along with Climate Science Centers, are also developing better projections of future impacts from sea-level rise and intense storms to beaches, marshes, other coastal systems, and the fish and wildlife species using these systems along the Atlantic coast. These projections will support assessments of the likely persistence of systems under various management scenarios as well as the services provided by maintaining them. For example, management actions that increase the persistence of coastal marshes in the face of storms and sea-level rise will maintain

the ability of these systems to help protect adjacent communities and infrastructure from coastal flooding and provide habitat to migratory birds and other species that depend on marshes.



The LCCs present an opportunity for Department of the Interior bureaus and other Federal agencies responsible for responding to Hurricane Sandy to work with partners to identify common issues and goals, reduce redundancy, and utilize science to guide strategic investments to help coastal systems and communities recover and be more resilient in the future.

To better understand white-nose syndrome in bats and its movement and distribution across the landscape, the USGS Fort Collins Science Center and FWS have collaborated to develop a data tracking system for information on infected bat specimens. The USGS scientists are working with FWS to develop a single, secure, web-based system to support implementation of common methodologies and protocols across agencies and organizations. This geospatially oriented data management system will track specimens from the point of collection through analysis by centralizing all partner data into a single repository. The data will conform to integrity standards by allowing users to enter, verify, and report their data remotely using a secure internet connection. The white-nose syndrome disease tracking system will provide wildlife managers and researchers with near real-time access to data, which can be used to evaluate seasonality of disease effects, identify distribution patterns through geospatial analyses, and forecast potential risk areas.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management – The BOEM’s Marine Minerals Program manages Outer Continental Shelf sand, gravel, and shell resources. These resources are critical for the long-term success and cost-effectiveness of many shore protection, beach nourishment, and wetlands restoration projects along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. Investments are needed in this program to ensure adequate capability to protect and improve natural resources and the environment locally, regionally, and nationally. Demands for sand and gravel and other resources from the OCS are constant and require an ongoing set of information about the availability of these resources based on very specific parameters including location on the OCS, texture, size, and color. In order to make scientifically sound decisions about the use and environmental impacts of OCS marine minerals, BOEM must first have an understanding of the marine mineral resources currently on the OCS. To conduct this critical scientific analysis, \$1.0 million is requested for comparative, long-term environmental studies to understand seafloor habitat, ecosystem functions, and the resilience of inner shelf sand bodies. These studies will allow BOEM to make informed, environmentally responsible leasing decisions that more consistently align with project timelines.

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy that caused massive beach erosion along the east coast, BOEM received an unprecedented number of requests from other Federal agencies, States, and communities for sand and gravel needed to rebuild beaches and

construct dunes to improve protection from future storms. The Bureau is improving its ability to respond to coastal disasters and is among the Federal agencies reaching out to States that experienced significant beach and dune damage from the storm. Preliminary assessments suggest the greatest needs for OCS sand resources are in distinct coastal segments in New Jersey, New York, and North Carolina. The BOEM has worked previously with coastal Atlantic States to identify and quantify potential OCS sand resources that could be used for shore protection projects. The MMP has the capability to identify OCS sand resources needed in the Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts. The Bureau will use and supplement as needed existing environmental analyses conducted over the past 20 years to respond quickly to requests for OCS sand resources for beach nourishment projects. In November 2012, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District, asked BOEM to participate in the environmental review of USACE proposal to use OCS borrow areas for the Long Beach Island Storm Damage Reduction Project in central New Jersey. The BOEM has since begun working with USACE in the preparation and review of environmental documents to help support recovery efforts. As Atlantic States rebuild their communities, BOEM will lend the expertise of the MMP to this important recovery effort.

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement The BSEE will use a requested \$2.0 million increase to invest in its Emerging Technologies program to promote safety and environmental compliance of offshore oil and gas activities and investigate new technologies, procedures, and materials for the promotion of safe, pollution-free operations, the prevention of oil pollution, and the improvement of oil spill response and cleanup. The BSEE will contract with universities and other entities with expertise to identify and develop best available standards technology and make this information available to industry to inform energy and mineral operations ranging from the drilling of oil and gas exploration wells in search of new reserves to the removal of platforms and related infrastructure once production operations have ceased. The requested research will help to inform the BSEE regulations, notices to lessees, and industry standards.

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement – After cessation of underground mining, groundwater infiltrates into and fills mine voids. This filling over time creates underground reservoirs or pools that are hydrostatically connected and can cover several square miles of area. Discharges from

these pools often have water quality issues that degrade streams and groundwater and cost hundreds of millions of dollars to treat. Treatment must be continued for decades and addresses the symptom and does not resolve the source of degradation. With an increase of \$400,000 in 2014, OSM will fund projects to investigate water quality and quantity interaction between adjacent underground mines, mines and surface water systems, and the mines and adjacent aquifers. Improving the reliability of modeling underground mine abandonment is essential to treat water pollution, prevent unchecked discharges or mine pool blowouts, and establish requirements for mining operators to responsibly deal with these types of potential problems before mine closures.

Bureau of Land Management – The Great Basin is facing increasing drought, fire, and invasive species issues, is well-suited for the development of renewable energy, and will soon have the benefit of a rapid ecoregional assessment for climate-related information and science. There is an existing inter-bureau collaboration regarding sage grouse habitat, and engagement from the Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative, the Northwest and

Southwest Climate Science Centers, and NOAA's Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessment program. Aligning Bureau and interagency resources and actions in this region will provide a model for regional climate adaptation coordination that can be exported to the large landscape demonstration areas of the AGO initiative and may inform the eventual expansion of the AGO portfolio. One of the projects BLM is proposing for 2014 is a regional coordination pilot to help integrate and focus interagency and intergovernmental decisions for managing the risks associated with large-scale change agents.

There will be four phases to this project. The first phase will be a compilation and assessment of the different types of planning decisions that are currently being made by the Federal, State, local, and tribal resource management agencies in the region. The second phase will crosswalk these decisions with the national climate adaptation plans that are being developed for fish, wildlife, and plants, and with the national strategies that are being developed to address wildland fire, invasives, and drought. The third phase will be to develop proposals to improve the coordination and integration of regional decisionmaking in four critical areas: 1) identifying

HIGHLIGHTING INVASIVE SPECIES INITIATIVES

Invasive species pose one of the greatest threats to the ecological, economic, and cultural integrity of America's landscapes. The Department's management of invasive species cuts across a number of priorities such as climate change adaptation, America's Great Outdoors, ocean policy, the arctic, traditional and alternative energy development, improved information management, and meeting tribal trust responsibilities. The Administration's budget for 2014 recognizes that certain non-native species cause great harm to the economy, environment, and in some cases, to human health directly. These invasive species can be plants, animals or microorganisms. They can displace native plant and animal communities, increase wildfires, damage critical water and power infrastructure, increase the cost of natural resource conservation, and threaten human livelihoods. Invasive species, such as cheat grass, Asian carp, quagga and zebra mussels, and invasive plant and animal pathogens, have altered entire landscapes and harmed Interior lands, waters, and infrastructure. The 2014 budget builds on existing efforts across a number of Interior bureaus to more pro actively address problems caused by invasive species through prevention, management, and research efforts. The Administration proposes targeted budget increases in 2014 for the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service that will enhance Interior's response to the serious threat of invasive species.

Invasive species harm fragile ecosystems and degrade public lands and waters in multiple ways. The 2014 budget for the USGS Ecosystems mission area includes an increase of \$5.4 million for research on key invasive species and priority ecosystems where the impacts have been significant. The 2014 budget also directs additional funding to address research and monitoring for new and emerging invasive species of national concern. If invasive species can be found before they spread, ecosystem damage and control costs can be greatly reduced or eliminated. In addition, USGS is developing and adapting advanced technologies to enhance its ability to detect and control invasive species.

core areas, corridors and potential refugia for fish, wildlife and plant species and priority areas for development, 2) managing the risks associated with catastrophic fire, 3) managing the risks associated with invasive plants and animals, and 4) managing the risks associated with prolonged drought. The fourth phase will include sharing lessons learned with LCC, CSC, and RISA networks.

This project will promote interagency climate change adaptation planning in the Great Basin, and also identify interagency coordination and integration opportunities that are transferable to other regions of the Country and will help the cooperatives strategically focus their investments.

U.S. Geological Survey – The 2014 budget invests in key areas of USGS research to examine contamination of the environment, collect elevation data, and improve understanding about the impacts of energy on wildlife. The USGS research is documenting with increasing frequency that many chemical and microbial constituents not historically considered as contaminants are present in the environment on a global scale. The 2014 budget includes an increase of \$2.0 million to study emerging contaminants, commonly derived from municipal, agricultural, and industrial wastewater sources and pathways.



These newly recognized contaminants represent a shift in traditional thinking as many are produced industrially yet are dispersed to the environment from domestic, commercial, and industrial uses. For example, biosolids, sludge from wastewater treatment plants have a very high nutrient value, but are a potential source of pharmaceuticals and other emerging contaminants to the environment. Contaminants may enter the environment through septic tanks, municipal effluent, hospital waste, and poultry, swine, dairy, and cattle operations.

One example of a new contaminant threat is the impact of estrogen on fish in the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. The USGS research has determined exposure to estrogen reduces production of immune-related proteins in fish. This suggests certain compounds, known as endocrine disruptors, may make fish more susceptible to disease. This research may provide new clues for why intersex fish, fish kills, and fish lesions often occur together in the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. The study revealed largemouth bass injected with estrogen produced lowered levels of hepcidin, an important iron-regulating hormone in mammals also found in fish and amphibians. The research suggests estrogen-mimicking compounds may make fish more susceptible to disease by blocking production of hepcidin and other immune-related proteins that help protect fish against disease-causing bacteria. The USGS researchers have previously found intersex occurring in fish in the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. Because other studies have shown estrogen and estrogen-mimicking compounds can cause intersex, the co-occurrence of the fish lesions, fish kills, and intersex in these two rivers suggested to USGS scientists that estrogen-mimicking compounds could be involved in the fish lesions and fish kills in addition to being a possible cause of intersex traits.

The 3-D Elevation Program initiative will systematically collect enhanced elevation data using Light Detection and Ranging and other technologies over the United States during an eight-year period. The 3-D elevation data is important to natural hazard scientists working on the identification of earthquake faults, farmers looking for high resolution elevation data for planting decisions, and emergency response managers as a critical input for estimating flood risks. Based on a 2012 study, there are 602 mission-critical activities of 34 Federal agencies, the 50 States, selected local and tribal governments, and private and other organizations that would benefit from enhanced elevation data for uses, including the State of Alaska, where aviation safety can be improved with more accurate elevation data to navigate through Alaska's many rugged mountains and active volcanoes. The Nation will receive up to \$13.0 billion annually in new benefits from enhanced availability of this elevation data.

In the push to develop new forms of sustainable energy, the wind power industry is at the forefront. Recent evidence shows that certain species of bats are particularly susceptible to mortality from wind turbines. Bats are beneficial consumers of harmful insect pests, and migratory species of bats cross

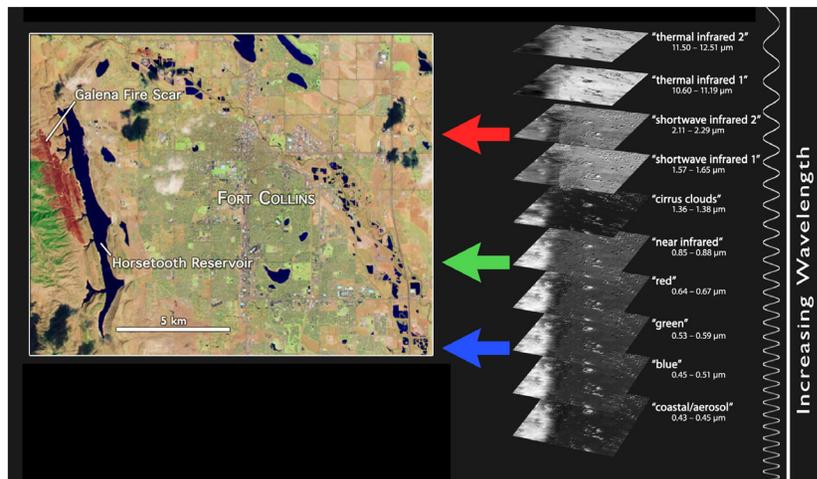
LDCM LAUNCH AND FIRST IMAGES

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Department of the Interior's U.S. Geological Survey released the first images from the Landsat Data Continuity Mission satellite, which was launched February 11, 2013. The satellite's Operational Land Imager and Thermal Infrared Sensor instruments observe each image simultaneously. The USGS Earth Resources Observation and Science Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, processes the data. Since launch, LDCM has been going through on-orbit testing. The mission operations team completed its review of all major spacecraft and instrument subsystems, and performed multiple spacecraft attitude maneuvers to verify the ability to accurately point the instruments.

The two LDCM sensors collect data simultaneously over the same ground path. The OLI collects light reflected off the surface of Earth in nine different regions of the electromagnetic spectrum, including bands of visible light and near-infrared and short-wave-infrared bands, which are beyond human vision. The TIRS collects data at two longer wavelength thermal infrared bands that measure heat emitted from the surface. By looking at different band combinations, scientists can distinguish features on the land surface. These features include forests and how they respond to natural and human-caused disturbances, and the health of agricultural crops and how much water they use. Data from LDCM will extend a continuous, 40-year-long data record of Earth's surface from previous Landsat satellites, an unmatched, impartial perspective that allows scientists to study how landscapes all across the world change through time.

After its checkout and commissioning phase is complete, LDCM will begin its normal operations in May. At that time, NASA will hand over control of the satellite to USGS, which will operate it throughout its planned five-year mission life. The satellite will be renamed Landsat 8. The USGS will process data from OLI and TIRS and add it to the Landsat Data Archive at the USGS Earth Resources Observation and Science Center, where it will be distributed for free via the Internet.

The LDCM captured this image on March 18, 2013, the first day that OLI observed Earth from space. This natural color Landsat scene was created using data from OLI spectral bands 2 (blue), 3 (green) and 4 (red), and it emulates the true colors the human eye would see from space. The data was collected at the same time as the TIRS data.



international and interstate boundaries. Mortality caused by white-nose syndrome in bats is already becoming a major threat to the viability of many bat species, and so the potential impacts of wind energy need to be mitigated. The 2014 request

includes an increase of \$2.0 million for the USGS to increase science to inform decisions related to wildlife impacts from development of renewable energy infrastructure.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The Land and Water Conservation Fund today is helping us meet the goals of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to foster a 21st century vision for conservation and outdoor recreation. We are working in partnership with communities across America to use the revenues from the energy resources we take out of the ground to build a lasting legacy of parks, trails, and open spaces.

Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior
March 30, 2012

In 1965, Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund to embody its bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, water resources, cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. The LWCF is based on a simple concept: take revenues from the depletion of one resource, offshore oil and gas, and use them to conserve parks, wildlife refuges, forests, open spaces, trails, and wildlife habitat. Every State, and nearly every county in the Nation, has benefited from this program. And all this is done without spending a single tax dollar.

This program has enjoyed a broad base of support over the years, however the requirements for carrying out successful conservation and recreation projects and programs have changed greatly. Conserving large landscapes requires collaboration among all stakeholders, including private landowners, conservation and recreation groups, and local, State, tribal, and Federal governments. America's Great Outdoors calls for broad collaboration around locally driven priorities and more efficient and coordinated ways of investing in, restoring, and managing the Country's natural and cultural resources.

The 2014 budget proposes a total of \$400.0 million in current funding for LWCF activities. Of this, \$282.0 million is for Interior programs, and \$118.0 million is for the U.S. Forest Service. In addition, the budget features a landmark legislative proposal for a multi-year strategy leading to full funding for the LWCF in 2015, not subject to annual appropriations. For 2014, the Administration proposes a one-third permanent and two-thirds current funding structure.

The 2014 permanent request through LWCF includes \$141.0 million for Interior, plus an additional \$59.0 million for the Forest Service for a total request of \$200.0 million. Total proposed LWCF funding from both components in 2014 is \$600.0 million, of which \$423.0 million supports Interior programs and \$177.0 million supports Forest Service programs.

The Administration is focused on maximizing LWCF's performance and outcomes. In addition to increased rigor on monitoring and evaluation of the LWCF grant programs, the Administration launched a Collaborative LWCF initiative in the 2013 budget that enables the Federal land management agencies to establish and leverage funding towards national priorities. In addition to the Collaborative LWCF initiative, other programs funded through LWCF, agency core acquisition programs and grants to States through Forest Legacy, Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation, Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery, and State Conservation Assistance grants, round out a multi-faceted approach to land and water conservation through local, State, and Federal action.

Permanent Funding for LWCF – Despite national support for LWCF—its benefits, widespread popularity, and success at developing a highly strategic collaborative component, effective implementation of the program is constrained by long standing challenges. Uncertainty about annual current appropriations prevents the agencies, and local and State partners, from engaging in the multi-year planning that landscape conservation and effective collaboration with local communities requires. Annual planning driven by the budget process can favor funding individual projects that are urgent and involve the most motivated willing sellers, but which may not be the most strategic in terms of advancing broader conservation objectives.

Land available for acquisition from willing sellers exceeds available LWCF funding, leaving many landowners who wish to sell their properties to the United States for the public's enjoyment with a choice: wait indefinitely for an LWCF appropriation to come through, or sell to another party who may not share the vision for placing the land in the public trust. These challenges are made more complex as they also impact the partner groups that work with agencies to protect critically important habitat and recreation areas who are hampered by the lack of certainty and irregularity of annually appropriated funding. The chronic uncertainty and underfunding of LWCF has made it increasingly challenging for

Federal, State, and local managers to use this tool to address the development threats facing the Nation's most important open spaces, pristine habitats, and cultural sites, the lands and waters that provide communities with recreational areas and preserve their history. Many program partners are ready to bring resources to the table and leverage the Federal investment, but lose interest as a result of long delays and more attractive offers from developers.

The Administration proposes to address these challenges by pursuing full and permanent funding for LWCF programs. Permanent funding will increase financial certainty needed to build local and community partnerships in conservation and optimize valuable investments by leveraging other Federal and non-Federal funds. Permanent appropriations will support the efficiencies demonstrated by the Collaborative LWCF program and enable a more predictable, transparent and inclusive process. Permanent funding will also finally achieve the original intent of the LWCF Act: to dedicate a meaningful portion, \$900.0 million, of the royalties private companies pay to access the Nation's offshore oil and gas reserves to preserving the Nation's lands and waters for the benefit of all Americans and future generations.

Federal Land Acquisition – In 2014, the Federal land acquisition request funded through the LWCF totals \$356.2 million. Of the total, \$264.0 million is for Interior and \$92.2 million for the Forest Service. Within this total, Interior funds the Office of Valuation Services with current funding of \$12.2 million and permanent funding of \$6.0 million to provide appraisal support valuations of lands and minerals in support of land acquisition and other programs. Mission-specific core land acquisition priority projects and program management across both agencies is funded at \$187.0 million. In 2014, the Administration proposes targeting the remaining \$169.3 million for an Interior-Forest Service collaborative land acquisition program to support strategic interagency landscape-scale conservation projects that also meet agency specific acquisition needs. Interior requests \$112.2 million for its three bureaus, NPS, FWS, and BLM, and the Forest Service requests the remaining \$57.0 million.

Collaborative Land Acquisition Projects – The Collaborative LWCF program serves as a model for LWCF programs to invest in the most ecologically important landscapes and in projects with a clear strategy to reach shared goals grounded in science-based planning. Through Collaborative LWCF, the

Interior bureaus and Forest Service jointly direct funds to projects that will achieve the highest return on Federal investment, and coordinate land acquisition planning with government and local community partners. The Collaborative LWCF program is designed as a nationwide competition in which individual landscape proposals are scored against ecological and technical criteria to form a ranked list of priority landscape projects that is submitted with the President's budget request to Congress.

Landscape proposals are prepared by interagency teams, with appropriate involvement of Federal and non-Federal partners with equities in the landscape. Often the proposals are the product of years of extensive Federal, State, and local engagement and have the support of dozens of stakeholder organizations. A Federal Technical Committee scores the proposals, and a Federal National Selection Committee comprising the directors and chiefs of the four agencies, as well as senior leadership from the two Departments, agrees on final funding recommendations. The National Selection Committee represents the government's most senior and experienced conservation leaders with oversight for the agencies' respective LWCF programs. The National Selection Committee considers a full range of factors in final decisions, including: leveraging opportunities with other Federal and non-Federal funding sources; the strength and maturity of partnerships and degree of local support; and existing and emerging Administration priorities, which impact the landscapes under consideration for investment in any given year.

For 2014, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and the National Selection Committee chose landscapes for Collaborative LWCF investment through a rigorous merit-based evaluation process. After evaluating and prioritizing multiple ecosystems, they selected four landscapes for 2014 funding:

- Crown of the Continent in Montana.
- Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina.
- Southwest Deserts in California.
- National Trails System in the United States.

The Collaborative LWCF program focuses multi-agency and partner effort investing in these ecologically important and threatened landscapes to ensure they remain resilient in the face of development pressures and global change. While efforts continue to protect individual tracts of land with other

LWCF components, the Collaborative component makes timely and smart investments in strategic conservation on a landscape-scale focusing on select areas for acquisition by multiple Federal agencies in concert with State and local efforts that can achieve outcomes in a short time frame of two to three years. These coordinated efforts will protect large areas to maximize ecosystem values, support at-risk species, and prevent ecosystem decline or collapse, thereby precluding the need for more expensive restoration and regulatory solutions. The proposed Federal investments in these landscapes will leverage significant private commitments to land and water conservation that build on community-based efforts and fulfill the needs for open space, recreation, and preserve historical uses.

Crown of the Continent – The Crown of the Continent landscape spans the Rocky Mountains, which extend through the northwest part of Montana and parts of Canada. The Collaborative LWCF request will support community-based conservation efforts to build resiliency in ecological systems and communities, enabling this landscape to continue to support a full range of native biodiversity in the face of global change. Building ecological resiliency includes maintaining intact, interconnected landscapes and restoring fragmented or degraded habitats.



Since the mid-1990s, a very broad base of citizens, organizations, user groups, and local, Federal, and tribal governments have worked together in support of the Federal acquisition of key private lands in a shared vision for the Crown. The agencies have engaged in long standing collaborations with non-government organization partners, local community groups such as the Blackfoot Challenge and Rocky Mountain Front Landowner Advisory Group, and State and county government officials, to tailor a Federal conservation strategy and acquisition program that achieves a synergy between private rights, open space, traditional land uses, and conservation.

A full suite of native forest carnivores are found within the Crown, including wolves, wolverines, pine martens, fishers, bobcats, and black and grizzly bears. The planned acquisitions will protect threatened and endangered wildlife, fish, and plant habitats and connectivity while fostering watershed health, in support of the conservation goals of the State Wildlife Action Plan, Partners in Flight, Endangered Species Recovery Plans, Forest Management Plans, and agency general management and departmental level strategic plans.

The request supports working farms, ranches, and forests through the use of conservation easements in lieu of fee acquisition on many tracts. The proposed acquisitions will also benefit local economies by supporting and expanding opportunities for big game hunting. The landscape is home to a number of large game species, including antelope, elk, deer, and moose which range throughout the acquisition area and can be hunted within some fee ownership acquisitions. Hunting provides recreational opportunities and vital revenue to local communities. In addition, investing in the Crown's wealth of water, wildlife, and recreation resources, including 40 new access points and increased opportunities for local tourism, will support the economic well-being and quality of life for local residents.

The 2014 budget proposes a total of \$15.6 million in Interior Collaborative LWCF funding and \$31.0 million in Forest Service Collaborative LWCF funding for Crown of the Continent.

Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine – The Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine landscape is located in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. The Collaborative LWCF request for the Longleaf Pine landscape is crucial to the ecological well being and recovery of the diminishing longleaf pine ecosystem in the South. Longleaf pines, which once covered up to 98 million acres of the Southeast have been reduced to about three million acres, much of it in poor condition. The acquisitions funded in this request address the most critical needs of each agency in support of the shared priorities of longleaf pine ecosystem conservation and restoration and endangered and threatened species recovery. The lands selected for this proposal are the highest priority for each unit to protect critical habitat, improve management, protect private lands from wildfire, and leverage the efforts of conservation partners.

Federal agencies drew from wildlife habitat gap analyses, recovery plans, other State and Federal

natural resource assessments and initiatives, and local government and general public input, to develop a plan for land acquisition that targets the most critical conservation needs, including acquisitions within three of the 16 Significant Geographic Areas identified in the *America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative Range-wide Conservation Plan*. The initiative is a collaborative effort of multiple public and private partners supporting range-wide efforts to restore and conserve longleaf pine ecosystems, led by a 33-member Partnership Council representing non-government organizations, State and Federal agencies, industry, and private landowners. Members such as these have forged enduring partnerships that have conserved natural landscapes for many years while building strong political support for conservation.



The 2014 budget proposes a total of \$12.9 million in Interior Collaborative LWCF funding for the Longleaf Pine landscape in current funding. An additional \$6.7 million is requested within the Forest Service budget. Interior's request will fund projects local communities identified as priorities through America's Great Outdoors, including the Santee Basin in South Carolina and the Waccamaw Blue Trail in South Carolina, in addition to other significant habitats within the ecosystem. It will also protect significant cultural lands, including the Gullah Geechee Corridor, an area intrinsically linked to the cultural heritage of African Americans in the Southeast. The project supports local economies by protecting highly prized natural landscapes for outdoor recreation and tourism. The working forest component further enhances economic vitality of local communities by providing forest products that support local economies.

Southwest Desert – The Southwest Deserts landscape area, which covers the California deserts garners broad national, regional, and local community support with conservation goals rooted in years of

partnership between a wide variety of government agencies and non-government organizations, and informed by multiple conservation and recreation plans for the area. In the Southwest Deserts, the Federal government is working with Local and State partners to ensure conservation and community outcomes are achieved alongside development initiatives. Diverse and increasing demands are being put on this landscape causing immediate and escalating demands, which drive community-based efforts to conserve resources.

Federal agencies with responsibilities in the landscape and State and non-government organizations partners have a long history of working together through the Desert Managers Group, LCC, the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Team, and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Action Team. The DRECP constitutes an important component of California's renewable energy planning and involves multiple Federal and State agencies working together to identify areas for biological conservation. This Collaborative LWCF request will directly support work being done through the DRECP, achieving habitat protection and recreational opportunities in alignment with renewable energy development.



Prior Federal investments in this area have led to important resource protection successes, a reflection of the strong partnerships in the area that continue to leverage Federal dollars. Because pressures on the land are increasing, Federal funding remains critical as local, State and Federal agencies work together to ensure conservation and community needs are addressed as development advances. The 2014 Interior budget proposes \$40.3 million for Southwest Deserts landscape projects, of which \$28.6 million is current and \$11.8 million is permanent funding. The 2014 Forest Service budget proposes an additional \$10.4 million for Southwest Deserts landscape projects.

National Trails – The Collaborative LWCF request for National Trails will benefit the Country’s world-class system of 30 National Scenic and Historic Trails totaling over 54,000 miles in length, traversing 49 States and every ecological biome in the Nation. The national trails system winds through wilderness, rural landscapes, and historic and cultural corridors. These long-distance trails, stretching for hundreds or thousands of miles each, connect with 70 wildlife refuges, 80 national parks, 90 national forests, and 100 major metropolitan areas. They protect crucial conservation areas and wildlife migration corridors and provide education, recreation, and fitness for all ages. The budget request will support acquisitions to improve safety, access, connectivity, and integrity for 11 trails in 17 States.

Each national trail is a collaborative venture in the conservation, interpretation, and responsible public use of important elements of the Nation’s natural and cultural heritage. The National Trails System Act enacted by Congress in 1968, created a broad partnership directing BLM, NPS, and the Forest Service to work in partnership with States, local units of government, land trusts, and private landowners, to protect lands and structures along these trails, enabling them to be accessible to the public. As established by law, the administration and management of these trails requires interagency collaboration, and significant LWCF investment to protect them for public appreciation. The collaborative nature of the national scenic and historic trails means that a financial investment by any of the partners has the potential to be greatly leveraged by contributions from other partners, including State agencies, local governments, and land trusts.

Federal investment does not just help to buy land to protect critical resources, it also sets the stage for citizen and community involvement in national trail stewardship. Federal investment in these trails stimulates citizen engagement in public resource stewardship and volunteerism, connects citizens with the Nation’s natural and cultural heritage, and strengthens communities across the land. Few Nations on earth have national trails systems, and none has one as extensive, diverse, and inspiring. The 2014 Interior budget proposes \$43.4 million for National Trail landscapes in permanent funding. The 2014 Forest Service Budget requests an additional \$8.9 million for the National Trails system. This request will protect and enhance the fragile, vulnerable, inspiring, and irreplaceable resources associated with these national trails.

To be successful, we must be thoughtful, strategic, and community-oriented in our approach to conservation. We are focused on targeting conservation investments to critical needs, relying on the best available science and planning tools to identify high-value opportunities that will produce measurable outcomes. Through LWCF, we are making conservation decisions informed by this kind of rigorous science-based analysis, but we are doing something more: realizing the added value of collaboration. Smart collaboration – within the Federal government and with States, Tribes, and non-governmental partners – better enables us to meet the needs of communities, achieve agency missions, and build stable, resilient ecosystems.

Rhea Suh
*Assistant Secretary - Policy,
Management and Budget
March 18, 2013*

Interior Core Land Acquisition Projects – The 2014 request of \$264.0 million for Federal land acquisition includes \$79.4 million for mission-specific, core funded projects. Of the amount proposed for core project funding, \$52.5 million is requested as current appropriations and \$26.8 million is proposed as permanent appropriations. The core land acquisition projects emphasize accomplishment of bureau-specific missions and priority land management requirements. The three Interior land management bureaus consider multiple factors to determine and prioritize lands and easements for acquisition. These criteria include the mission value of planned acquisitions, feasibility of acquiring and operating the lands, the availability of willing sellers, the risk of imminent development of property, and the participation of partners. A list of the 2014 proposed core projects are included in Appendix F of this book. Detailed information about each project can be found within the specific bureau budget justification in the Land and Water Conservation Fund or land acquisition section.

In addition to the core project request, Interior requests an additional \$45.2 million in current appropriations to support Federal Land Acquisition through land protection planning, purchase

of inholdings, emergency projects, donations, exchanges, hardship cases, relocations, and acquisition management.

The 2014 budget for NPS also includes \$9.0 million in current appropriations for American Battlefield Protection program land acquisition grants, equal to the 2012 enacted level. These matching grants provide much needed resources to States and local governments to preserve and protect threatened Civil War battlefield sites outside the national park system. Private non-profit entities may also apply in partnership with a State or local agency. These grants support the fee simple acquisition of land, or the acquisition of permanent, protective interests in land, at Civil War battlefields listed in the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission's 1993 *Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*.

Bureau of Land Management Core Projects – In 2014, BLM requests \$16.1 million for core land acquisition projects. Of this, \$5.5 million is requested in current funding to include: \$2.0 million for California Coastal National Monument in California, Point Arena; \$1.7 million for Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado; and \$1.8 million for the Lower Salmon River Area of Critical Environmental Concern/Special Recreation Management Area lands in Idaho. The remaining \$10.6 million is proposed as permanent funding to include: \$1.1 million for Agua Fria National Monument and Ironwood Forest National Monument in Arizona; \$600,000 for Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area in Colorado; \$1.0 million for Henrys Lake Area of Critical Environmental Concern in Idaho; \$3.0 million for Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and Crooked National Wild and Scenic River in Oregon; \$4.0 million for Red Cliffs National Conservation Area in Utah; and \$900,000 for the North Platte River Special River Management Area in Wyoming.

The BLM's requested acquisitions would establish a number of publicly accessible sites along the California coast to improve the interpretation of the resource and recreational value of the California Coastal National Monument. This request includes several core projects, which would provide access for hunters and anglers as an additional benefit, including: Cascade-Siskiyou NM; Crooked National Wild and Scenic River; Dominguez-Escalante NCA; Henrys Lake ACEC; Lower Salmon River ACEC/SRMA; and, North Platte River SRMA.

The access of hunters and anglers to the public lands is often frustrated by complicated checkerboard land ownership patterns. Hunting and angling access easements alleviate some of these challenges and provide better access to valuable public recreation opportunities.

Fish and Wildlife Service Core Projects – In 2014, FWS requests \$37.7 million for core projects. Of this, \$26.7 million is requested in current funding to include: \$5.0 million for Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas; \$5.0 million for Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area in Florida; \$2.0 million for Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area in Kansas; \$3.0 million for Neches River National Wildlife Refuge in Texas; and \$11.7 million for Dakota Grassland Conservation Area and Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area in North and South Dakota. The remaining \$11.1 million is proposed as permanent funding for core projects to include: \$2.0 million for Grasslands Wildlife Management Area and San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge in California; \$1.0 million for Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland; \$567,000 for Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota; \$900,000 for John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge in Rhode Island; \$1.0 million for Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas; \$1.0 million for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge that touches the four States of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin; and \$4.6 million for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in the four States of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

National Park Service Core Projects – In 2014, NPS requests \$25.6 million for core projects. Of this, \$20.4 million is requested in current funding to include: \$319,000 for Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in Colorado; \$5.3 million for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan; \$1.8 million for San Antonio Missions National Historic Park in Texas; \$2.8 million for Virgin Islands National Park in the Virgin Islands; \$5.5 million for Civil War Sesquicentennial Units; and \$4.7 million for Greenways and Blueways. The remaining \$5.2 million is proposed as permanent funding for core projects to include \$1.5 million for Saguaro National Park in Arizona and \$3.7 million for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in California.

LWCF Grant Programs – Federal land acquisition through the LWCF is complemented by matching grants that fund State and local activities. Four grant

programs are proposed to be supported through LWCF in 2014: the NPS State Conservation Assistance grants and Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery grants, the FWS Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grants, and the Forest Service's Forest Legacy grants.

State Conservation Assistance Grants – Administered by NPS, this program provides matching grants to States and through States to local governments, for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The program helps create and maintain high quality recreation areas and facilities and stimulates investments in the protection and maintenance of recreation resources across the United States. The benefits to local communities are many. Access to outdoor recreation sites and greenways has been shown to improve overall mental health, increase physical activity, and connect people to nature as well as foster a greater sense of community. As documented in the *National Recreation and Park Association's Synopsis of 2010 Research Papers*, urban trees in the lower 48 States, many of which are located in parks, remove an estimated 783,000 tons of pollution per year, with an estimated annual value to society of \$5.6 billion. The State Conservation Assistance program itself has a clear and noticeable economic impact. The most recent study published that looks at the economic impact of Interior programs, *The Department of the Interior's Economic Contributions, FY 2011*, found Federal investment of \$37.1 million for State Conservation Assistance grants resulted in a Nationwide economic impact of \$120.0 million and supported 803 jobs.

Most of the grants awarded to States have gone to locally sponsored projects to provide close-to-home recreation opportunities readily accessible to Americans across all walks of life and physical abilities. Land and Water Conservation Fund assisted parks touch the lives of people living in more than 98 percent of American counties. Each State has the flexibility to ensure the highest State and local priorities are addressed. In 2012, LWCF grants supported the creation of 32 brand new parks, helped acquire 2,439 acres, and enhanced 311 parks with new or rehabilitated facilities. Overall, 314 communities benefitted from these grants. For example, a recent grant assisted the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in acquiring 17,639 acres of Devils River Ranch at the confluence of the Devils River and Amistad Reservoir, helping the State protect a total of 37,000 acres including 24 river miles. Public recreation opportunities span an unprecedented range from

remote wilderness to family-friendly river access for fishing, hunting, and paddling. However, not all grants are focused on land acquisition. The City of Bremerton, Washington's Lions Park was in need of renovation. The 1970s-era design at this park resulted in much of the 1,900 feet bordering Puget Sound being covered in pavement, and blocked stunning views with non-native trees. In re-thinking the park, the City of Bremerton removed more than 2.5 acres of asphalt, restored the shoreline, and redeveloped park infrastructure with sustainable elements including porous paving, green roofs, rain gardens, and a nature-themed playground. The Federal investment, less than 30 percent of the project, was matched with grants from the Lion's Foundation and the State.

In 2014, the budget proposes \$40.0 million in current funding for State Conservation Assistance, a programmatic decrease of \$5.2 million compared to the 2012 enacted level. Included within this request is \$36.4 million to be allocated to States through the traditional formula based process. An additional \$3.6 million will be allocated to administer the new grants, as well as monitor grant assisted sites to ensure they are not converted to non-recreational uses.

The Administration's proposal to permanently authorize annual funding for LWCF, without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation, will provide an additional \$20.0 million for State Conservation Assistance grants in 2014.

Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Grants – The 2014 budget requests \$10.0 million in current funding to revitalize the UPARR program, through the LWCF. Established in November 1978, by P. L. 95-625, the UPARR grants program was designed to provide matching grants to select physically and economically distressed urban communities to revitalize and improve recreation opportunities. This program provides grants directly to local governments to rehabilitate existing indoor and outdoor recreation facilities; demonstrate innovative ways to enhance park and recreation opportunities; and develop local Recovery Action Program Plans to identify needs, priorities, and strategies for revitalization of the total recreation system. This program, like the NPS State Conservation Assistance grants program, aligns with the AGO goal of creating and enhancing a new generation of safe, clean, accessible urban parks, and community green spaces. This proposal is also part of a broader, renewed focus by Interior to develop strategies to improve the integration of

agency programs and park units to impact urban economies and the quality of life for urban residents, expanding opportunities for all.

Funding for UPARR grants has not been appropriated since 2002. However, since its inception, \$307.1 million has been appropriated for grants to improve and protect more than 1,520 recreational sites in distressed urban communities nationwide, and to help create and launch new innovative programming. The UPARR rehabilitation grants have been used to completely overhaul inner-city outdoor playgrounds, parks, ball fields, and tennis and basketball courts. The grants also have enhanced other recreation facilities such as recreation centers and indoor pool facilities that were unsafe and in many cases closed. For example, a 2002 grant to the City of Detroit, Michigan completely restored and enhanced Peterson Playfield, which had deteriorated to the point where the recreation facilities were unsafe. All the main recreation opportunities of the park, including the ball fields, tennis courts, and basketball courts were restored. Additionally, new, accessible playground equipment for disabled children and a water spray-ground were installed. Today, Peterson Playfield is a major athletic and community hub, used by all ages for everything from tennis and Little League to walking. In 2014, the grants will be targeted at rehabilitating primarily outdoor-oriented neighborhood parks, especially those with active recreation opportunities; directly connecting with and engaging underserved communities and youth; removing barriers and improving access to make parks easier to use; and involving and expanding public and private partnerships.

The Administration's proposal to permanently authorize annual funding, without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation, for LWCF would provide an additional \$5.0 million for UPARR grants in 2014.

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants – Because more than half of all species cur-

rently listed as endangered or threatened spend at least part of their life on privately owned lands, the Department recognizes that success in conserving species will ultimately depend on working cooperatively with landowners, communities, and Tribes to foster voluntary stewardship efforts. States play a key role in catalyzing these efforts.

The CESCOF, authorized by the Endangered Species Act and funded through the LWCF, provides grants to States and Territories to participate in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects to benefit candidate, proposed, and listed species on non-Federal lands. The 2014 budget includes \$56.0 million in current funding for CESCOF grants. These funds would be leveraged with State funds for the development of habitat conservation plans, acquisition of lands to support habitat conservation plans and facilitate species recovery, as well as grants for States to improve the status of species through public education and outreach, habitat restoration, species status surveys, and captive propagation.

For example, a grant awarded in 2012 to California will fund the acquisition of nearly 1,351 acres of important biological core habitat areas for the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher. The purchases will also benefit numerous other listed and unlisted species covered by the Carlsbad Habitat Management Plan, including the least Bell's vireo, California least tern, western snowy plover, and several plant species. The proposed land acquisition supports a large, landscape-level conservation initiative that will greatly enhance the conservation goals of the Carlsbad HMP by securing key regional wildlife linkages and preserving core habitat in the three targeted areas. The parcels proposed for acquisition support a mosaic of high quality, native riparian and upland habitats.

The Administration's proposal to permanently authorize funding, without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation, for LWCF will provide an additional \$28.0 million for CESCOF grants in 2014.

AN AGO URBAN AGENDA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The President's America's Great Outdoors initiative has helped connect Americans to the treasured outdoor spaces in their communities, including the more than 80 percent of Americans who live in urban areas.

*Lisa Jackson, Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
December 4, 2012*

Parks and green spaces improve a community's economy, health, quality of life, environment, and social cohesion. In cities and towns across the Country, parks generate tourism and recreation dollars and improve investment and renewal. Parks and green spaces also have social value as places where people of all ages can come together to relax and recreate at little or no cost.

However, in some communities, the nearest park is miles away and cannot be visited using public transportation. Even in communities with ample open space, a lack of modern, well maintained facilities, or affordable, reliable transportation and safe pedestrian routes can deter people, especially youth and families, from enjoying the outdoors.

Interior bureaus are working with partners in cities across the Nation, replacing old infrastructure and hardscape with buildings and roads that are functional as well as truly green; increasing the number of parks and trails to improve public health; planting rain gardens, increasing tree canopy, and building landscape elements that trap pollutants and silt to address stormwater management issues; restoring habitat for urban wildlife; and helping cities monitor water quality, address contaminants, and implement the research that forms the underpinning of these urban greening efforts.

The Rocky Mountain Greenway is an outstanding example of what can happen when strong Federal, State, local, and private partnerships align to improve access and connections to the great outdoors. Completion of the Rocky Mountain Greenway, first proposed by Secretary Salazar and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper in May 2011, will result in a comprehensive trail system connecting three national wildlife refuges, Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Two Ponds, and Rocky Flats, to Rocky Mountain National Park and hundreds of miles of trails in the Denver metropolitan area.

This Greenway will provide Denver area residents and visitors greater access to rivers, parks, open spaces, and other outdoor wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities. The national wildlife refuges will anchor the trail network and offer additional birding, hiking, fishing, and environmental education opportunities. A portion of this effort is being funded through a Federal Transit Administration's Transit in Parks program grant. This grant, a proposal developed by the Rocky Mountain Greenway partnership, which includes the State of Colorado, Fish and Wildlife Service, local municipalities, and nongovernmental organizations, will provide for the initial design and construction of the western trail link, connecting Rocky Flats and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuges to the Greater Denver trail system. Building on these efforts such as the Rocky Mountain Greenway, Interior is developing a comprehensive vision of urban conservation for the 21st Century.

This focus on urban areas will require Interior to realign some of its thinking and priorities. In 2013, Interior will prepare a new report, *AGO Urban Agenda for the 21st Century*, that identifies existing Interior assets and activities in and near cities and recommends ways to increase the urban presence. Interior will also identify 20 AGO urban projects, highlighting cutting edge efforts to increase recreational opportunities, urban wildlife and habitat, greenspace, and green infrastructure, to be completed during 2013 in cities across the Nation. The report will look for the first time across the bureaus to better align resources, identify priorities, and create a comprehensive vision for urban conservation, recreation, and restoration.

The 2014 budget will request \$10.0 million in current funding to revitalize the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery program. An additional \$5.0 million for this program is proposed as permanent funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, providing a total of \$15.0 million. This increase will provide targeted support to economically distressed urban communities for the rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities. From 1979 through 2008, the UPARR program awarded approximately 1,500 grants to 380 local jurisdictions in 43 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These grants addressed the diverse needs of urban areas, including rehabilitating playgrounds, ball fields, and recreational trails; converting non-recreational facilities into recreation centers; and development of recreation plans. In 2014, the UPARR program will focus on rehabilitating primarily outdoor-oriented neighborhood parks, removing barriers and making parks easier to access, and involving and expanding public and private partnerships.



NATIONAL BLUEWAYS AND AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS

The National Blueway designation recognizes that strong, diverse partnerships are the best way to address the modern-day threats to our Nation's most important rivers, and the White River is an outstanding example of that approach. The River is the recreational and economic lifeblood of communities from the Ozarks to the Mississippi. River users and river lovers of all stripes have banded together to protect the White River watershed and maintain this magnificent resource for the region—and for the Nation.

*David Hayes, Deputy Secretary of the Interior
January 9, 2013*

In May 2012, Interior established the National Blueways System to recognize and support locally-led efforts to sustain the economic, recreational, and natural values of rivers and watersheds of national significance. A National Blueway



includes the entire river from headwaters to mouth as well as the river's watershed. The designation does not establish a new protective status or regulation, but is intended to recognize and support existing local and regional conservation, recreation, education, and restoration efforts by coordinating ongoing Federal, State, and local activities.

The first National Blueway is the 410 mile-long Connecticut River and its 7.2 million acre watershed. Covering parts of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont,

the watershed includes the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, sub-boreal forests, floodplains, a major migratory pathway, and a globally recognized wetland. The Connecticut River is also an important economic resource to the 2.4 million residents and 396 communities in the watershed. Annually, 1.4 million people enjoy the recreational opportunities presented by the watershed, including National Recreation Trails, scenic byways, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Natural Landmarks. These and other recreation opportunities contribute an estimated \$1.0 billion to local economies, according to the Trust for Public Land.

Inclusion in the National Blueways System recognizes and supports exemplary river system stewardship efforts to enhance abundant conservation, environmental education, recreation, and economic opportunities by over 40 organizations, including the Friends of the Silvio O. Conte Refuge, the Connecticut Watershed Council, the Connecticut River Museum, and the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Collaborating Federal agencies include the Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Benefits are already starting to emerge from this designation including better coordination among the many groups that share similar programs and goals, but may not have worked together given the size of the watershed.

In January 2013, Interior announced the Nation's second National Blueway, the White River watershed. Flowing over 700 miles from its headwaters in the Ozarks to its mouth at the Mississippi River, the White River drains a watershed spanning 17.8 million acres across 60 counties in Arkansas and Missouri. It is home to 1.2 million people who rely on the economic benefits that recreation, tourism, agriculture, and commerce along the river provide to watershed communities. The White River is an important part of the wildlife-related economies of Arkansas and Missouri, which State-wide, accounted for \$1.8 billion and \$2.8 billion, respectively. Public and private landowners in the watershed have already conserved more than 3.2 million acres of land for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The White River National Blueway was nominated for recognition as a National Blueway by 26 diverse stakeholder groups including the National Wildlife Refuge Association, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, The Conservation Fund, the National Audubon Society, the Arkansas Canoe Club, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, the cities of Augusta and Clarendon, Arkansas, and local businesses. Federal partners include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, and the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture. In conjunction with this designation, FWS also announced it approved an expansion of the acquisition boundary of the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, one of the White River's main tributaries, that will protect floodplain habitat. Additionally, USACE announced it will move forward with the Lower Cache River Basin Restoration Project, increasing fish and wildlife habitat.



Other partners including the USDA and local groups are working with the agricultural community to minimize nutrient pollution and erosion through efforts such as planting trees, optimizing the management of pasture land, and mapping out better ways of handling waste generated by chicken producers.

In 2014, the President's budget proposes a \$3.3 million Cooperative Watershed Management Program administered by FWS on behalf of a multi-agency committee to support watershed partnerships such as the Connecticut and White River National Blueways and their important role in watershed stewardship. The CWMP supports the formation and expansion of locally led watershed groups and development of

multi-stakeholder watershed management projects. These funds will be awarded via a joint decisionmaking process of the National Blueways Committee. The program will provide candidate and designated National Blueways partnerships with financial assistance to support strategic watershed coordination, collaboration, partnership development, regional planning, implementation, and project delivery.

Additionally, the budget request includes LWCF funding to acquire refuge lands within the watersheds of the two National Blueways. This includes \$4.6 million to acquire and conserve 3,700 acres as part of the Silvio O. Conte NFWR. This acquisition will protect important fisheries and wildlife habitat including grassland and northern boreal forest tracts. The budget also proposes \$5.0 million to acquire an estimated 1,920 acres at the Cache River NWR. These tracts contain a variety of habitats, and their acquisition will contribute greatly to habitat conservation efforts in this area.

RIVER RESTORATION

Bureau of Reclamation – In 2014, Reclamation’s river restoration programs are included in the AGO initiative. The Reclamation’s 2014 budget request for river restoration is \$120.2 million, a decrease of \$33.6 million below the 2012 enacted budget and an increase of \$10.7 million above the 2013 Continuing Resolution annualized, primarily due to the completion of the Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project in the 2012 budget.

Reclamation’s river restoration programs directly support the goals of the AGO program, through local and basin-wide collaboration in watershed partnerships. Reclamation’s river restoration helps reduce environmental conflicts and litigation, as evidenced by the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, where 18 years of litigation was settled by committing to restored water flows and the reintroduction of salmon to the River, as well as certainty on water and power delivery to customers. Restoration programs support tribal needs, restoring fisheries affected by water and power operations as demonstrated by the Trinity River Restoration program which is re-establishing the physical process and rescaling the Trinity River as a foundation for fishery recovery. Restoration programs also develop valuable conservation skills for young people working on projects as is demonstrated by the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program among others. The 2014 budget includes \$26.0 million for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, \$14.0 million for the Trinity River Restoration program, another \$4.0 million for the San Joaquin and Trinity restoration programs within the Central Valley Project Restoration fund, and \$18.2 million for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program.

Reconstruction of dams, coastlines, and lakes that limited the availability of fish and other natural resources depended upon for food, recreation, conveyance, economic vitality, and quality of life are bringing communities back together. The Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project, the culmination of over 40 years of effort, was initiated as a means to find a balanced solution to improve fish passage and the reliability of irrigation water deliveries. Reconstruction of the Red Bluff Diversion Dam, which had been an obstacle for fish migration, has resulted in the gates being opened permanently. A new fish screen and pumping system will divert water from the Sacramento River into the Tehama-Colusa and

Corning Canals while ensuring safe fish passage. The 2014 budget includes \$1.9 million for ongoing operations and maintenance of the Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project.

Partnering with people and communities helps enforce the objectives of AGO by restoring, protecting, and cultivating waterways in an effort to reconnect people with the Nation’s cultural, natural, and economic resources. The Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management program has brought together diverse interests in a collaborative partnership to restore and protect the river while maintaining dam operations. The program’s Adaptive Management Work Group, led by the Department of the Interior, has representation from Reclamation, FWS, NPS, BIA, Colorado River Basin States, environmental groups, recreation interests, and contractors for Federal power from Glen Canyon Dam. The AMWG makes it possible to bring all these varied interests to a consensus on how to protect downstream resources and strike a wise balance on river operations. Another example of a cooperative partnership is the Columbia/Snake Salmon Recovery Program Tributary Habitat Activities’ Yankee Fork Off-Channel Habitat Restoration Project located in Idaho. To support the YFOHRP, Reclamation is partnering with local, State and tribal governments, landowners, and others to improve habitat in support of salmon and steelhead trout, enhance river recreation that support jobs in tourism and outdoor recreation, and build relationships that will strengthen the State of Idaho. The 2014 budget includes \$3.5 million for the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program and \$18.0 million for the Columbia/Snake Salmon Recovery Program Tributary Habitat Activities.

Recovery of endangered species and their habitat is another goal of river restoration. Restoring species to their native habitat and ensuring water is fit for habitation is important to the survival of human and plant and animal populations. The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program were put into operation as measures to recover populations of endangered fish and to improve water development to meet current and future needs. These recovery programs have taken a cooperative approach to recovering endangered species, avoiding litigation, and ensuring ESA compliance. Benefits of the recovery programs are instream flow protection and habitat restoration, which are expected to result in healthier riverine and riparian environments, improving the quality of life for humans in adjacent communities and

USGS GEOFORCE – FUNDING SCIENTIFIC FIELD EXPERIENCES FOR YOUTH ATTENDING MINORITY-SERVING HIGH SCHOOLS

The U.S. Geological Survey contributes to Interior's Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative by engaging youth through meaningful hands-on work experience, training, professional mentoring, and graduate research in the natural sciences. The 2014 budget includes an additional \$1.0 million for USGS to hire additional youth and invest in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education that is critical to achieving the USGS mission now and in the future.

The USGS will use this new funding in 2014 to expand support for efforts such as GeoForce, a program to encourage students from minority-serving high schools in rural South Texas and inner-city Houston, to take on the challenges of a rigorous math and science curriculum, to pursue higher education in these fields, and to enter the high-tech workforce.



GeoFORCE students from Texas met with the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, Anne Castle at Great Falls, Virginia. These high school students are finishing their fourth summer of geologic field experiences and 100 percent are heading off to university. The USGS scientists are proud to help mentor this outstanding class and support them on a pathway to a career in science.

benefiting national parks, wildlife refuges, and public lands frequented by outdoor recreationists and nature enthusiasts. The 2014 budget includes \$6.1 million for the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and \$2.4 million for the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program.

Other ongoing efforts in river restoration in 2014 include: \$10.2 million for the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program; \$4.6 million for the Gila River Basin Native Fishes Conservation Program, Colorado River Basin Project, Central Arizona Project; \$9.7 million for the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program; and \$1.7 million for other smaller programs.

OTHER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

From conserving working landscapes from Montana to Florida, to creating a new generation of dynamic and accessible urban parks from New York to Los Angeles, to establishing a network of national water trails and blueways, we have worked closely for the last three years with States, local communities, and other partners to preserve America's natural heritage and open up more opportunities for outdoor recreation.

*Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior
September 12, 2012*

Partnerships are a key component of Interior's delivery of programs. Partnerships underpin nearly every program and provide a critically important connection to local communities, interested constituencies, and diverse populations. They are key to the success of the AGO initiative. In communities across the Nation, Interior works with State, local, and tribal governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and citizens to realize the wide-ranging benefits of a revitalized connection to the outdoors. Recognizing that no single entity, Federal, State, tribal, local, or private, is able to provide the resources necessary to achieve the Nation's conservation goals, the Department, through FWS and NPS, administers technical assistance programs and a number of grant programs that are leveraged with partners.

Conservation Grants – Interior's 2014 budget includes \$104.5 million, an increase of \$3.9 million above the 2012 enacted level for FWS conservation

grant programs. These grants are in addition to the \$56.0 million current request for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund through the LWCF, described above.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants – The NAWCA grant program provides grants throughout the United States, as well as in Canada and Mexico, for the conservation of waterfowl and other wetland-associated migratory birds. For the past twenty years, NAWCA funds have been invested in the continent’s most vital wetland ecosystems, the key for sustaining species and important to hunters and anglers. Projects are funded based on the significance of the wetland ecosystems and wildlife habitat to be conserved, migratory bird species benefited, partner diversity, non-Federal contributions leveraged, and the long-term value of the conservation work proposed. The FWS budget includes \$39.4 million for these grants in 2014, an increase of \$3.9 million. This request, along with non-Federal partner matches, will enable the NAWCA program to continue to select and fund wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement projects such as the Bird Island Cove Estuarine Habitat Restoration Project in Texas and the Thousand Acre Marsh Wetland Protection Project in Delaware that were funded in 2012, along with 22 other projects.

State and Tribal Wildlife Grants – This grant program assists States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, Territories, and Tribes in protecting fish and wildlife populations along with their habitat, including non-game species. The Tribal Wildlife Grants provide a competitive funding opportunity for federally recognized tribal governments to develop and implement programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitat, including species of Native American cultural or traditional importance, and species that are not hunted or fished. In 2012, 23 Tribes in 17 States used Tribal Wildlife Grants to fund a wide range of conservation projects ranging from salmon restoration to invasive species control.

For State Wildlife Grants, all funded activities must link with species, actions, or strategies included in each State’s Wildlife Action Plan. These plans collectively form a nationwide strategy to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered and are unique compared to many prior conservation plans because of broad participation and an open planning process. By working with stakeholders and other members of the community, State fish and wildlife agencies translate pressing conservation needs into practical actions and on-the-ground results. Through

this program, FWS has been able to assist States to improve efforts to conserve native flora and fauna and encourage multi-State projects.

The budget includes \$61.3 million for grants to help conserve and recover imperiled fish and wildlife, level with the 2012 enacted budget. To target a sizeable share of the funds toward national conservation objectives, the 2014 request includes \$44.1 million to be awarded based on a statutory formula, \$13.0 million to be awarded competitively to States, and \$4.3 million to be awarded competitively to Tribes. The work conducted with competitive grant funding focuses on projects with the most significant conservation benefits such as:

- Baseline surveys on species, such as sea turtles, and assessments of how species have been impacted by climate change and other environmental stressors across State boundaries.
- Protection of species’ habitat across boundaries or Species of Greatest Conservation Need habitat areas, thereby increasing the ability for multiple States to protect habitats through cooperative projects among State fish and wildlife agencies to support viable populations at the broader ecological scale.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation – These grants support projects that benefit neotropical migratory birds that breed in the U.S. and Canada and winter in Latin America. The more than 340 species of neotropical migratory birds include plovers, terns, hawks, cranes, warblers, and sparrows. The populations of many of these birds are in decline, and some are currently protected as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The 2014 FWS request includes \$3.8 million for Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation grants, level with 2012. This funding will support nearly 30 projects such as the Arctic Shorebird Demographics Network II project and the Targeted Grazing Management to Conserve the Sprague’s Pipit project that were funded in 2012.

Rivers and Trails – The NPS budget request includes \$10.1 million for the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to help communities increase and improve recreational opportunities. This amount is nearly the same as the 2012 enacted level.

Working in communities across the Nation, this program provides expertise and experience to help

citizens and community groups achieve on-the-ground conservation successes and urban renewal through their projects. From urban promenades to trails along abandoned railroad rights-of-way to wildlife corridors, the rivers and trails program promotes the creation and restoration of diverse greenways, as well as river conservation activities spanning downtown riverfronts to regional water trails and stream restoration. One recent example was the assistance provided to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in New York to provide technical assistance to help create an all-season recreational trail alongside a lightly used rail corridor to connect the communities of Norwood and Norfolk, New York. The Norwood-Norfolk Central School District applied for this grant because the New York Department of Transportation would not allow sidewalks to be built alongside the only road that connects the two communities to their shared school facilities. This trail will give students and staff an opportunity

to safely walk or bike to school. In 2014, NPS will initiate 80 new community-based, on-the-ground partnership projects and continue to assist more than 100 additional communities and partners to create or improve 1,900 trail miles, conserve or provide access to over 1,000 miles of rivers and waterways, and conserve or restore over 40,000 acres of park and natural areas.

Historic Preservation and Battlefield Protection Grants—America’s great outdoors are endowed with a vast collection of natural and cultural features that reflect both community and national character. As economic pressures, development, and other factors threaten the sustainability of heritage resources, locally led partnership initiatives can guide efforts to preserve these unique places. Working with State and local partners, NPS plays a vital role in sustaining local efforts to preserve the Nation’s cultural history through a variety of programs that

APPLYING SCIENCE TO ASIAN CARP PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The spread of Asian carp from the Mississippi River system into the Great Lakes is one of the most acute threats facing the Great Lakes and its multi-billion dollar fishing industry. Since 2010, there has been an aggressive focus by the Administration to push the Asian carp invasion further from the Great Lakes, but more effort is needed on the lower Illinois, upper Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, and other river systems. The 2014 budget builds on Asian carp prevention and control and management efforts already underway, in the U.S. Geological Survey and Fish and Wildlife Service.

In 2010, USGS began conducting research as part of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee. This Committee is charged with developing a control program to prevent Asian carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes. The USGS research is essential to developing tools to fight the spread of Asian carp. Tremendous progress has been made by USGS, including predicting tributaries that might provide suitable habitat for Asian carp spawning, developing selective toxicants, and testing water guns and CO₂ barriers. Completing this research is a critical step toward focusing monitoring and control efforts. The 2014 USGS budget includes a \$3.0 million increase, as compared to the 2012 enacted budget, of which \$1.0 million is included in the 2013 operating plan for Asian carp research in the Great Lakes and the Upper Mississippi River. This effort will augment current support to provide scientific information and methodologies to better prevent, detect, and control Asian carp, and enable research that transfers technology to managers for field use both within and outside the Great Lakes Basin.

The 2014 FWS budget includes a program increase of \$5.9 million above the 2012 level to address the threat posed by Asian carp to the Great Lakes. Of this amount, the FWS will allocate \$5.0 million to support eDNA labs within FWS Fish Technology Centers to increase early detection capabilities. This funding will also support rapid assessment, containment, response, and control outside the Great Lakes in high-risk ecosystems and habitats, a critical element of the National Asian Carp Management and Control Plan. The remaining increase of \$903,000 is for traditional gear sampling as part of a comprehensive surveillance and monitoring program. The effort complements FWS activities to prevent other invasive species from establishing and becoming another costly crisis that harms wildlife, habitat, and the American people.

address historic preservation needs nationwide. The 2014 budget request includes \$60.3 million for two NPS historic preservation grant programs. Of this amount, \$58.9 million is for the NPS Historic Preservation Fund, a \$3.0 million increase over the 2012 funding level. This includes \$46.9 million for grants-in-aid to States and Territories and \$9.0 million to Tribes, level with 2012 enacted for these two grant programs. These grants assist State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices in their efforts to protect and preserve their historic resources and carry out other activities pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act and other laws.

The \$3.0 million increase will be used to establish a competitive grants program under the HPF to survey and nominate properties associated with communities currently under-represented in the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks. State, local, and tribal communities and preservation organizations would be eligible to compete for these grants in collaboration with State and tribal historic preservation offices.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. Currently, 86,000 entries are included in the National Register of Historic Places, with approximately 1,600 nominations received annually. However, current estimates place the combined representation of African-American, American Latino, Asian-American, American Indian, Native Alaskan, and Native Hawaiian sites on the National Register of Historic Places and among National Historic Landmarks at less than eight percent of the total listings.

Grants will be awarded to applicants who propose surveys of communities currently under-represented, demonstrate the professional capability and capacity to conduct the surveys and prepare the nominations, and have incorporated extensive community engagement.

The NPS American Battlefield Protection program grants are funded at \$1.4 million, equal with the 2012 level. These grants, which complement the American Battlefield Protection program land acquisition grants funded through the LWCF, assist in the preservation and protection of America's

significant battlefields. These grants support efforts in site identification and documentation, planning, interpretation, and educational projects. In 2012, this grant program awarded 27 grants, including one to the Connecticut River Museum to study a War of 1812 raid by the British on Pettipaug Neck, a safe harbor for American privateers. The raid resulted in the greatest American loss of ships of the entire war. This project will survey and document the raid and delineate the battlefield boundaries. These data will then be used for a National Register nomination.

ON-THE-GROUND RESULTS

People across the Country are coming together to protect and preserve the places that nurture our souls, provide opportunities for recreation, and power our economies. We know that an investment in conservation now is a direct investment into our Nation's economy, and one that will benefit generations to come.

Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior
March 2, 2012

Conservation in America has reached a crossroads, needs have never been greater amid resources never more scarce. An ecological and fiscal imperative exists to plan conservation action at a landscape- and watershed-scale. Because large landscapes are often comprised of Federal, State, tribal and private working lands, collaboration between and among Federal agencies and State and local partners is critical. And because solutions are most durable when they are owned by communities, Federal agencies increasingly seek to catalyze and bolster local conservation efforts. More than at any time before, alignment of Federal, State, and private resources and authorities toward community-based conservation goals at meaningful ecological scales are proving essential to success.

In recent years, Federal agencies have generally excelled in adopting this cross-jurisdictional approach as evidenced by agency-specific landscape- and watershed-scale conservation initiatives. What was lacking, however, was an institutional means to coordinate these initiatives across the Federal agencies to better align investments and authorities. A significant focus of the AGO initiative has been to address this challenge.

Nine Federal agencies — BLM, Reclamation, FWS, NPS, NRCS Forest Service, NOAA, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and USACE, recently committed, through a Memorandum of Understanding, to continue efforts to demonstrate this community-based landscape- and watershed-scale conservation model across seven geographic areas: Southwest Deserts, Crown of the Continent, Great Plains Grasslands, Longleaf Pine, New England Forests and Waters, Connecticut River Watershed, and the White River Watershed.

A complementary, Cabinet-level MOU between Interior, USDA, and USACE was recently signed committing these agencies to continued support of the National Blueways System in particular, to enhance river-oriented outdoor recreation and education, natural resource stewardship, and sustainable economic development at a watershed-scale.

In 2012, Interior reached significant milestones in translating the AGO vision into on-the-ground action. Accomplishments include:

- Interior, USDA, and USACE established a new America the Beautiful Pass that allows the men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces and their families to visit more than 2,000 national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and other public lands without paying entrance or amenity fees.
- Interior continued its efforts to promote veteran hiring. Overall, 16 percent of employees hired were veterans, of which five percent were service disabled veterans.
- Interior provided 19,175 jobs for young Americans, ages 15-25, an increase of 20 percent above 2009 levels. Since Secretary Salazar established youth employment as a Priority Goal within the Department, Interior has employed more young people each year above 2009 levels, 36 percent in 2010 and 30 percent in 2011.
- Interior and USDA investments in Youth Conservation USACE programs increased participation by 20 percent in 2012 above 2011 levels.
- Interior and the Department of Education signed an historic agreement to expand outdoor learning access for an estimated 54 million students and teachers.
- The President designated four new National Monuments to protect unique American natural, cultural, and historic sites and promote local economic growth: Fort Monroe in Virginia, Chimney Rock in Colorado, and Fort Ord and Cesar Chavez in California.
- Interior, USACE, the Departments of Commerce and Transportation, and EPA established a new National Water Trails System, a new network that will increase access to water-based outdoor recreation in and around urban areas, provide national recognition and resources to existing, local water trails, encourage community stewardship of local waterways, and promote tourism that fuels local economies across America. The water trails will be a class of national recreational trails under the National Trails System Act of 1986. Nine rivers were designated National Water Trails in 2012: the Alabama Scenic Water Trail, Atlanta's Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Water Trail, Bronx River Blueway, Hudson River Greenway Water Trail, Kansas River Water Trail, Mississippi River National River and Recreation Area Water Trail, Mississippi River Water Trail-Great River Water Trail section, Okefenokee Wilderness Canoe Trail, and Willamette River Water Trail.
- Interior and the City of New York signed an unprecedented agreement between NPS and the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation, documenting how the two agencies will cooperatively manage 10,000 acres of Federal and city-owned parks in and around Jamaica Bay to promote visitation, education programs, scientific research, and opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- Interior, USDA, USACE, and Commerce relaunched the recreation.gov website with dramatic improvements and expanded content, helping millions of visitors plan travel, find outdoor resources, and explore national parks, lands, waters, and historic and cultural sites.
- Reclamation released nearly 2,000 tagged chinook salmon at various locations in the San Joaquin River. The efforts are part of research studies to collect data that will help the San Joaquin River Restoration

Program understand how juvenile chinook salmon may move through the San Joaquin River and bypass system and also adult spawning habitat use in the River. These study efforts mark the first time a number of adult fall-run chinook salmon are in the river near Friant Dam and, possibly, the first documented successful spawning of salmon in the River in many decades.

- Reclamation's San Juan River Habitat Restoration Program in New Mexico restored 6.5 miles of secondary channel and six acres of backwater habitat for endangered species. Additionally, the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program acquired nearly 1,248 acres of land for habitat during 2012 and acquired up to 4,800 acre-feet of water per year to help increase flows for endangered species.

Additionally, Interior and its partners made significant progress on the 101 AGO projects identified by Governors and stakeholders in all 50 States, published in 2011 in a report titled *America's Great Outdoors Fifty-State Report*. The initial success of this process inspired the designation of additional projects throughout the 50 States, for a total of 130 Interior AGO priority projects. By the end of 2012, 95 percent of the 130 projects had achieved a tangible outcome, with the remaining five percent on track to do so in 2013. Interior instituted a process to select additional projects for 2013, including continuing the best of the multi-year, collaborative efforts from 2012.

Enjoying and protecting the Nation's lands and waters is an American value that crosses regional, demographic, and political lines. Interior is proud of these shared accomplishments, but looks forward to what can be achieved in the future through these partnerships. As noted earlier, the 2014 President's budget includes an increase of \$3.3 million to provide candidate and designated National Blueways partnerships with financial assistance to support strategic watershed coordination, collaboration, partnership development, regional planning, implementation, and project delivery. Complementary Federal land acquisition projects will protect important habitat within the watersheds of the Connecticut River and White River National Blueways, both of which are part of the seven geographic areas addressed in the AGO demonstration landscapes.

The budget requests \$4.5 million for the three land management bureaus and Reclamation to target three areas in the AGO landscape portfolio: the Southwest Deserts, Crown of the Continent, and the Grasslands of the Northern Great Plains landscapes. This increase will support coordinated research to enhance the models used to guide ecosystem restoration and improve ecosystem services while tackling such issues as invasive plants and species restoration. A portion of the funding, \$1.0 million, will support efforts by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to build capacity with community partners to help collaboratively conserve large landscapes.

An example of the type of work these projects will support is in the Grasslands of the Northern Great Plains landscape. This landscape covers about 180 million acres across Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and two Canadian provinces. Native prairie is among the most endangered ecosystems on the planet. Over the past two decades, States such as Iowa and Minnesota, have lost all but one percent of the native prairie with an accelerated loss in the last three to five years. Large contiguous blocks of native prairie still remain but the prairies are being plowed and prairie wetlands are being drained for agricultural purposes. These landscapes have an incredible diversity of grasses and plants, used by many fish and wildlife for their food and cover. With a 2014 request of \$1.4 million, FWS will use a portion to address these threats in partnership with the NRCS to restore and enhance native grassland in this area and recover imperiled prairie species, such as the Dakota skipper, a small butterfly. These strategic funding increases will help not only to maintain current, ongoing partnerships but will foster the development of new partnerships to benefit conservation across this Nation.



NATIONAL COUNCIL TO BUILD 21ST CENTURY CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS

A Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor, as well as the EPA Administrator, Chair of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service and Assistant Secretary of the Army Civil Works establishes a national council to guide implementation of the Obama Administration's 21st Century Conservation Service Corps. The 21CSC is a national collaborative effort to put America's youth and returning veterans to work protecting and restoring America's great outdoors.

A recommendation of the President's America's Great Outdoors initiative, the 21CSC expands efforts of the Administration to increase job opportunities for young people. It builds on existing partnerships with youth conservation corps across the United States to engage thousands of young Americans in hands-on service and job training experiences on public lands and community green spaces.

The 21CSC assists young people, including diverse low-income, under served and at-risk youth, as well as returning veterans, to gain valuable training and work experience while accomplishing conservation and restoration work on public lands, waterways, and cultural heritage sites. The 21CSC contributions range from helping restore parks and beaches in the wake of Hurricane Sandy to leading visitor interpretation programs in national forests and refuges.

The National Council will support the 21CSC by enhancing partnerships with existing youth corps programs around the Nation, stimulating existing and new public-private partnerships, and aligning the investment of current Federal government resources.

For additional information, visit:
<http://www.doi.gov/21csc>

For a copy of the MOU, visit:
<http://on.doi.gov/UZma3a>



The President's America's Great Outdoors initiative is helping to connect Americans with the recreational, economic, and health benefits of our nation's extraordinary natural resources. The 21CSC will help prepare the leaders of the future by providing youth with valuable opportunities for recreation, career development, and service to their community and their Nation.

Nancy Sutley, Chair
White House Council on Environmental Quality



Building on the legacy of President Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression in the 1930s, 21CSC will help build and train a workforce who represent the diversity of America while creating the next generation of environmental stewards and improving our public lands.

Ken Salazar, Secretary
Department of the Interior



By coordinating resources across the Federal family and working with partners, 21CSC will accomplish important restoration work, provide more job and training opportunities, expand educational opportunities for youth, and create meaningful pathways to careers, all while reconnecting America's youth with the great outdoors.

Tom Vilsack, Secretary
Department of Agriculture



The 21CSC is a great example of how innovative partnerships are utilizing government resources more efficiently and effectively. The Labor Department is committed to working with our partners to provide young people with valuable training opportunities that can form the foundation of lifelong careers.

Hilda Solis, Secretary
Department of Labor



Our Federal lands and waters are vital to the health and well-being of Americans. The 21CSC will expand the USACE's capacities to conserve and maintain these areas, and provide youth and veterans with meaningful work, education, and exposure to the outdoors.

Jo Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



We here at Commerce plan to use 21CSC to expand NOAA's existing habitat conservation programs to provide technical training to veterans and youth so they can develop expertise in the conservation sector.

Rebecca Blank, Acting Secretary
Department of Commerce



As we see every day in AmeriCorps, young people bring extraordinary energy, passion, and talent to public service. This partnership is a win all-around: it expands opportunity for young people, taps the leadership skills of veterans, improves our public lands, and puts a new generation on a lifelong path of service.

Wendy Spencer, CEO
Corporation for National and Community Service



America is home to some of the most beautiful outdoor spaces in the world. The 21CSC will not only help our young people and returning heroes feel more of a connection to those spaces, but it will also ensure our treasured outdoors are preserved for generations to come.

Lisa Jackson, Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency