

Protect the Environment and Preserve Our Nation's Natural and Cultural Resources

“In 1999, Interior proudly celebrated its 150th anniversary as the Nation’s principal conservation agency.”

Because people and the environment are interdependent, the Department of the Interior ensures that our lands, waters, and other resources remain healthy. Resource-dependent communities can only be sustained by lands in a healthy condition. As we have learned more about the factors that affect the land, Interior has made significant strides in developing and applying sustainable management practices.

The Department is committed to protecting and preserving our national parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, and natural/cultural heritage resources. Federal lands contain exceptional geological formations, rare and vulnerable plant and animal communities, wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, and numerous historical, paleontological, and archaeological sites. These resources are scientifically, educationally, and historically important and represent a significant part of our Nation’s national and cultural heritage.

Interior is committed to making decisions based on sound scientific and technical understanding. Within this framework, our 1999 activities included:

- Implementing ecosystem-based standards and guidelines for healthy lands, placing particular emphasis on restoring and protecting streams, riparian areas, wetlands, and abandoned mine lands; and
- Working with other federal agencies, states, and the private sector to prevent contamination of quality habitat, cleanup contaminated water bodies, and restore fish, wildlife, and their habitat.

The major departmental activities to achieve the goal of protecting the environment and preserving our Nation’s natural and cultural resources are presented in *Figure 5*.

Figure 5

Goal 1 - Protect the Environment and Preserve Our Nation's Natural and Cultural Resources	
<i>GPRA Program Activity</i>	1999 Expenses (\$ in millions)
A. Protect Natural and Cultural Resources	
A1. Preserve Natural and Cultural Heritage on Public Lands	\$436
A2. Understand the Condition of Public Lands	93
A3. Preserve Park Resources	574
<i>Subtotal A</i>	1,103
B. Restore the Health of America's Lands	
B1. Environmental Restoration Related to Mined Lands	252
B2. Restore At-Risk Resources and Maintain Functioning Systems	132
B3. Environmental Protection Related to Mining Operations	88
B4. Technical Development and Transfer Under the Surface Mining Law	21
B5. Financial Management of Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund	9
<i>Subtotal B</i>	502
C. Maintain Healthy Ecosystems	
C1. Habitat Conservation	819
C2. Environmental Activity	147
<i>Subtotal C</i>	966
D. Protect and Restore Imperiled Species	
D1. Fish and Wildlife Management and Development Affected by Reclamation Projects	84
D2. Sustainability of Fish and Wildlife Populations	500
<i>Subtotal D</i>	584
Total - Goal 1	\$3,155

Protect Natural and Cultural Resources

Preserve Natural and Cultural Heritage on Public Lands

Desired Result: Preserve and protect natural, historical, landscape, and cultural resource values for current and future generations.

The public lands contain exceptional geologic formations; rare and vulnerable plant and animal communities; wild free roaming horse and burro herds; wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers; and innumerable paleontological, archaeological and historical sites. These resources are scientifically, ecologically, educationally, and recreationally important, representing a significant part of our Nation's natural and cultural heritage.

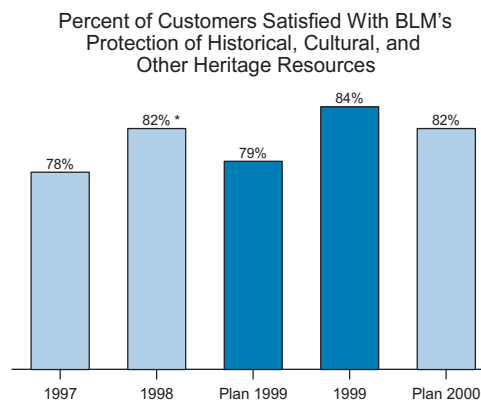
Management of natural and landscape resources is a key element of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) mission, which is accomplished largely through community land planning and collaborative decision-making with affected stakeholders. The BLM Resource Advisory Councils also play an important role in assisting the BLM carry out its mission.

The protection of historical, cultural, and other heritage resources is critical to the Bureau of Land Management's mission. The principal method of protection involves working in partnership with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Conference of State Historical Preservation Officers to inventory, monitor, and design protection for significant resources.

The BLM uses a set of core questions in customer surveys to gauge mission accomplishments. Within the set of questions is a specific question on how well the BLM protects historical and cultural resources. Satisfaction with BLM's performance

represents the outcome measure of strategies used to achieve program activity goals.

1999 Performance Indicator



* In 1998, survey data was derived from a sample of high profile recreation sites.

In 1999, the BLM exceeded the target for this performance measure. However, budget constraints and increased BLM workloads are expected to negatively impact the 2000 customer satisfaction survey.

The BLM provides for sustainable management of wild horses and burros. The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 requires the BLM to manage these animals as a national heritage, in a manner that is designed to achieve and maintain a thriving ecological balance on the public lands. To accomplish this, the BLM determines Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) for each of the designated Herd Management Areas (HMAs).

1999 Performance Indicators

	1997	1998	Plan 1999	1999	Plan 2000
Number of HMAs reaching Appropriate Management Levels	53	58	78	51	49
Number of animals removed from public lands that are accurately accounted for and monitored	10,443	6,389	6,316	6,024	7,380

The decrease in demand for adoption of wild horses and burros and limited funding to care for animals in holding facilities dictated that fewer animals be removed from Herd

“Customer survey shows that 84 percent of respondents are satisfied with the Bureau of Land Management’s protection of historical, cultural, and other heritage resources.”

Management Areas. This reduced BLM's ability to achieve AML on as many HMAs as originally intended.

Understand the Condition of Public Lands

Desired Result: *Comprehensively assess and report the condition of lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management and ensure the adequacy of land use plans.*

Public lands are diverse and geographically dispersed, intermingled with lands owned and managed by many other entities. The Bureau of Land Management has a complex mission that involves all landowners and users in common watersheds. Both environmental and human use issues must be addressed. The BLM's land use decisions affect adjacent landowners and state, local, and tribal governments, along with the myriad users of public lands. The BLM is dedicated to understanding socioeconomic and environmental trends, cooperating in decision-making, and implementing appropriate on-the-ground activities.

Land use plans provide the basis for nearly all decisions affecting the public lands. Recent activities and events have focused renewed attention on land use plans and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents.



Pompeys Pillar National Historic Landmark in south-central Montana (photo by Bob Allen).

The BLM has reviewed its core planning and NEPA documents to determine the most critical planning/NEPA needs and identified priority planning efforts for the next several years.

1999 Performance Indicators

	1997	1998	Plan 1999	1999	Plan 2000
Percent of land use plans with comprehensive land health standards	N/A	30%	53%	50.6%	N/A
Areas assessed against health standards (miles) – flowing riparian areas	4,790	5,109	7,065	6,301	N/A
Areas assessed against health standards (acres) – key watersheds and standing wetlands	3,064,768	20,350	2,347,000	2,564,366	N/A

In 1999, the BLM incorporated comprehensive land health standards in 50.6 percent, or 83 of its land use plans. This was less than the performance target due to unanticipated delays in completing land use plan amendments. Most of these amendments are planned for completion in 2000.

In 1997 and 1999, Alaska completed about two million acres of remotely sensed assessments through contract. Approximately 20,000 acres per year was completed in the lower 48 states. In 1999, the performance measure was rewritten and expanded to include upland assessments. Prior to 1999, the performance measure only covered wetland assessment. This redefinition explains the upward trend from 1998 to 1999.

The BLM had planned to assess 7,065 miles of riparian areas and 2,347,000 acres of key watersheds and standing wetlands. A total of 6,301 miles and 2,564,366 acres of assessments were completed. The target amount for miles of riparian areas was revised to 6,508 miles during 1999. The primary factor that influenced production was a heavy grazing permit renewal workload. Employees responsible for both activities adjusted priorities in order to complete the permit renewal workload.

Preserve Park Resources

Desired Result: *Conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein.*

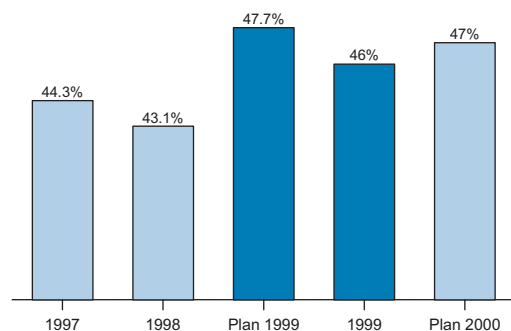
Several years after Congress created the National Park Service (NPS) in 1916, the Park Service conducted an official study on the purpose of the national parks. The report declared: “America’s national heritage is richer than just its scenic features. Perhaps our greatest national heritage is nature itself, which when combined with great scenic beauty as it is in the national parks, becomes of unlimited value.”

Interior has renewed emphasis on preserving unimpaired, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people, the many and diverse natural elements and the great scenic beauty of America’s national parks.

Historic and prehistoric structures and the events surrounding them are key park cultural resources, forming the basis for 225 park units, and are integral to many other parks. Maintaining these structures in good condition responds to the NPS Organic Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the cultural resource integrity of the national park system.

1999 Performance Indicator

Percent of List of Classified Structures in Good Condition



In 1999, the National Park Service improved the condition of 674 structures rather than the 1,066 projected. In addition to improving the condition of structures to good condi-

tion, the NPS also maintained the condition of 23,551 structures. A preliminary assessment of actual 1999 performance indicates that the 1999 target was set too high given the condition of the structures and the NPS’s capability to improve condition.

The NPS has identified the adverse effects of disturbed lands on natural systems as a significant resource management concern. Presently, over 195 parks contain lands that have been disturbed by modern human developments, including abandoned roads, dams, canals, railroads, campgrounds, mines, and other abandoned sites. The NPS strives to improve resource conditions in parks by restoring lands impacted by former uses and containing invasive plant and animal species.



Apostle Island cleanup (photo by NPS).

1999 Performance Indicators

	1997	1998	Plan 1999	1999	Plan 2000
Percent of targeted disturbed lands restored (cumulative)	N/A	3.6%	4.5%	14.7%	16.8%
Percent of lands impacted by exotic species restored	N/A	2.5%	4.1%	8.2%	10%

In 1999, the National Park Service exceeded its targets for the above performance measures by restoring 35,380 acres (14.7 percent) of park land identified as disturbed and containing 155,869 acres (8.2 percent) of park land identified as impacted by exotic vegetation.

Restore the Health of America’s Lands

Environmental Restoration Related to Mined Lands

Desired Result: *Repair, reclaim, and restore land and water that was degraded by past mining in order to provide America with cleaner and safer land and water.*



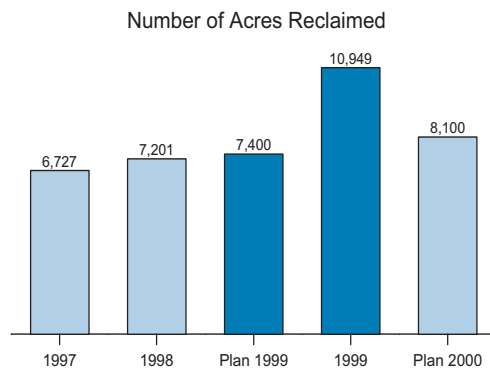
OSM's Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative supports community efforts to accelerate the cleanup of rivers and streams polluted by contaminated runoff from abandoned coal mines, predominantly in Appalachia (photo by OSM).

Through its abandoned mine lands reclamation and clean streams programs, the Office of Surface Mining plays a key role in the restoration of the Nation's landscape. The restoration of this land to productive use supports the Administration's goals for Water and Watershed Restoration as outlined in the Clean

Water Action Plan. In addition to becoming useful to the local communities in which they are located, restored lands reduce health and safety issues while benefitting the general economy.

The Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program provides for the restoration of lands mined and abandoned or left inadequately restored before August 3, 1977. Implementation is accomplished through both emergency and nonemergency programs.

1999 Performance Indicator



In 1999, 10,949 acres of land and water were reclaimed. This exceeded the target for 1999 and represents an increase of 3,748 acres, or 52 percent, over 1998. Watershed stewardship through the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative remains a high priority. OSM has partnered with over 100 government agencies, private foundations, coal producers, and private individuals on these projects.

Restore At-Risk Resources and Maintain Functioning Systems

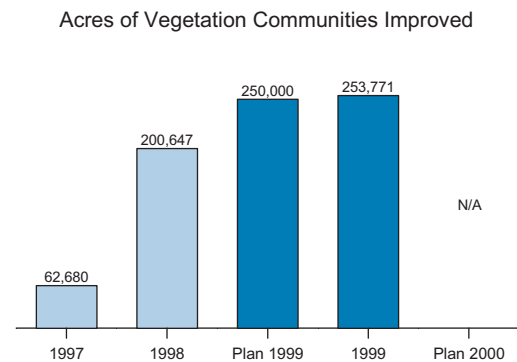
Desired Result: *Implement strategies to restore priority watersheds and resources to functioning condition on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.*

Restoring and maintaining the health of the land is the foundation of BLM's mission. Livestock grazing, timber harvesting, hunting, fishing, and other resource uses can be sustained over time only if the land is healthy. Compared to other public land management agencies, the BLM is particularly well positioned to make significant national contributions to (1) clean water and healthy watersheds, (2) biological diversity, and (3) the protection of critical habitat for a variety of plant and animal species.

Based upon the Wildland Fire Management Program and Policy Review, it has been determined that the health of uplands can be improved by reducing the spread of weeds and reintroducing fire into specific landscapes, specifically those in heavier fuel models.

With congressional approval of the Wildland Fire Operations appropriation to be used for implementing fuel projects, the number of acres treated by prescribed fire and other fuel modification projects has dramatically increased. This level of increase is expected to accelerate through 2005 and then level off at an average of 500,000 acres per year.

1999 Performance Indicator



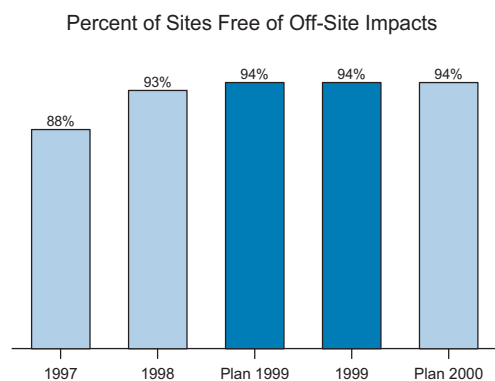
In 1999, the performance target for fuels treatments was met. State targets were substantially exceeded in Alaska and Idaho.

Environmental Protection Related to Mining Operations

Desired Result: *Improve regulatory program for protecting the environment, people, and property during current mining operations and subsequent reclamation through cooperative results-oriented oversight and evaluation of state programs and in carrying out OSM's regulatory responsibilities in order to safeguard people and the environment.*

The Office of Surface Mining (OSM) administers regulatory programs that ensure that the environment is protected during surface coal mining operations and that coal operators adequately reclaim disturbed land after mining is completed. Protection of people, property, and the environment is measured by the number of times incidents occur outside the boundaries of the permitted areas being mined. These are known as off-site impacts; Interior's goal is to have no incidents occur.

1999 Performance Indicator



In 1999, the OSM realized its goal to have 94 percent of mines free of off-site impacts. Of the six percent of the sites that did have incidents occur off-site, only seven percent were in the major category of severity. There was a 21 percent decrease in the number of impacts and resources affected compared to

1998. This decrease from 1998 breaks down to a 21 percent decrease in minor, 18 percent decrease in moderate, and 30 percent decrease in major categories of severity.

Technical Development and Transfer Under the Surface Mining Law

Desired Result: *Strengthen the capabilities of states, tribes, and OSM staff to enforce the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) effectively by improving service to OSM customers, partners, and stakeholders through open communications, technical training opportunities, technical assistance and the transfer of technology in order to have better information and skills to make decisions.*

The Office of Surface Mining provides states, Indian tribes, federal agencies, the coal industry, and citizens with the technical information and tools they need to carry out their responsibilities under the Surface Mining Law. These activities include providing direct technical assistance to address specific mining and reclamation problems; transferring technical capability to others through training, consultations, forums, and conferences so they are better equipped to solve problems on their own; developing and testing new methods of mining and reclamation; and maintaining automated systems and databases used by others in making decisions under the Surface Mining Law.

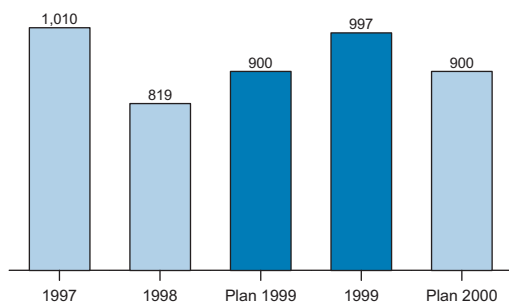
OSM's National Technical Training Program offers technical and legal training related to permit approval, bond release, reclamation, inspection, and enforcement.



OSM geologist Robert Welsh uses Global Positioning System to locate a mine survey control point in relation to active mining operations in the State of Washington (photo by OSM).

1999 Performance Indicator

Number of Students Trained by OSM



In 1999, the OSM increased the number of students trained over the previous year. The increase is attributed to (1) classes being shifted from both the 1998 and 2000 schedules to 1999, (2) a special session of the Expert Witness course in response to current events, and (3) cost savings that enabled more students to attend the classes.

Financial Management of Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund

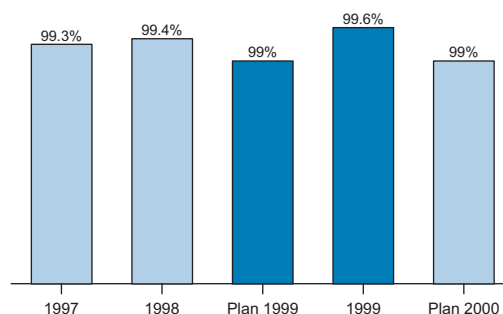
Desired Result: *Effective and efficient management of human and fiscal resources to facilitate reclamation of abandoned mine lands in order to protect the environment, people, and property during and after mining.*

The Office of Surface Mining's financial management program includes fee compliance, grants management, and revenue management. Fee compliance covers the collection, accounting, audit, and investment of abandoned mine reclamation fees. Grants management includes accounting for and reporting on grants awarded to states and tribes for Abandoned Mine Land (AML) and regulatory purposes. Revenue management involves the accounting and collection of revenue other than reclamation fees, such as civil penalties assessed under federal citations of mining violations and federal performance bonds forfeited by coal mine permittees.

To maximize the fee compliance rate, the OSM promptly and accurately identifies all parties authorized to produce coal, ensures they have the information and assistance needed to meet their tonnage reporting and fee payment responsibilities, conducts a comprehensive audit program to ensure the tonnage and fees are accurately reported, and takes swift collection and other appropriate actions on those who fail to comply.

1999 Performance Indicator

AML Reclamation Fee Compliance Rate



The Office of Surface Mining annually collects more than \$270 million for the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, which is used to finance the Abandoned Mine Land Program. Over the years, the coal industry and OSM have gradually improved compliance with the SMCRA's quarterly tonnage reporting requirements. For 1999, the compliance rate was more than 99 percent. Work will continue with the industry to ensure that companies have a complete understanding of all reclamation fee requirements, and to assure that the high level of compliance is maintained.

Maintain Healthy Ecosystems

Habitat Conservation

Desired Result: *An ecologically diverse network of lands and waters—of various ownerships—is conserved in cooperation with others to provide habitats for migratory birds, imperiled species, interjurisdictional fish, marine mammals, and species of international concern associated with those ecosystems.*

Habitat is fundamental for self-sustaining populations of fish, wildlife, and plants as well as for functional ecosystems. One of the objectives of protecting the environment is to protect and manage habitat quality of the lands and waters owned and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, principally the National Wildlife Refuge System. The National Wildlife Refuge System, with 521 refuges and approximately 93.6 million acres, protects virtually every type of habitat found in the United States for the benefit of fish and wildlife species.

Acreage protection targets reflect the increased size of the National Wildlife Refuge System through the addition of new lands. Funding for land acquisition is provided through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

1999 Performance Indicators

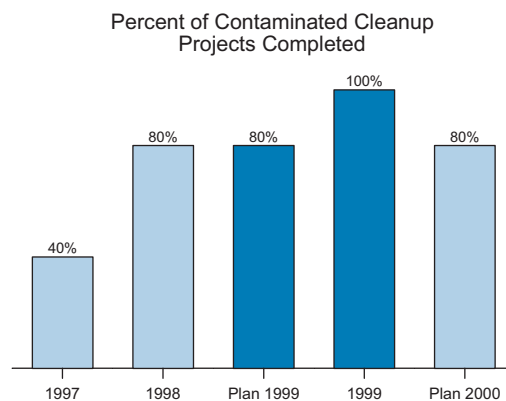
(acres in millions)	1997	1998	Plan 1999	1999	Plan 2000
Number of acres protected	92.874	93.312	93.567	93.628	93.883
Number of acres enhanced or restored	2.647	3.347	3.303	3.231	3.377

In 1999, the number of acres of habitat enhanced and restored was slightly under the estimate for the year. A number of factors were at play, most important of which were weather-related factors. In 2000, the Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to enhance

and restore as many areas as possible given budget constraints and weather suitability. Service managers will continue to work with outside partners to complete mutually beneficial projects involving the use of volunteer labor.

A variety of contaminant problems exist on refuges largely as a result of activities occurring on refuges prior to their becoming refuges or from the activities occurring on lands adjacent to refuges. Abandoned mine sites, former military bases, abandoned landfills, and runoff from nearby activities have contributed to contaminant activities on refuges. The Department strives to ensure that quality fish and wildlife habitat is provided on refuges by removing identified contaminants on refuges.

1999 Performance Indicator



In 1999, the Fish and Wildlife Service completed 24 of 24 (100 percent) of its planned cleanup projects, exceeding the departmental target of 80 percent. These projects, which focus on site investigation, monitoring, and cleanup on Service lands, represent a significant effort towards providing quality habitats for fish and wildlife.



Tagging a green sea turtle (photo by FWS).

“The National Wildlife Refuge System began with a small island in Florida, known as Pelican Island, which became the first refuge and the beginning of an idea unique in the world.”

“Since 1993, Interior has acquired over 1.32 million acres of land in the Everglades.”

Environmental Activity

Desired Result: Restore and maintain the health of our lands, waters, and renewable resources.

One of the country’s most significant initiatives is the restoration of the Everglades and the South Florida ecosystem. This vast region, which is home to more than six million Americans, seven of the ten fastest growing cities in the country, a huge tourism industry, and a large agricultural economy, also encompasses one of the world’s unique environmental resources. Over the past 100 years, human-caused changes to the region’s water flow have provided important economic benefits to the region but have also damaged the environment. Biological indicators of native flora and fauna have shown severe damage throughout South Florida.

The Department of the Interior signed an interagency agreement in September 1993 creating the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. This interagency group works to integrate federal plans, policies, and programs in the Everglades ecosystem. The Department strives to complete federal land acquisitions on a schedule consistent with the hydrologic restoration of those areas. Other lands for habitat and water management will be acquired on a 50/50 cost shared basis with non-federal partners to provide the necessary spatial extent of the restored wetlands.

1999 Performance Indicators

	1997	1998	Plan 1999	1999	Plan 2000
Number of acres acquired and/or offers extended on by federal agencies	5,675	26,716	29,000	10,326	33,000
Number of acres acquired and/or offers extended on by the State of Florida with funding provided by Interior	N/A	N/A	33,000	43,336	30,000

In 1999, federal agencies acquired 10,326 acres in the South Florida ecosystem. This was less than the 1999 target of 29,000 acres. The goal was not achieved because the

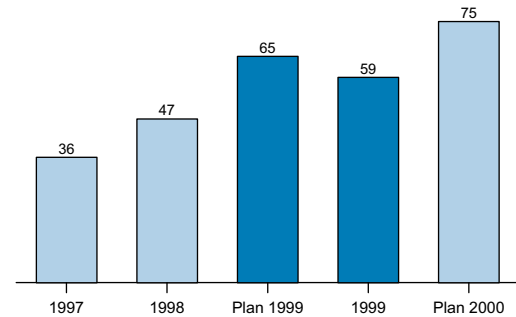
National Park Service did not receive the total appropriation that it requested for the East Everglades Expansion Area. Instead of \$35 million, the NPS received \$20 million. In addition, the actual acreage does not include acreage forwarded to the Department of Justice for condemnation.

The Departmentwide Restoration Program provides for the restoration of injured natural resources nationwide. The Restoration Program assesses the damage to natural resources resulting from hazardous substance releases or oil spills on the Department’s lands and other lands within its authority and trust responsibility for American Indians. Settlements resulting from the damage assessment cases provide recovered funding that the Department uses to protect and restore injured natural and cultural resources, returning them to a healthy environmental condition for management in perpetuity.

The Restoration Program is currently undertaking a number of management actions, including a planned inventory and evaluation of restoration settlements and past implementation actions that will ultimately increase the number of natural resource restorations. This will help identify successful implementation techniques as well as ways to overcome obstacles to restoration.

1999 Performance Indicator

Restoration Projects Implemented



At the end of 1999, a total of 59 restoration projects were underway. This was less than the target of 65. Implementation of restora-

tion actions was hindered by issues such as Trustee coordination, compliance with other laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act, and staffing resources at regional and field locations where available staff were involved with other ongoing damage assessment cases. Additionally, the absence of key policy and legal guidelines for field staff hindered the processing of cases.

Protect and Restore Imperiled Species

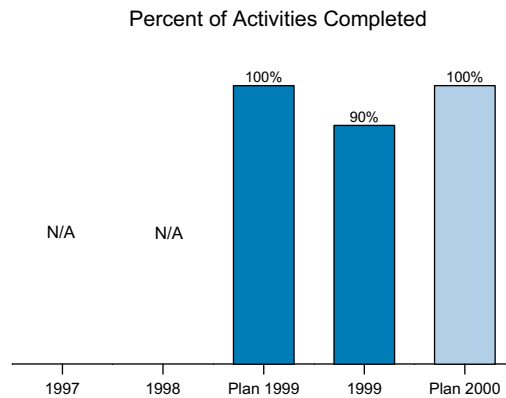
Fish and Wildlife Management and Development Affected by Reclamation Projects

Desired Result: *Conserve, enhance, and restore fish and wildlife populations, threatened and endangered species, and their habitats.*

The Bureau of Reclamation strives to conserve, enhance, and restore fish and wildlife populations, threatened and endangered species, and habitats affected by Reclamation projects. The agency strives to accomplish this in the most environmentally and economically sound manner possible, in cooperation with others, and in compliance with federal and state laws pertaining to fish and wildlife.

Reclamation is engaged in an important effort to develop a long-term plan and implement interim conservation measures for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program.

1999 Performance Indicator



In 1999, Reclamation completed all conservation activities that were scheduled including the purchase of land for habitat, the restoration of wetlands, and the raising and stocking of fish. However, NEPA's public scoping for the multi-species and multi-state plan consultation process is taking longer than anticipated. Consequently, the plan is not yet complete. Reclamation is currently meeting with stakeholders on alternative approaches to conserve or enhance habitat for endangered species. The 90 percent completion rate is an estimate of the remaining work based on the total amount of time to implement the entire project.



Shallow braided sections of the Platte River in Nebraska provide ideal habitat for whooping cranes and other endangered species. Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service are leading Interior's effort to prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposed program to preserve such habitat (photo by Reclamation).

Sustainability of Fish and Wildlife Populations

Desired Result: *Migratory birds, endangered fish, wildlife and plant species, interjurisdictional fish, marine mammals, and species of international concern are conserved, protected, enhanced, or restored.*

The living resources of this Nation's inland and coastal aquatic ecosystems have been a core responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for more than 120 years. Within this historical time, native fish



Fish and Wildlife Service protection efforts have helped to stabilize the polar bear population in Alaska (photo by FWS).

communities have undergone significant, sometimes adverse changes. These changes generally tend toward reduced distributions, lowered diversity, and increased numbers of species considered rare. The FWS strives to maintain stable fish

In 1999, 100 percent of the marine mammal populations in Alaska for which the FWS has jurisdiction were maintained at sustainable population levels and were protected under conservation agreements. These include two stocks of polar bears (the Chukchi/Bering Seas stock and Beaufort Sea stock), the Pacific walrus, and three proposed stocks of northern sea otters (the Southeast Alaska stock, the Southcentral Alaska stock, and the Southwest Alaska stock).

populations and to protect marine mammals, recognizing that wildlife knows no geophysical boundaries.

The FWS strives to maintain a 100 percent sustainable population level, or protection under conservation agreements, for the marine mammal populations over which it has jurisdiction.

1999 Performance Indicator

Percent of Marine Mammal Populations at Sustainable Levels or Protected Under Conservation Agreements

