

# Resource Protection



*Environmental progress ultimately resides in the efforts of all of us to apply a caring hand to the landscape. It resides in our actions in our own backyards, at our places of work, on our farms and ranches, and in our communities.*

*Secretary Gale A. Norton*

The Department of the Interior's stewardship for one-fifth of the Nation's land creates an awesome responsibility to conserve, protect, and restore natural treasures. This responsibility extends beyond the well-known crown jewels of the National Park Service, such as Yellowstone National Park and Grand Canyon National Park, to include the newly established Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota and the Bureau of Land Management's Red Rocks National Conservation Area in Nevada.

Interior's responsibility extends as well to the protection of the Nation's cultural heritage. Assets in the Department's charge range in size from small museum objects like the six-inch derringer used to assassinate President Lincoln to the 60-foot granite carvings at Mount Rushmore, and include such icons as the Statue of Liberty National Monument and the Wright Brothers National Memorial.

As the Nation's chief conservation agency, Interior is responsible for protecting thousands of plant and animal species, including more than 1,200 protected under the Endangered Species Act, ranging from plants such as the South Texas ambrosia and the Contra Costa wallflower to animals that include the albatross and the Florida panther. The Department also plays a major role in ensuring the continued viability of non-anadromous fisheries and of hundreds of species of waterfowl, songbirds, and shorebirds that migrate to or through the United States.

Interior's stewardship for natural and cultural resources transcends the boundaries of Federal lands

## RESOURCE PROTECTION MISSION

**Protect the Nation's natural, cultural, and heritage resources**

and regulatory programs. Resource stewardship depends increasingly on partnerships across a mosaic of land ownerships. The Department and its bureaus cannot manage Federal lands successfully without working with adjacent landowners, States, Tribes, and communities. Secretary Norton's goal is to empower Federal land managers to form partnerships with local communities to better care for the land and natural and cultural resources. By promoting these partnerships, Interior leverages Federal conservation dollars with non-Federal funds and taps into the ingenuity and local knowledge of the people who live and work on the land. Above all, Interior strengthens on-the-ground results that benefit the long-term conservation of resources on and off public lands.

The 2006 budget proposes \$2.6 billion for resource protection programs. The budget will:

- Support healthy and productive lands through cooperative conservation and private stewardship.
- Sustain biological communities by increasing focus on recovery of endangered, threatened, and at-risk species and by increasing inter-agency efforts to curtail harmful invasive species.

- Support the Administration's plan to revamp the Abandoned Mine Lands grant program to better address serious resource and life-threatening hazards resulting from abandoned mine lands.
- Fulfill the President's commitment to address the deferred maintenance backlog in parks.
- Help local communities find self-sustaining ways to manage historical properties and promote heritage tourism through Preserve America.



## COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION

Over the past four years, Interior has joined with citizen stewards to preserve open space, remove invasive species, restore habitat for wildlife, and protect endangered species. These partnerships are achieving substantial conservation benefits. The Department and its partners have restored millions of acres of habitat; removed harmful exotic species; replanted native grasses; improved riparian habitat along thousands of miles of streams; conserved limited water resources; and developed conservation plans for endangered species and their habitat. Cooperative conservation exemplifies a new environmentalism focused on performance, partnerships, innovation, and incentives to achieve the Nation's environmental goals.

By focusing conservation on community cooperation and voluntary actions, the Department is working with the American people to achieve healthy lands and thriving communities across the Nation. Citizen stewards are taking responsibility for the lands where they live, work, and play to restore and preserve the health of these lands, while maintaining working landscapes that support dynamic economies.

The Department's conservation partnerships are supported by a suite of cooperative grant and cost share programs. These programs emphasize local input and cooperative decisionmaking to

achieve land management and resource goals. The use of matching funds improves cooperative relationships with partners, engaging them in local conservation and increasing the likelihood of successful efforts. The programs build on established productive relationships with local communities and citizens, and foster innovative and collaborative solutions to overcome conflict and maintain healthy lands and waters.

From 2002 through 2005, Interior's conservation partnership programs have provided \$1.7 billion for conservation investments. The 2006 budget request includes \$381.3 million to support continued partnership success.

**Landowner Incentive Program** — Because more than half of all plant and animal species currently listed as endangered or threatened spend at least part of their life cycle on privately owned lands, Interior recognizes that success in conserving species depends on working cooperatively with landowners, communities, States, and Tribes to foster voluntary stewardship efforts on private land.

In 2002, the Department launched the Fish and Wildlife Service Landowner Incentive Program to provide incentives for landowners to conserve sensitive habitats, while allowing traditional land management practices such as farming or ranching to continue to maintain the fabric of local communities. Competitive matching grants are provided to States, Territories, and Tribes to create, supplement, or expand programs that protect and manage habitats on private lands, and benefit



## COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION EXECUTIVE ORDER

President Bush signed Executive Order 13352, Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, on August 26, 2004. The order charges the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense, and the Environmental Protection Agency to work with each other, and with State, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities, and individuals on programs, projects and activities relating to the use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources and protection of the environment.

As agencies conduct activities, they are expected to encourage local participation in Federal decisionmaking processes and take appropriate account of and respect for the interests of persons with ownership or other legally recognized interests in land and other natural resources. A White House conference on cooperative conservation, under the leadership of the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, is to be convened in 2005.

*Today, I have directed the Federal agencies that oversee environmental and natural resource policies and programs to promote cooperative conservation in full partnership with States, local governments, Tribes, and individuals. Local involvement is critical to ensuring successful, effective, and long-lasting conservation results. The executive order on cooperative conservation that I have signed today will help us continue to make sure that decisions in Washington, D.C., are well-informed by those closest to the land and their communities.*

*President George W. Bush, August 26, 2004*

listed species or species-at-risk. In 2004, grants were provided to 42 States and 23 Tribes.

In 2006, \$40.0 million in Landowner Incentive Program grants will help conserve and restore the habitat of endangered species and other at-risk plants and animals. This is an increase of \$18.3 million from 2005 and provides an important dimension of the Department's endangered species protection activities.

**Private Stewardship Grants** — The Private Stewardship grant program works directly with landowners to fund conservation actions for imperiled species on private lands. The program provides Federal grants on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in voluntary conservation efforts on private lands that benefit imperiled species, including federally listed endangered or threatened species as well as proposed, candidate, and other at-risk species. The 2006 budget request

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina will use its \$200,000 Tribal Landowner Incentive Program grant in 2005 to undertake a multi-year, comprehensive survey of plants and aquatic and terrestrial fauna found on the reservation. This will allow the Tribe to develop a new natural heritage database to benefit species of concern. The Tribe will be able to use this new information to develop resource management plans for individual species-at-risk, to conduct environmentally sensitive land use practices, and to plan future commercial and residential development.



Matching a \$100,000 Private Stewardship grant award, the Hawaiian Silversword Foundation completed construction of a 5.5 mile fence that encloses 3,000 acres of some of the best native forest habitat remaining in the Puu Lalaau Unit of the Keauhou Ranch. Construction of fences to exclude alien animals is often the necessary first step in the protection and recovery of native Hawaiian species and ecosystems. In addition, they have reduced the number of ungulates within the unit by 90 percent and removed all feral pigs and several mouflon sheep. Efforts at weed control, reforestation, and rare species out-plantings are still on-going.



proposes \$10.0 million for these grants, a \$3.1 million increase over the 2005 level. Landowners and partner groups may submit proposals directly to FWS for funding to support those efforts that complement regulatory activities under the Endangered Species Act.

**Challenge Cost Share Programs** — The Department emphasizes local input and cooperative decisionmaking to achieve land management and resource goals through a diverse set of cost share conservation programs in BLM, FWS, and NPS. For 2006, the budget proposes \$44.8 million for these programs. These cost share programs better enable agencies to work together and with adjacent communities, landowners, and citizens to achieve common conservation goals.

A total of \$21.5 million is proposed for resource restoration challenge cost share projects to fund dynamic partnerships with individuals, Tribes, State and local governments, non-profit organizations, and others to carry out projects that restore damaged habitats and lands and achieve the conservation goals of the land management agencies. Projects require a one-to-one match or better, thereby at least doubling the impact of Federal dollars. The cost share program, as with Interior's other cooperative conservation grants, is a linchpin of a new environmentalism of performance, partnerships, innovation, and incentives.

In 2004, the conservation challenge cost share program funded 633 projects with more than 1,913 partners in 44 States. Matching funds supported 60 percent of the cost of these projects. A total of

\$21.0 million in Federal dollars were matched by \$31.6 million in non-Federal dollars.

The resource restoration challenge cost share program is complemented by a \$23.3 million request for the traditional challenge cost share programs that focus on cultural, recreation, and resource protection projects.

**Partners for Fish and Wildlife** — The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program gives landowners tools to manage private lands that benefit wildlife while maintaining productive activities. The program recognizes that, with over 60 percent of our Nation's land in private ownership, the health of many populations depends on habitat found on private lands. State resource agencies work closely with FWS to establish priorities and identify focus areas. Over the last three years, the program has undertaken thousands of restoration projects and has restored 130,796 acres of wetlands and 605,170 acres of prairie, grasslands, and uplands.

The 2006 request is \$52.2 million, an increase of \$4.2 million or nine percent over the 2005 level. These funds will allow FWS to expand its established relationships with communities and over 33,100 landowners, providing financial and technical assistance and restoration expertise to an additional 2,600 private landowners, Tribes, and other conservation programs.

Within the total, \$7.5 million is proposed for the Upper Klamath River Basin restoration initiative, a cooperative effort including Federal, State and local agencies, tribal governments, public



## CHALLENGE COST SHARE PROJECTS

**Florida** — At the Juniper Inlet Area of Critical Environmental Concern, BLM and the Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management partnered to restore wildlife habitat through prescribed burns; removal of invasive exotic plants such as rosary pea, Brazilian pepper, Australian pine, and natal grass; and construction and restoration of wetlands. Imperiled Florida sand pine and oak scrub communities are being treated to improve breeding habitat for the federally listed threatened Florida scrub jay, the State-listed gopher tortoise, and other State-listed plant species. The BLM and local community have removed thousands of non-native trees and planted thousands of native plants in this environmentally sensitive area. The \$37,740 Federal portion of the project was matched on a one-to-one basis, resulting in a \$75,480 program.

**New Mexico** — Riparian habitat dominated by native vegetation is being restored along the Rio Grande River in central New Mexico as a result of a large-scale cooperative project at the arid riparian and wetland land management and research demonstration area of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Project partners are the Range Improvement Task Force of New Mexico State University, Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR, and FWS. The project demonstrates innovative salt cedar control and riparian restoration techniques on 1,100 acres of the Bosque del Apache NWR. A strong educational component results in the sharing of knowledge on control and restoration methodology with other Federal, State, local, and non-governmental land management entities, as well as private landowners in similar arid areas of the southwestern United States. Partners and volunteers aided in developing 300 acres as seasonal wetlands, restoring 300 acres using controlled flooding for natural regeneration, and replanting 500 acres with native plant communities. The Federal investment of \$300,000 was matched for a total of \$600,000.



**Alaska** — The NPS and commercial wildlife viewing partners developed and implemented self-regulating strategies to mitigate the trend of declining marine populations in the Kenai Fjords. The Kenai Fjords, a part of the rugged Alaska marine coast, comprises six frigid, deep-water fjords surrounded on three sides by steep mountains and large tidewater glaciers. This park is home to harbor seals, sea otter, endangered Steller sea lions, and many species of sea birds. These animals share the resources of the fertile sub-arctic fjord waters for shelter, foraging, breeding, pupping, and resting. The once robust populations of marine species that populated the fjords have declined markedly over the past 20 years due to natural ecosystem changes and increased human-induced activities. The NPS partnered with Alaska SeaLife Center, a tribal corporation, the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, as well as nine other partners. The Federal funds of \$166,000 were matched by 12 partners for a total of \$443,800.

## UPPER KLAMATH BASIN RESTORATION INITIATIVE

The Upper Klamath River Basin restoration initiative is a cooperative effort among Federal, State and local agencies, tribal governments, public organizations, and individuals to restore the Klamath Basin ecosystem and economic vitality. Examples of projects to be completed include:



**Wetland restoration along Ball Bay on Upper Klamath Lake for shortnose and Lost River suckers** — The FWS will partner with the Klamath Basin Ecosystem Foundation to restore 350 acres of lakeshore wetlands for Lost River and shortnose suckers and other wetland species. Wetlands in Ball Bay were drained for pasture land over 100 years ago and, upon restoration, will be reconnected to a stream to provide fish passage to spawning habitat.

**Cherry Creek stream channel restoration for bull trout, redband trout, yellow rails, and the Oregon spotted frog** — In the Cherry Creek watershed on the west side of Upper Klamath Lake, FWS will partner with the local watershed council and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to restore stream channel and riparian habitat for bull trout, redband trout, Oregon spotted frogs, and yellow rails. Habitat connectivity has been lost among the spring-fed stream west of Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon. Restoring the connectivity among the local streams will greatly assist seasonal movement of salmonids among watersheds.

organizations, and individuals to restore the Klamath Basin ecosystem and its economic vitality to the area in Oregon and California. The funds will be used specifically to restore fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.

**FWS Coastal Program** — The FWS Coastal program coordinates conservation efforts in bays, estuaries, and watersheds around the U.S. coastline. Through this program, FWS and its partners work to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats to support healthy coastal ecosystems by:

- Providing assessment and planning tools to identify priority habitats that should be protected and restored.
- Conserving coastal habitats through voluntary conservation easements and other local land protection actions.
- Restoring degraded coastal wetland,

upland, and stream habitats by working with partners to implement on-the-ground projects.

- Focusing resources on coastal conservation, including education through conservation alliances that leverage resources and multiply the impact of the taxpayers' dollar.

The 2006 budget includes \$14.9 million for the Coastal program, a programmatic increase of \$3.0 million above 2005. With the proposed increase, the program will expand its work with coastal communities focusing on high priority coastal habitat issues such as protecting pristine habitats in the Gulf of Mexico; controlling invasive species in California wetlands and Puget Sound; controlling nutria in the Chesapeake Bay watershed; and promoting the restoration and enhancement of native coastal habitats to support important fisheries in States such as Florida and Hawaii.





**FWS Migratory Bird Joint Ventures** — The 2006 budget includes \$12.9 million, a \$2.6 million program increase over the 2005 level for the Joint Ventures program. This program, originally formed to implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, has broadened to include other conservation partnership initiatives, such as Partners in Flight, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. The 2006 budget will allow FWS to develop six new joint ventures.

**Take Pride in America** — Funding for Take Pride in America, an initiative that encourages and recognizes outstanding volunteer efforts, is funded at \$1.0 million. A more extensive discussion on the Take Pride in America initiative is located in the Recreation chapter of this document.

**Cooperative Conservation Grant Programs** — The 2006 budget provides additional funding for FWS grant programs that benefit wildlife conservation. A total of \$204.0 million is requested for FWS State and Tribal Wildlife grants, the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, and the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund.

## SUSTAINING BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

**Endangered Species** — Along with State, tribal, local, and other public and private conservationists, the Department shares the goal of protecting endangered, threatened, and at-risk species. The 2006 budget includes \$270.1 million for endangered species programs, an increase of \$17.9 million compared to 2005. This includes \$140.1 million within the FWS Resource Management account, \$80.0 million within the Cooperative Endangered

Species Conservation Fund, and \$50.0 million in the Landowner Incentive and Private Stewardship grant programs. The Department's other cooperative conservation programs complement these efforts to protect endangered species by enhancing wetlands, riparian, upland, and other habitat across the Nation on public and private lands.

Within the Resource Management account, the 2006 budget includes a \$1.9 million increase for general program activities in the ESA recovery program. The recovery program supports the ultimate goals of FWS: to recover listed species to levels where protection under the Endangered Species Act is no longer required because species have reached a secure, self-sustaining level.

Reversing species declines requires extensive coordination, planning, and extraordinary knowledge of the species. The proposed 2006 recovery increase will improve capability to stabilize endangered species, to delist or downlist species that have met their recovery goals, complete recovery plans for species that lack plans, conduct five-year reviews of all listed species, and increase work with willing partners to recover listed species.

With the proposed recovery budget increase, FWS will continue its preventing extinction, showing success initiative begun in 2004. This successful effort focuses recovery efforts in areas with the greatest potential; on species that are in immediate danger of becoming extinct; and on species very close to being downlisted or delisted. The requested increase will also improve the FWS ability to provide partners with leadership and technical assistance that is necessary for successful species recovery.

The budget also proposes a \$1.9 million program increase for the listing program. This increase will



## BUFFALO CREEK, PENNSYLVANIA

Dairy and beef cattle have traditionally grazed along Buffalo Creek in Washington County, Pennsylvania. Through the FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, farmers are now engaged in riparian restoration. They are keeping the cattle out of streams, allowing the trees and brush to regenerate, and protecting the banks from erosion. The new vegetation also provides shade for the stream that lowers its temperature, making it more hospitable for fish and other fauna and flora. Stream bank shrubs also are hosts to ground-nesting birds whose habitats had previously vanished.

What benefits do the farmers derive from this partnership? Moving the cattle out of the stream and fencing off the stream has allowed farmers to practice rotation grazing and better utilize their fields. These actions have also reduced the bacterial count in the stream. That means healthier cows – less waterborne hoof disease, for example. FWS agents are working with farmers to plant native warm season grasses in less productive fields. The fields planted in native warm season grasses expand forage for cows and provide habitat for wildlife.

At Buffalo Creek, cooperation and partnering are achieving healthy lands and water, thriving communities, and dynamic economies.



*I have lost several calves over the years. Since we fenced, I haven't lost one.*

**Ralph Nevela, Farmer, Washington County, Pennsylvania**

*There's a different tune in the music around, Mother Nature has returned to us.*

**Ron Ristimacki, Farmer, Washington County, Pennsylvania**

address litigation-driven workloads and would also provide additional funding to address other high-priority actions that are not the subject of ongoing litigation.

The 2006 budget funds the FWS Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund at \$80.0 million, a \$462,000 decrease from the 2005 enacted level. This program provides grants to States and Territories to participate in an array of voluntary conservation projects for candidate, proposed, and listed species. Projects may include habitat restora-

tion, development of regional habitat conservation plans, as well as land acquisition associated with habitat conservation plans and species recovery. Because most listed species depend on habitat found on State and private lands, this program is critical to the Department's partnership approach to conservation.

**Mitigation of Invasive Species** — Since 2004, Interior has presented a unified invasive species performance-based crosscut budget, in conjunction with other Federal agencies, through the National



Invasive Species Council. In coordination with the NISC, the Department has focused its past budget increases on species-specific government-wide priorities, such as tamarisk, the brown tree snake, and aquatic invasives.

In 2006, Interior will coordinate invasive species activities based on geo-regional areas in response to bureau concerns that the species-specific focus areas do not always accurately portray the invasives work done on any given piece of land. For example, when BLM is controlling and managing weeds on public lands in the West, BLM will identify the target species, such as tamarisk or leafy spurge, while also taking into consideration the other associated weed species in the area. The goal is to treat the target species, as well as the other invasive and noxious weeds in the same area.

In 2006, Interior will focus invasives work on three priority geo-regional areas that also contain an abundance of invasives targeted by NISC priorities. The bureaus submitted coordinated, joint budget requests for each of these areas, developed in each case by an inter-bureau team.

Increases totaling \$2.3 million are proposed for the three areas. Base funding will also be redirected to the coordinated efforts.

In South Florida, a \$1.0 million increase for FWS would focus on invasives efforts at the Loxahatchee NWR. This funding will be used to treat 2,500 acres of dense lygodium on tree islands and allow re-treatment of 14,000 acres infested with melaleuca, lygodium, Brazilian pepper, and Australian pine on other lands. A \$100,000 increase in the U.S. Geological Survey will provide research to assist in the detection, control, and eventual eradication of the Brazilian pepper tree.

On the Northern Great Plains, BLM, with a \$500,000 budget increase, will treat and control 7,500 acres of leafy spurge and other invasives, inventory and monitor 209,000 acres for weeds, map 20,000 acres

for invasive species. One thousand acres would be restored.

In the Rio-Grande River Basin, 4,915 acres of tamarisk and other invasives will be treated and controlled, 1,000 acres will be inventoried for weeds, research will be conducted on revegetation, and one decision support system will be developed. A \$500,000 increase for BLM is proposed to support these efforts. With a \$200,000 proposed budget increase, USGS will conduct research on revegetation and will provide technical and scientific support in the development of the BLM decision support system.

In addition, the FWS budget proposes \$1.0 million for tamarisk eradication in the endangered species recovery program. This exotic plant is considered a threat to some endangered and threatened species, such as the southwestern willow flycatcher. Tamarisk removal is identified as a key recovery action that is needed for many listed species that occur in wetland areas throughout the arid southwest.

For example, the

recovery plan for the Pecos sunflower requires the management and control of Tamarisk.

**Natural Resource Challenge**— Programs funded through the Natural Resource Challenge provide NPS managers with the information needed to understand and measure the condition of park resources, including watersheds, landscapes, marine resources, and biological communities. The information guides park management actions to improve and sustain the health of the Nation's park resources.

Two key components of the Natural Resource Challenge are vital signs and water quality monitoring. Vital signs monitoring tracks measurable features of the environment that indicate the health of park ecosystems, as well as the health of individual plant and animal species. Water quality monitor-



ing tracks water conditions to preserve pristine waters and improve impaired waters in parks and surrounding areas. The NPS has developed a system of 32 multi-park, multi-agency vital signs and water quality monitoring networks sharing similar geographical and natural resource characteristics to complete this task.

As of 2005, all 32 water quality networks have been funded. Twenty-four of the 32 networks encompassing 207 national parks have been funded for vital signs monitoring. The 2006 request provides \$4.9 million for the inventorying and monitoring program, through an increase of \$1.0 million and \$3.9 million redirected from the natural resource preservation program. The additional funding will allow the inventory and monitoring program to identify the vital signs for natural resource monitoring in 100 percent of 270 parks by the end of 2008. This will complete funding for the 32 planned monitoring networks



measures, allowing the program to evaluate the cost-effectiveness and consequences of work planning decisions in terms of performance impacts.

The program recently underwent an evaluation using the Program Assessment Rating Tool, which identified the need for improved performance measures and other management improvements.

Using the assessment, managers have improved performance measures and program planning.

The requested increase will allow FWS to conduct surveys, regulatory activities, and other migratory bird management activities to meet its performance targets. The FWS expects this funding increase will allow it to maintain a focus on 444 bird species of management concern and implement focused management actions to improve the status of five targeted bird populations. The FWS will also address the problems caused by eight species of overabundant migratory birds, continue cooperative management activities of these eight

species, maintain work on the development of reliable population models, and increase understanding of the status and trends of important migratory bird populations.

### NPS VITAL SIGNS MONITORING

	2004 Estimate	2005 Estimate	2006 Request
Monitoring Networks Funded.....	22	24	32
Parks Funded.....	185	207	270
Parks with Identified Vital Signs.....	176	216	240
Parks Monitoring Vital Signs.....	10	101	153

**Migratory Birds**— The FWS is the principal Federal agency charged with protecting and enhancing the populations and habitat of more than 900 species of birds that spend all or part of their lives in the United States. In 2006, FWS proposes a \$3.1 million program increase for migratory bird conservation and monitoring.

The Migratory Bird Management program has undertaken a concerted effort to institute management improvements and orient activities based on programmatic goals. Based on this effort, the program has implemented a project-based budget system to plan and track spending by project. Each project can be directly linked to specific goals and

## LANDSCAPE AND WATERSHED PROTECTION

**Conserving Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Habitat** — The FWS has completed its status review of the sage-grouse in response to several petitions to list the sage-grouse. The FWS has determined that the species does not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act at this time. However,



continued, vigorous efforts are essential to prevent further deterioration of sage-grouse populations and sagebrush habitat that could trigger reconsideration for listing under ESA.

Protecting and conserving sage-grouse and sagebrush habitat continues to be a Departmental priority in 2006. Listing of the sage-grouse could have devastating economic impacts, as it could severely restrict BLM's ability to authorize energy development, mining, grazing, and even recreation activities over a wide swath of public lands. The 2006 BLM budget includes an increase of \$7.0 million to strengthen and expand efforts to conserve and restore sagebrush habitat. Of this amount, \$3.4 million will be funded by the Challenge Cost Share program, which will allow BLM to leverage resources by working with States, Tribes, and others.



Sage-grouse occupy about 50 million acres of BLM land. The immediate goal is to inventory, evaluate, and prioritize those areas with the greatest potential and need for restoration. The BLM has collaborated extensively with Federal, State, local, and private entities to develop a long-term conservation and restoration strategy to improve and coordinate mapping, inventories, vegetative treatments, and other ongoing restoration and related activities. The 2006 funding increase proposed for BLM will support accelerated implementation of the strategy. Implementation of the strategy will also benefit a multitude of other species dependent on sagebrush habitat.

**Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration** — The Department's Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program seeks recoveries from responsible parties to restore natural resources damaged by the releases of hazardous substances or oil. Damage assessments provide the basis for determining the restoration needs that address the loss in value and use of these resources.

*The sage-grouse strategy encourages efforts such as the work of the Shoshone Basin local working group in Idaho to manage BLM grazing allotments for both livestock forage and seasonal sage-grouse habitat requirements. The group's plan has maintained existing grazing levels while the acreage rated as "excellent" for sage-grouse has increased from two percent of the allotment to 24 percent. The commitment of local participants was key to success in the Shoshone Basin. Local users brought important knowledge of range conditions and history along with a willingness to include private lands associated with the allotment in the plan.*

**Bureau of Land Management Director Kathleen Clarke**

*At the same time the status review clearly illustrates the need for continued efforts to conserve sage-grouse and sagebrush habitat on a long-term basis. I commend Federal and State agencies as well as the local working groups for their current efforts to maintain or improve sagebrush habitat and encourage them to continue to move forward with the new plans to develop and implement conservation strategies throughout the grouse's range.*

**Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams**

The annual NRDA budget of \$5.7 million in 2005 will leverage over \$300 million that has already been or soon will be recovered from responsible parties. The 2006 budget requests an increase of \$369,000 to accelerate the restoration of hundreds of acres of injured trust resources. The budget increase will fund enhanced science support from the USGS that will influence successful trustee bureau restoration activities by improving the science of design, implementation, and monitoring of habitat or contaminant type-specific restoration projects. Additionally, a strategic realignment of the FWS contaminants program will refocus efforts on restoration activities, emphasizing cooperation with NRDA.



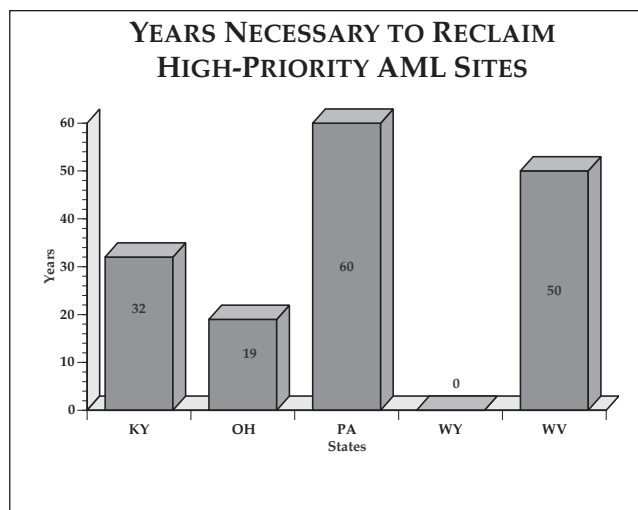
## RECLAIMING ABANDONED COAL MINES

**Abandoned Mine Lands** — More than 3.5 million Americans live within one mile from dangerous abandoned coal mines. Nearly 1.2 million people live less than half a mile from these unsafe sites. These are not merely ugly landscapes that need to be cleaned up; these are serious life and resource threatening hazards. Although the Department has successfully worked in partnership with States, local governments, and private, nonprofit groups to reclaim over 225,000 acres of damaged and dangerous land, the outlook for cleanup of these areas is poor, as the majority of funds are directed towards States with few or no priority areas. Under a continuation of the current law it would take, for example, 60 years to reclaim all of the dangerous abandoned coal mines in Pennsylvania. However, OSM's authority to collect AML fees expires on June 30, 2005.

In addition to the pending expiration of the fee collection authority, another problem is a fundamental imbalance between the goals established by the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 and the way the funds are required to be allocated under the Act. The statutory allocation formula results in a progressive distribution of resources away from the most serious AML problems. The majority of AML funding is distributed on the basis of current coal production. In the early years, 75 percent of the AML fee income was in the East where 94 percent of the problems existed, and 25 percent of the income was in the West where six percent of the AML problems existed. Over the past 28 years, however, fee income has shifted away from the areas with high historic production and into areas where few or no AML problems remain. Today, some States have completed reclamation on all of the abandoned coalmine sites or are working on low priority sites, while others are still decades away from completing the most critical high priority sites.

In addition to the allocation issue, the certified States and Tribes have an estimated unappropriated balance of \$580 million in their State and tribal share AML accounts, which they maintain should be available as provided in the 1977 Act.

The Administration proposes reauthorization of OSM's AML fee collection authority, and reform of the AML program to expedite the elimination of high priority health and safety abandoned coal mines, as well as provide for the expedited payment of unappropriated balances to certified States and Tribes. Any acceptable proposal must fit within the President's mandatory and discretionary spending limits.

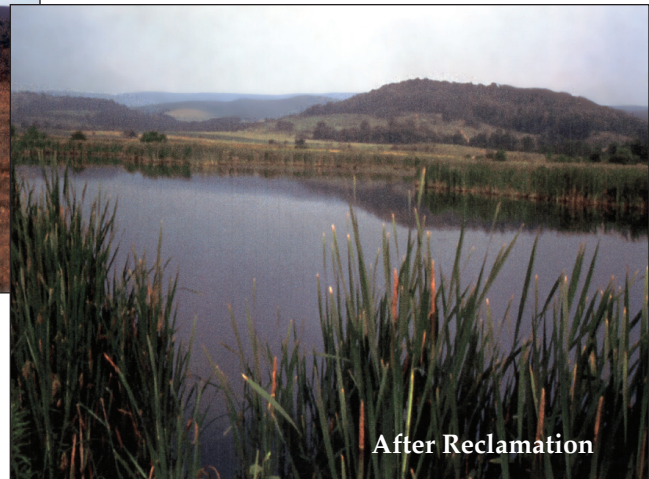




The 2006 budget supports the Administration's vision for reauthorizing the AML program. It provides \$147.5 million in AML grants to non-certified States, and another \$58.0 million in AML grants to certified States and Tribes. The proposed budget

improve the technical innovation and professional services program.

The 2006 budget proposes a \$1.0 million applied sciences initiative. The research funded within this initiative would focus on technical issues such as mountaintop mining, coal bed methane, loss of streams to underground mining, and acid mine drainage. The proposed funding would also be used to preserve underground mine maps and to provide them to the interested public in an



will increase the percentage of appropriated AML funds for reclamation of high priority abandoned coal mines sites and provide for the repayment of State shares to certified States and Tribes.

**OSM Coal Mining Management** — The 2006 Office of Surface Mining budget includes an increase of \$2.5 million for technical initiatives, which will allow OSM to ensure that coal mine surface activities are operated in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining. These initiatives will also assist OSM in protecting resources through abandoned mine reclamation. The funding will assist in the creation of underground mine maps, expand OSM's national technical training program, fund applied science initiatives, and

electronic format. Accurate and readily available underground mine maps are essential resources for preventing repetition of incidents such as the Martin County Coal Company impoundment failure in Kentucky. The OSM and others would use these maps to enhance the reclamation of AML sites, minimize the offsite impacts of active mining operations, help to minimize the risk of injury to the public and the environment from abandoned underground coalmines, and improve service to OSM customers, partners, and the public.

AML ACCOMPLISHMENTS		
	Current	2006 Proposed
Acres Reclaimed.....	6,900	8,200
People Removed from Risk Annually .....	76,000	140,000
Years to Eliminate Existing Health and Safety problems ....	47	25
Corrects Allocation Problems....	No	Yes

The OSM is requesting \$1.0 million for its technical innovation and professional services program. Funding for this program would enhance mobile computing, e-training, and remote sensing capabilities and provide specialized hardware and software licenses. These initiatives would support the inspectors on the ground and allow them to use technology more efficiently. This would

save personnel hours and allow the time spent on-site to be more productive. Ultimately these initiatives would assist in the consistent application of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act nationwide.

The 2006 budget request includes a \$500,000 increase for OSM's national technical training program. This funding would significantly increase the number of students trained in order to better meet demand. This funding would also allow OSM to develop new courses to meet new technical needs, and to update digital presentation technology and course offerings. The OSM would train an additional 250 students each year, and would be able to offer new courses in geology, vegetation, hydrology, and engineering to address changes in technology, and changes in program policy due to regulatory changes.

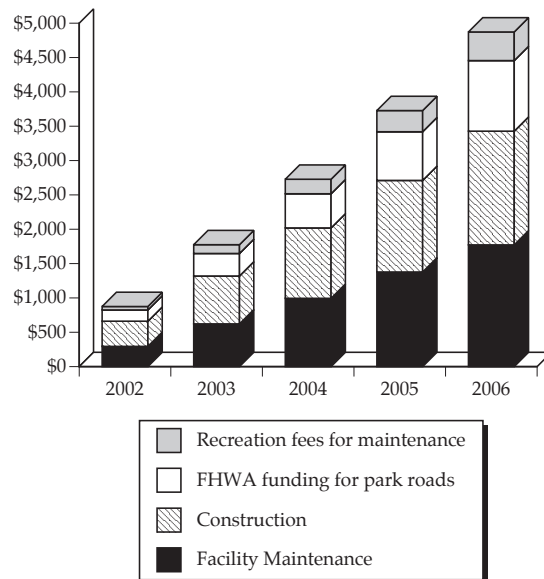
## MAINTAINING PARKS AND PRESERVING HERITAGE

The NPS manages and preserves many of the Nation's cultural, historic, and natural treasures, ranging from the inspiring grandeur of the Grand Canyon to the symbols of America's hope represented by the Liberty Bell and other national icons. As steward of these unique places, NPS has developed a state-of-the-art system to assess and prioritize maintenance needs.

**Park Maintenance Backlog** — Broken irrigation systems, poorly maintained trails, antiquated sanitation facilities, roofs in ill-repair, and rutted and poorly surfaced roads have kept national parks from realizing their full potential. In a campaign speech in 2000, then-Governor George W. Bush highlighted that "good roads, safe trails, clean lakes and streams, and well-kept campgrounds are basic needs that the Federal government must meet for the public to continue to enjoy our national parks."

Operating and maintaining in good condition nearly 7,500 facilities for park visitors presents a perennial challenge. Over many decades, a backlog of maintenance needs had accumulated in the national parks. This backlog has had an effect on the visitor experience and the

**ACHIEVING THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT  
CUMULATIVE DEFERRED MAINTENANCE FUNDING  
2002-2006**



public's ability to appreciate and enjoy the natural, historic, and cultural wonders of national parks.

President Bush committed to reverse this trend, proposing to invest \$4.9 billion over five years to address the maintenance backlog. Between 2002 and 2005, more than \$3.7 billion has been provided to address deferred maintenance needs. The 2006 budget request meets the President's funding commitment, reaching the promised five-year total of \$4.9 billion.

The 2006 budget proposes \$716.6 million for construction and park facility maintenance, an increase of \$27.1 million. Including funds in the proposed reauthorization of the Transportation Equity





Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, total deferred maintenance funding will exceed \$1.1 billion in 2006.

The investment in park facilities is garnering results. Through 2004, NPS has undertaken over 4,000 infrastructure and facility improvement projects nationwide. As a result, visitors to the parks are seeing improved trails, more accessible campgrounds, rehabilitated visitor centers, better roads, stabilized historic structures, and reduced environmental threats through better sewer, water, and drinking systems.

An essential component of the President's approach is a vigorous effort to bring state-of-the-art facilities management practices to the parks. A comprehensive asset management strategy has enabled NPS, for the first time in its history, to inventory its assets and measure the condition of its facilities. This information has established a Service-wide baseline for facility conditions and will be used to monitor and prioritize ongoing maintenance needs. With the funds expected through 2009, park assets will be improved to acceptable conditions overall, based on the Facility Condition Index.

The 2006 budget increase includes \$22.2 million for NPS construction and \$3.4 million for the repair and rehabilitation program. The latter increase will be used for high-priority historic buildings and other historic structures in several small historical parks that have a comprehensive preventive maintenance program and have robust asset inventories. Support for these efforts will demonstrate that a small amount of funding can improve the average condition of all of a park's historic structures from fair or poor to good over a two-year period.

**Park Roads and Parkways Program** — Recreation travel accounts for 20 percent of travel in the United States. Park roads are a vital part of America's transportation network, providing economic opportunity and growth in rural regions of the country. In addition to park access, roads to accommodate motor tourism have created viable gateway communities en route to parks. In some areas, entire economies are based on park road access. Examples include communities near Yellowstone, Glacier, and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Park roads show the effects of time and use. Funds provided through the Transportation Equity Act slowed down deterioration of park roads and began to stabilize the road system for the first time since 1987. Nonetheless, in 2001, approximately 35 percent of park roads were in good condition.

The President's proposal for reauthorization of TEA-21 calls for a six-year investment of \$1.89



billion in park roads. The majority of the funds, or 90 percent, would go to the improvement of roads. The proposal would also complete the NPS parkway systems and continue exploration of alternative transportation systems to help ease congestion in some parks.

A Federal Highway Administration road system analysis based on condition data collected between 1997 and 2001 has shown that a road investment of the magnitude proposed by the President would bring over 80 percent of park roads into good or excellent condition and would leave virtually no road in poor condition.

**Preserving Our Cultural Landscapes** — America's cultural resources — buildings, landscapes, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, objects and documents, structures and districts — embody a rich heritage of human experiences and cultural identities that spans at least 12,000 years and includes the living traditions of today's Native Americans and peoples whose roots lie in Africa, Oceania, Europe, and Asia. They tell a compelling story of our Nation, States, and communities and help us understand how we got where we are today. America's cultural resources also provide evidence about important historical trends and events, reflect people's everyday lives and significant accomplishments, and illustrate distinctive architectural, landscape, and engineering designs.

Americans are also choosing to reconnect with our Nation's rich heritage as they travel. Visiting historic and cultural sites is one of the most popular tourist activities today. In 2002, 81 percent of adults in the United States included at least one cultural, historic, or heritage activity in their vacation plans. Currently, 26 States have some form of heritage tourism program, a strong contributor of economic development. The NPS has assumed a national leadership role in the field of cultural landscapes, offering several programs that address the identification, evaluation, protection, interpretation and treatment of cultural landscapes for our national parks and other historic properties.

Through its Preserve America initiative, the Administration is encouraging community efforts to preserve our cultural and natural heritage. The initiative links to and complements both the Save America's Treasures grant program, which helps communities restore significant historic structures and resources, and the National Heritage Area program through which communities highlight and manage notable historic places of national significance. The 2006 budget proposes a total of \$32.5 million for locally focused historic preservation and heritage tourism.

A key part of this effort is a budget request of \$12.5 million for Preserve America grants to support communities that demonstrate sustainable uses of historic and cultural sites and develop economic and educational opportunities related to heritage tourism. Preserve America grants will help communities develop resource management strategies and business practices for continued preservation of heritage assets. Such activities include planning and feasibility studies, heritage education materials, heritage tourism business cases, and feasibility initiatives. Grants will be awarded competitively, subject to a 50/50 match, as a start-up investment to help eligible communities deliver a specific product or accomplish a specific result. The NPS will administer the program in partnership with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

To date, 194 communities in 32 States have been designated as Preserve America communities. In

May 2004, the President and First Lady presented the first four Preserve America Presidential Awards to: the Blue Ridge Heritage Initiative, located



in North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia; Lackawanna Heritage Valley, located in northeast Pennsylvania; Historic Beaumont Hotel, Ouray, Colorado; and Historic Raven Natural Resources Learning Center, Kootenai National Forest, Libby, Montana.

tenai National Forest, Libby, Montana.

The National Heritage Partnership program offers an innovative method for citizens, in partnership with local, State, and Federal governments, non-profit organizations, and the private sector, to work across jurisdictional and demographic boundaries by identifying multiple cultural landscapes that are linked thematically, historically, or geographically. Constituents utilize shared concerns about these landscapes to collaboratively focus on maintaining the distinct qualities that integrate the region and make it special.

Congress has designated 27 national heritage areas across the country in which conservation, interpretation, and heritage tourism activities are planned and implemented through partnerships among Federal, State and local governments, residents, and the private sector. These areas are fully managed by the private nonprofit groups or by the States. The NPS provides technical and financial assistance to these areas, including planning and interpretative expertise, and connects regions with other Federal agencies to fully leverage private funding. The 2006 budget request includes \$5.0 million for heritage areas.

The NPS also administers a number of successful historic preservation programs to preserve irreplaceable monuments and treasures of American heritage for future generations. Save America's Treasures grants, intended to commemorate the Millennium, are available for preservation and conservation work on nationally significant intellectual and cultural artifacts and nationally significant



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historic structures and sites. Intellectual and cultural artifacts include collections, documents, and works of art. Historic structures and sites include historic districts, buildings, and objects.

The budget includes \$15.0 million for Save America's Treasures. Grants under this program are awarded through a competitive process and require a dollar-for-dollar non-Federal match, which can be cash, donated services, or use of equipment.

## SOUTH FLORIDA'S EVERGLADES

The South Florida Everglades is a complex ecosystem which hosts a wide array of upland, lowland, and marine habitats that support thousands of species of plants and animals, including numerous threatened and endangered species. Since the early 1900s, flood control, water supply systems, agriculture, and development have disrupted the region's natural hydrological patterns. Half of the original Everglades ecosystem has been drained.

The Department remains committed to maintaining and improving its stewardship responsibilities in the Everglades. The 2006 budget request in support of Everglades restoration totals \$83.5 million. With these funds, NPS, FWS, BIA, and USGS will continue efforts to preserve and improve natural habitat; protect and recover endangered and threatened species; support tribal partners; and obtain the best available science to guide decisionmaking.

The Interior Department will also continue its work with the Corps of Engineers and the State of Florida to complete the modified water deliveries project. Land acquisition for the 8.5 square mile area will be completed by the end of 2005; and efforts are underway to complete the construction features for the 8.5 square mile area and the seepage and conveyance features, and to begin improvements to the Tamiami Trail that will result in more natural flows of water between water conservation areas and Everglades National Park. Once completed, this project will provide much needed flexibility to water managers and serve as a strong foundation for future benefits under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

Within the 2006 request for NPS construction is \$25.0 million for the modified water deliveries project, a key to restoration of natural flows in the Everglades. Under a new agreement between Interior and the Corps of Engineers, the cost to complete the project will be shared by NPS and the Corps. The 2006 budget for the Corps includes \$35.0 million for the Mod Water project. Over the period 2007 to 2009, the Corps will contribute an estimated additional \$89.0 million and the NPS an additional \$42.0 million. The 2006 NPS contribution consists of \$8.0 million in new funding and \$17.0 million redirected from unobligated balances for Everglades land acquisition that are not currently needed for high-priority acquisitions.

