2009 Tribal Wildlife Grants Recommendations to the Director for Award and Project Summaries

The competitive Tribal Wildlife Grants program (TWG) began in FY 2003 and to date, nearly $50 million has been awarded to federally recognized Indian Tribes to build their capacity to manage, monitor and conserve their important fish and wildlife resources. TWG provides fiscal support to tribal governments in the development and implementation of projects that benefit wildlife and their habitat, including species of Native American cultural significance and species that are not hunted or fished. The FY 2009 appropriation for this program is $7 million and the maximum award is $120,000.

REGION 1

WASHINGTON

California Bighorn Sheep Project
Confederated Tribes of Colville Reservation; $139,701

The Confederated Tribes of Colville will re-introduce California bighorn sheep to their historic range on the Colville Reservation. This ongoing effort between tribal, state, provincial, and federal agencies will return this species to suitable habitat. Goals include monitoring population composition; genetic testing; disease testing and treatment (if necessary); identification of winter and summer range, seasonal movements, and core use areas; habitat mapping; and identifying mortality rates and causes. Information from this project will be incorporated into the Tribe's Wildlife Management Plan. Tribal youth will be educated in survey data collection and interpretation.

Skokomish Elk Monitoring Project
Skokomish Indian Tribe; $199,874

This project will identify and mitigate potential causes of the decline of the Olympic elk herd. It will provide data on status, health, and movement of elk to better understand and manage their population and their habitat. Daily monitoring and monthly aerial surveys will provide data that is essential to the Tribal Wildlife Management Plan and establishes a baseline to monitor the effects of climate change on this species. The Tribe will collaborate with partners to promote stewardship careers.

South Fork Saxon Reach Restoration Project
Lummi Indian Nation; $200,000

Lummi Natural Resources (LNR) will support recovery of endangered bull trout, steelhead, Chinook salmon and other species important to the Lummi in the Nooksack River basin. By designing, building and monitoring pool-producing logjams, the LNR, working with the Nooksack Indian Tribe, will improve the salmonid populations and habitat. The project will also educate tribal youth, compile habitat data and advance the Tribe's capacity to manage its fish and wildlife resources.

South Rainier Elk Herd Management and Habitat Enhancement Project
Puyallup Tribe of Indians; $128,433

With the support of the Medicine Creek Treaty of Tribes the Puyallup will conduct habitat improvement projects on the critical summer habitat of the South Rainier Elk Herd. The Tribe has used this species for subsistence and ceremonial purposes since time immemorial. The project will monitor the South Rainier Elk Herd and improve 200 acres of forage habitat for elk and other wildlife species.

Knotweed Removal along Bogachiel River
Quileute Tribe; $175,943

Knotweed is an invasive plant that rapidly displaces native vegetation and destroys salmon habitat. Salmon are vital to the Quileute Tribe's subsistence, ceremonies, and commerce. The Tribe has teamed with federal, state, and local governments to assess knotweed presence, remove knotweed and monitor native vegetation return. Quileute's project and partnership with the Olympic Knotweed Working Group will record data and map invasive plants to coordinate restoration work on four different native salmon runs.

REGION 2

ARIZONA

Cocopah Colorado River Restoration
Cocopah Tribe; $130,606

The riparian ecosystems of the Lower Colorado River on the Cocopah reservation have been greatly altered and degraded by more than a century of water development, deforestation, agricultural and realty development, the introduction of invasive species, and the impacts of climate change. This project will begin restoration and monitoring activities on seven acres of this important riparian habitat. The success and monitoring of this project will guide future restoration projects and planning.

Golden Eagle Occupancy and Reproduction Assessment
Navajo Nation; $200,000

Eagles, in particular the golden eagle are culturally significant to many tribes throughout the U.S. and at a national level there are limited data on golden eagle populations. This project will monitor the annual occupancy and reproduction of the golden eagle on Hopi and Navajo Nation lands during the 2009 reproductive season. Data collected from this work will assist the Tribes in future management of eagles and support the management activities conducted between the Service, states and other entities.

Golden Eagle Prey Base Assessment on Hopi and Navajo Lands
Hopi Tribe; $200,000

Eagles, in particular the golden eagle are culturally significant to many Tribes throughout the U.S. and at a national level there are limited data on golden eagle populations. In relation to an Intergovernmental Compact between the DOI, Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this project will study the golden eagle prey base on Hopi and Navajo lands. This study will identify and map habitat of the golden eagle prey base populations; mainly rabbits and prairie dogs. Data collected from this work will not only assist the Tribes in future management of eagles, but support management activities conducted in partnership with the Service, states and other entities.

NEW MEXICO

Mule Deer and Elk Management
Pueblo of Santa Ana; $200,000

Mule deer and elk are of cultural significance to this Pueblo as a food source and culturally - as traditional dances and ceremonies are held in relation to these animals. This project will enable the Tribe to develop a comprehensive management plan and help to ensure the future practice of important traditional ceremonies. This project coincides with habitat restoration and management activities that benefit additional associated species and habitat resources, including species that migrate between adjacent tribal, state and private lands.

OKLAHOMA

Propagating Neosho Madtom and Freshwater Mussels
Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma; $189,846

Freshwater mussels have a great cultural significance to various tribes. Historically, mussels have been used as food, tools, utensils, handcrafts and ornaments. While carrying on these traditional uses, the Peoria Tribe is also working to protect and conserve mussel species in decline. This project will propagate and reintroduce culturally significant and imperiled freshwater mussels, including the rabbitsfoot, Neosho mucket, and Neosho madtom. Through a previous TWG project the Tribe conducted field studies, established a comprehensive recovery plan and built a facility to propagate fresh water mussels for tribal use and as a collaborative effort with Oklahoma State University, adjacent Tribes, and the Service.

Zebra Mussel Impacts on Freshwater Mussels
Osage Nation; $135,250

This project will provide for the reintroduction of the Neosho mucket and the monitoring of freshwater mussels to determine the impact of zebra mussels on the native freshwater mussels. Emphasis will be placed on the occurrence of the zebra mussels, which are an invasive species, as well as efforts to reintroduce the Neosho mucket, a state endangered species, which were historically found on the Osage Reservation.

Expansion of the Grey Snow Eagle House

Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma; $200,000

The Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma is the first and only Tribe to establish both an eagle aviary and rehabilitation center. Eagles that cannot be rehabilitated have been transferred to this aviary, and naturally molted feathers are collected and distributed to enrolled tribal members for religious and cultural purposes. The biological goal of the aviary is to rehabilitate eagles and return them to the wild. To date, the aviary houses eleven non-releasable eagles and has been successful rehabilitating and releasing three bald eagles to the wild. This grant will enable the Tribe to expand their aviary, hire additional tribal personnel, and assist in the conservation of this important national symbol.

REGION 3

MICHIGAN

Juvenile Lake Sturgeon Assessment
Gun Lake Tribe: $189,351

The Tribe will increase its capacity to protect and manage the state threatened and culturally important lake sturgeon. The status and critical areas for habitat protection and restoration of juvenile lake sturgeon in the Kalamazoo and Grand Rivers will be assessed. Adult populations have been assessed but there is little data on juveniles. Education and outreach to increase public knowledge regarding this prehistoric fish including an event for the Sturgeon Youth Day are important components of this project.

MINNESOTA

Rehabilitation / Evaluation of Lake Sturgeon
Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians; $197,393

The lake sturgeon was extirpated from the entire Red River of the North Watershed by the 1950's. With continued actions of federal and state agencies along with the Band, it is hoped that there will be full recovery of the sturgeon. This project will continue to enable the Band to participate in the recovery through stocking and management activities.

Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Prairie Island Indian Community
Prairie Island Indian Community; $200,000

This project will plan a number of wildlife and habitat enhancement activities, building upon existing information established by the Tribe and will cover more than 1300 acres within the Upper Mississippi River Flyway. It will establish a baseline for many species and document their conservation, management and habitat needs and will ensure that the vision and cultural values of the Prairie Island Community are properly reflected.

Moose Habitat Use in a Changing Climate

Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians; $199,999

This project will provide data on habitat use that will enable the Grand Portage Band's Natural Resources Management Department and the 1854 Treaty Authority (in cooperation with the MN Department of Natural Resources and Fond du Lac Band) to improve habitat management for moose on the reservation and make informed land management decisions.

WISCONSIN

Lac Courte Oreilles Gray Wolf Research and Management Plan Development
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe; $72,946

Telemetry data will be collected on up to three wolves over one year to establish the home range of the "Eddy Creek Pack". The information collected will provide a basis for development of a comprehensive wolf management plan for the reservation.

2009 Lake and Stream Assessment for the Menominee Tribe
Menominee Indian Tribe; $199,992

The Menominee Conservation Department will develop a tribal fish and wildlife management program. Fishery data collection will be improved and an updated survey of lakes and streams will allow the Tribe to continue monitoring efforts, assess lake productivity, analyze fish populations, and create a subsistence fishery for the Menominee people. Biological monitoring of habitat use and population status will allow assessment of current management strategies.

REGION 4

FLORIDA

Seminole Bird Habitat Enhancement Project
Seminole Tribe of Florida; $200,000

The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Bird Habitat Enhancement Project will implement previous habitat assessment and management needs of the Red-cockaded woodpecker, Everglades snail kite, Sherman's fox squirrel, wild turkey, Florida grasshopper sparrow, Florida scrub jay and Gopher tortoise. Methodology involves prescribed burning, fire prevention planning, training staff in fire certification and fire planning, prescribed burn maps, replanting native species and a database to track the fire program.

NORTH CAROLINA

Eastern Band of Cherokee Wildlife and Fisheries Enhancement
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; $200,000

This project will implement management and restoration activities for species of federal concern and of cultural importance to the Cherokee on reservation lands. Species include Indiana and grey bats, the Carolina northern flying squirrel, mountain catchfly, glade spurge and butternut. The goal is to protect rare species and to implement habitat improvements identified in recovery plans and avoid high priority habitat in tribal economic development planning.

REGION 5

MASSACHUSETTS

Popponesset Bay Restoration Project
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe; $200,000

This project will restore the historic oyster fishery in Popponesset Bay. The restoration of fish, wildlife, and plant species and their habitat is central to this undertaking. The increasing threat of fish kills due to extreme nitrogen loading in the Popponesset Bay sub-estuaries will be eliminated. In partnership with the town of Mashpee and the Massachusetts Estuaries Project, this project will implement established research goals and monitoring objectives.

MAINE

Survey/Manage: Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, Bald Eagle and Amphibians
Passamaquoddy Tribe - Indian Township; $65,391

The Passamaquoddy Tribe will conduct annual surveys to inventory baseline data on ruffed grouse, American woodcock, bald eagle and resident amphibians. This project will complete a ten-year study.

REGION 6

MONTANA

Protection of the Manning Lake Wetland Complex through Conservation Leases
Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of Fort Peck; $199,886

This project will secure 25-year conservation leases for 1,280 acres of prime wetland and associated grassland acres within the Manning Lake Wetland Complex in order to manage them for the benefit of habitat and the wildlife that depends on it.

Inventory and Survey of Fish and Herpetofauna in Streams and Rivers on the Reservation
Blackfeet Nation; $200,000

This comprehensive inventory and survey of fish and herpetofauna will encompass the streams and rivers of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. In addition to providing new information on

species diversity the survey will update the Blackfeet Fisheries Management Plan to further the conservation of native fish populations and habitats and provide for the management of its sport fishery resources consistent with tribal values.

Intertribal Cougar Monitoring Project
Chippewa Cree at Rocky Boys; $199,968

Cougars are a tribally significant species and the Chippewa Cree are working hard to ensure their continued existence on tribal lands. This monitoring study will capture, collar and monitor a minimum of six cougars. Data will be gathered to better understand cougar habitat, predation, disease, reproduction and home ranges. Guidelines will be developed to include harvest strategies, habitat maintenance information and potential ordinances and enforcement plans.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Mako Sica (Badlands) Bighorn Sheep Population and Habitat on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation
Oglala Sioux; 200,000

This project will determine local herd dynamics and habitat use of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep located within the boundaries of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The project includes a comprehensive study, population augmentation, development of a management plan, and evaluation of the potential for a sustained harvest.

Recovery of the Black-footed Ferret on the Cheyenne River Reservation
Cheyenne River Sioux; $116,059

The Cheyenne River Indian Reservation is one of ten critical sites needed to meet the goal of the Black-footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Team, which will contribute to the down listing and eventual delisting of the ferret by 2010. The Cheyenne River Sioux project will conduct the annual Black-footed ferret adult and kit spotlight survey.

Sylvatic Plague Contingency Plan
Lower Brule Sioux; 24,450

The goal of this project is to protect the Tribe’s Black-footed ferret population in the event of a sylvatic plague epizootic.

REGION 7

ALASKA

Local Management for Endangered Wildlife and Habitat
Native Village of Barrow; $200,000

As sea ice conditions change, walrus, polar bears and other associated species, are becoming increasingly reliant on the coastal areas near Barrow. The threatened Steller and spectacled eiders and other protected migratory birds that nest in tundra ponds along the Barrow road system are illegally shot each year. This two-year project will enable the Native Village of Barrow to effectively monitor and conserve wildlife resources and educate the community about species at risk.

Nushagak River Watershed Traditional Use Area Conservation Plan Implementation
New Stuyahok Traditional Council; $200,000

The Nushagak-Mulchatna watershed in southwest Alaska is a biologically rich area with healthy populations of wildlife and wild salmon. Its Chinook salmon run is the largest in Alaska. This five-year project will protect fish and wildlife habitat by reserving adequate water flow for the Nushagak River and designate lands to be considered for long term conservation and management.

English Bay River Sockeye Smolt andAdult Enumeration
Native Village of Nanwalek; $96,002

English Bay River sockeye salmon have been a primary source of subsistence food for local Natives for centuries. However, the sockeye run began a steady decline 20 years ago that resulted in a closure of fisheries. The operation of smolt and adult enumeration weirs on the river will provide information to manage the sockeye run with more precision and provide information needed for its restoration and enhancement.

Matanuska Watershed Salmon Habitat Restoration and Research
Chickaloon Native Village; $193,123

Moose Creek was once one of the most productive tributaries of the Matanuska River. However, from the 1920s through the 1980s, these runs were reduced to a remnant of their previous abundance due to mining and railroad construction. This project continues the Tribe’s work, begun in 2003, with the Matanuska Watershed Salmon Habitat Restoration and Research project to restore miles of spawning and rearing habitat, enhance salmon populations and monitor salmon escapement.

Freshwater Seal Studies of Iliamna Lake
Newhalen Tribe; $199,776

The freshwater seals that inhabit Iliamna Lake are an important subsistence resource for members of the Newhalen Tribe but there is little baseline information on this population. This project will gather population data and collect tissue samples to provide biological information on these seals in hopes of gaining a better understanding of their life cycle, health, abundance, habitat use and ecology within Iliamna Lake.

REGION 8

CALIFORNIA

Learning Landscapes: Preserving Our Natural and Cultural Heritage
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians; $199,834

The Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians and member-Tribes of the Native American Land Conservancy are concerned with the loss of cultural landscapes critical to the perpetuation of tribal knowledge of the flora and fauna in their aboriginal homeland. The Old Woman Mountain Preserve and Learning Landscapes program will provide information about threatened or endangered species, their needs and status, their meaning in tribal tradition, and develop a guide for their identification and protection. This project will evaluate the status of desert tortoise and provide important base-line analysis of climate change in the eastern Mojave Desert.

Present and Historic Distribution and Status of Freshwater Mussels
Karuk Tribe of California; $100,000

The Karuk Tribe of California, with the White Sulfur Springs National Fish Hatchery, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Whitman College will examine the status of freshwater mussels within Karuk aboriginal territory. Surveys will be conducted on the Klamath the Salmon Rivers. Their location and abundance will be correlated with proposed actions within the watershed so that impacts can be properly addressed. Acquiring baseline data on mussel densities and distribution prior to the proposed removal of three dams on the Klamath River make this effort particularly meaningful.

Restoration of Ackerman Creek
Pinoleville Pomo; $128,770

The Pinoleville Pomo Nation will restore riparian habitat for the culturally important steelhead and salmon through a variety of in-stream management techniques. This project addresses wildlife habitat and fish barrier priorities of the Russian River Watershed Adaptive Management Plan and the North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. The project will improve habitat for insects, amphibians, birds and mammals that make up the historical Ackerman Creek ecosystem.

Lower Forsythe Creek Restoration Project
Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians; $176,071

This project implements the Forsythe Creek Watershed Assessment and will improve spawning and rearing habitat for adult and juvenile salmon and steelhead trout by providing shelter, establishing rearing pools, providing shade, and by stopping the erosion of stream banks and preventing sedimentation of Forsythe Creek.

Torres Martinez Pilot Wetland Habitat Enhancement Project
Torres Martinez; $200,000

Projections indicate that the Salton Sea will continue to recede, exposing barren mudflats that quickly dry, erode, and add harmful contaminants into the air during wind events. This project will provide wetland habitat while reducing exposure to harmful contaminants as the Salton Sea continues to recede. The project will demonstrate an attainable solution by constructing a shallow water wetland on approximately 85 acres of adjacent tribal land and replace invasive salt cedar with native vegetation. Habitat enhancements for a variety of wetland-dependent bird species are also addressed.

Parker Creek Habitat Restoration and Riparian Management
Pit River Tribe; $172,239

Two miles of Parker Creek and its associated riparian corridor will be restored. The Parker Creek Riparian Area Management Plan will reflect tribal watershed management objectives and unrestricted grazing will be eliminated. Proper riparian function will be enhanced by establishing native plants in areas that contribute to non-point source pollutants. Data will be established to balance agricultural operations and a sustainable fishery.

Santa Ynez Chumash Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Management
Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians; $83,134

The Tribe will conduct baseline surveys of habitat and wildlife populations occurring on their lands to develop and implement a Tribal Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Management Plan that will prioritize species and identify sensitive habitats. The Plan will include a monitoring plan, an education program, regulatory mechanisms, procedures for revision, and specific restoration actions. Tribal Environmental Office personnel will be trained to manage fish, wildlife, and habitat resources.

NEVADA

Establish Noxious Weed Management Program
Summit Lake Paiute Tribe; $197,867

The Summit Lake Paiute Tribe will enhance and conserve the biodiversity of the reservation and surrounding area in partnership with federal, state, and non-profit organizations. Project elements include noxious weed inventory and treatment, public education on noxious weeds, training employees and volunteers, and develop and implement a program to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of noxious weed treatments.

If you have specific questions, or would like to be briefed on this issue, please contact Patrick Durham, Native American Liaison, at (703) 358-1728.