

# Strategic Goal 1: Protect the Environment and Preserve Our Nation's Natural and Cultural Resources

Science, history, and shared experience have taught Americans that their own physical and mental well-being depends on the health of the environment around them. Our lands, waters, and other resources must remain healthy if our communities are to thrive.

That challenge defines the Department's first strategic goal, protecting the environment and preserving our Nation's natural and cultural resources. It is a mission with many elements—protecting lands of national significance and helping communities tackle the future; healing damaged public lands and restoring natural systems and habitats; helping native species; and protecting cultural resources.

The Department is directly responsible for 507 million surface acres of public lands, including 388 parks and 542 wildlife refuges, and for 700 million subsurface acres, as well as for oil and gas and other mineral exploration and development activities on 1.76 billion acres on the OCS. Rich in natural heritage, representing diverse and complex ecosystems, these lands contain exceptional geological formations, rare and vulnerable plant and animal communities, wild and scenic rivers, and numerous historical, paleontological, and archeological sites.

The Department's responsibilities stretch far beyond these public lands, however. We focus every day on preserving the natural habitat in America's backyards, protecting local green space, improving water and air quality, sustaining wildlife, and providing families with places to play and relax.

Interior takes a "systems approach" to conservation, giving consideration to the complex relationships of land, water, air and the life within them. This systems approach does not stop with simply repairing and healing the land where it has been damaged through prior use. The Department's focus is on other components of "healthy systems," including maintaining the quality of air and water and influencing the entities that might undermine this quality. Here Interior depends heavily upon the use of sound scientific knowledge and techniques to help us maintain healthy systems.

Our success also increasingly depends on our ability to involve others in our conservation work. Our

goal is to empower Americans as citizen-conservationists. Interior can offer landowners, land-user groups, environmental organizations, communities, local and State governments, and companies the resources and technical support to undertake conservation projects that advance the health of the land, benefiting all of us.

The more the Department can empower people as stewards of the land we all share, the more effective we can be in our conservation mission. We emphasize environmental performance and progress through partnership and cooperation. We seek common ground by using local information about the best way to solve problems, providing incentives to create a Nation of self-motivated stewards, and creating a climate of environmental innovation and imagination.

The benefits for the Department have been significant. Enhanced partnerships have allowed us to leverage our own constrained funding, identify strategies that make sense on the ground to the wide varieties of people with an interest in our programs, and create an environment of cooperation, consultation, and communication that rebounds to the benefit of the resources that we manage and the people we serve.

Interior also has a responsibility to protect the native species that live on and use our lands. Our obligation to protect fish and wildlife stretches beyond geographic boundaries. The Department is responsible for protecting thousands of native plant and animal species, including 1,263 with special status under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) within the United States. Protection efforts focus not only in conserving the species, but also on

### The Power of Pride

Partnership and volunteerism, two keys to the Department's conservation plans, are getting a boost from the recent rebirth of a celebrated program from the era of President Reagan—**Take Pride in America**. Designed to focus the Nation's attention on the opportunities for volunteers from every corner of America to improve our parks, refuges, recreation areas, and cultural and historical sites, the program aims to inspire citizen stewardship through a bold and innovative public communication campaign. Outstanding volunteer efforts will be rewarded with Presidential recognition.



**Take Pride** works with governors and other partners to launch volunteer efforts as part of President Bush's USA Freedom Corps volunteer service initiative. More than 100 charter partners, including major corporations, conservation groups, service organizations, and traditions, have signed on to help.

**Take Pride** features a bipartisan Council of Governors from states that have signed memoranda of agreement with the national program. By establishing formal partnerships with State governments, Federal and State land managers can identify volunteer opportunities and enlist public service commitments from citizens. In addition, a blue-ribbon panel has been chartered to assist Take Pride with fundraising for public awareness, educational purposes, and judging national Take Pride awards. The ability to engage in fundraising was a key feature of the Take Pride Act passed by Congress in 1990.

**Take Pride** will increase volunteerism by expanding participation among youth, senior citizens, Hispanics and African-Americans, faith-based groups and union organizations. Take Pride will also emphasize service to inner city and urban sites, such as parks, trails, historic monuments, and playgrounds. More information about Take Pride in America is available at [www.takepride.gov](http://www.takepride.gov). In addition, the Department's electronic outreach is served by [www.volunteer.gov/gov](http://www.volunteer.gov/gov), a Web site designed to help would-be volunteers and the agencies seeking them to find each other on the Internet.

encouraging their recovery from endangered and threatened status.

Partnerships with private landowners are particularly important in these efforts, since half of all endangered species have at least 80 percent of their habitat on private lands. We have seen that farmers, ranchers, and foresters are often the best stewards of their land. We can achieve more by working with them, capitalizing on their intimate knowledge of the land.

In 2003, Interior issued the first comprehensive Federal guidelines designed to promote the establishment of conservation banks. Conservation banks are lands acquired by third parties, man-

aged for specific endangered species, and protected by conservation easements. There are dozens of conservation banks now operating in a number of States. These have become increasingly important tools in conservation plans prepared by land developers.

In addition to protecting and conserving our lands, water, and wildlife, the Department of the Interior protects the cultural heritage, the historic sites and objects, that link us to our past. These resources include landscapes associated with historical events, structures such as historical homes, and sites that provide clues to prehistoric life. Assets range from paintings by artists such as Thomas Moran to personal belongings of historical figures such as a cane owned by Abraham Lincoln, along with such icons as the carved faces of Mount Rushmore and the Statue of Liberty National Monument

### Performance Results

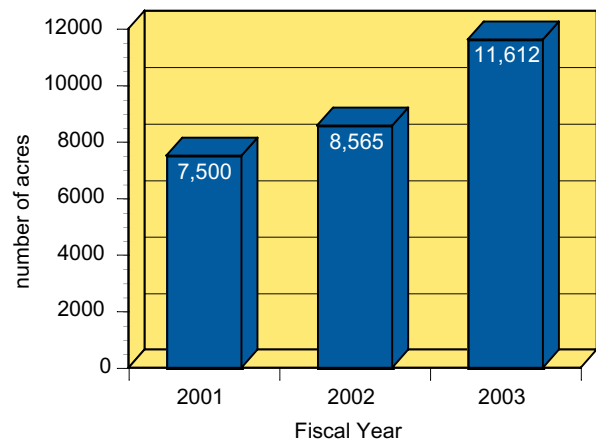
The Department of the Interior measures its performance in protecting the environment and preserving our natural and cultural resources against four long-term measures: our ability to restore the health of public lands, to maintain healthy natural systems, to protect and recover imperiled species, and to protect and restore cultural resources.

The Vital Signs Monitoring Project of the National Park Service (NPS) illustrates the Department's healthy systems approach to protecting and conserving public lands. Initially launched in 2001, the project organized 270 park units into 32 monitoring networks that track key indicators of change, or "vital signs" occurring on park lands. These indicators enable park managers and scientists to understand, track, and better protect the health of their resources, and to provide a complete picture of the condition of the national parks. Long-term monitoring provides an early warning and detection of conditions in time to develop effective mitigation measures.

In FY 2003, 43 percent of 270 units of the National Park System identified their vital signs, exceeding a target of 40 percent. The Vital Signs Monitoring Project will continue until 100 percent of these units inventory the characteristics that need monitoring. The project will serve as a key component

FIGURE 7

### Targeted Disturbed Park Lands that are Being Restored



of resource management by providing scientific information to park managers.

In addition to monitoring park vital signs, the NPS is estimating that it will meet its FY 2003 target to restore 5.2 percent of targeted park lands (or 11,500 acres) that had been disturbed in some manner by development or agriculture (*Figure 7*). It further estimates that it will also meet its target to initiate 30 watershed assessment projects in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to better understand aquatic resource conditions in parks. Along with these assessments, the NPS evaluated air and/or water quality for 288 units of the National Park System. It estimates that for FY 2003, 56 percent of park units will report stable or improved air quality, against a target of 61 percent, while an estimated 71 percent of these units will enjoy unimpaired water quality, against a target of 65 percent (*Figure 8* and *Figure 9*). Final results will be available in a supplemental report to be published in the third quarter of FY 2004, as mentioned previously.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is also actively reviewing the condition of the public lands that it manages. In FY 2003, the BLM conducted land condition assessments for 6 priority sub-basins, against a target of 10. It prepared 3 new land use plans, against a target of 13, bringing the total number of land use plans prepared since 1999 to 7. These targets were not achieved due to complexities in consultation and collaboration, some lengthy

FIGURE 8

Percent of Park Units Reporting Air Quality is Stable or Improved

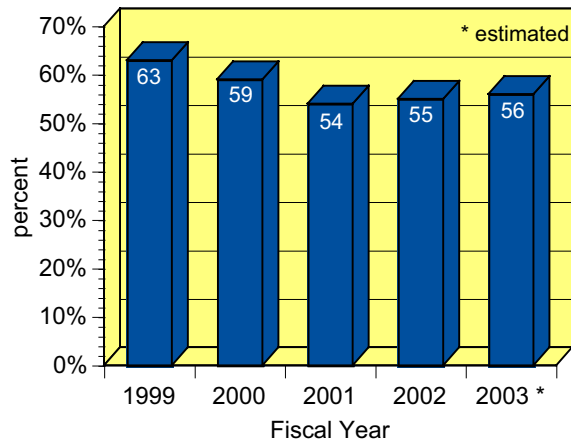
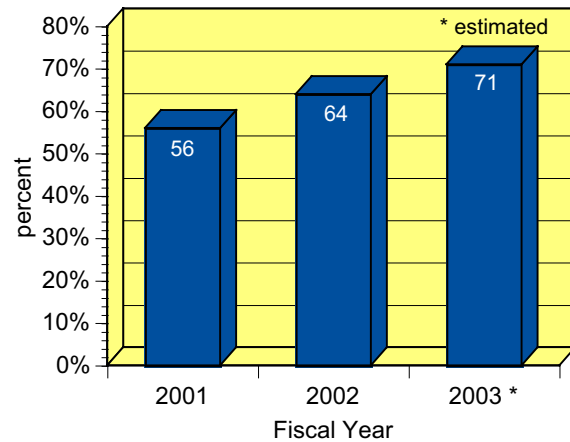


FIGURE 9

Percent of Park Units Reporting Unimpaired Water Quality



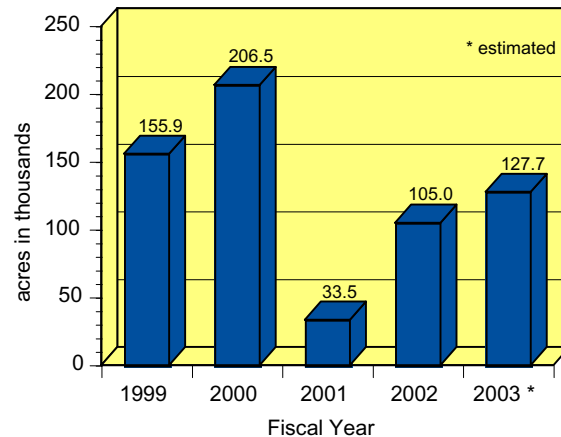
protests, and Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The BLM amended an additional 54 land use plans to reflect new information or management strategies, exceeding its target of 41, for FY 2003.

Together, Interior's NPS, BLM, and FWS contained the spread of invasive vegetation that jeopardizes the health of public lands and the wildlife they support (Figure 10). NPS estimates that, in FY 2003, it controlled invasives on 4.8 percent of park lands against a target of 4.6 percent. FWS efforts helped protect 229,416 acres of the National Wildlife Refuge System from terrestrial and aquatic invasive species, against a target of 227,445 acres. The BLM treated 298,000 acres of public lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds, exceeding its target of 245,000 acres.

Interior's conservation mandate does not stop with Federal lands. We also protect and conserve non-Federal lands, particularly lands damaged by surface coal mining. In FY 2003, the Department's Office of Surface Mining (OSM) reclaimed 6,539 acres of abandoned coal mine lands, or 94 percent of its target of 6,900 acres. It funded 37 water cleanup projects, exceeding its target of 28, under the Clean Streams Program. This program provides funds to small local watershed organizations to clean streams affected by acid mine drainage.

FIGURE 10

Containing Invasive Species on Park Lands



In FY 2003, the BLM addressed environmental issues associated with old mines by remediating 72 abandoned mines located on lands that it manages, exceeding its target of 60. The BLM also further protected visitors to its lands by plugging and reclaiming 127 orphan wells, far exceeding its target of 20.

The protection and conservation of water remains critical, particularly in the arid Western states. Interior's Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) manages, develops, and protects water resources. In FY 2003, Reclamation responded to requests for drought emergency assistance within 60 days

of receiving the request 97.1 percent of the time, exceeding its target of 85 percent.

In addition to helping mitigate potential impacts of drought, Reclamation encourages recycling and reuse of water in order to increase use of available water supplies. In FY 2003, Reclamation completed 3 cooperative agreements to perform feasibility studies related to water recycling against a target of 2. Reclamation also completed 4 appraisal investigations and initiated 2 feasibility studies on water recycling projects in FY 2003. It promoted efficient use of water supplies associated with Federal water projects by assisting 360 organizations, customers, and agencies, against a target of 260, in effective water conservation planning and management. Its water recycling and reuse projects helped yield 25,402 acre feet of water compared to a target of 25,000 acre feet.

Reclamation also conducts projects designed to improve water quality to ensure the viability and use of the water supply. In FY 2003, it conducted 31 water quality assessments, against a target of 35, at Reclamation stream segments and reservoirs. It implemented 6 operational changes to address water quality issues that were identified as a result of these assessments, meeting its annual target. It improved water quality in the Colorado River Basin, exceeding its annual target of 25,000 tons, by removing 30,393 tons of salt at a cost less than \$50 per ton, as part of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (CRBSP). As salinity levels rise, crop yields diminish and water treatment costs escalate. The CRBSP maintains or improves water quality in the Colorado River by reducing the amount of salt in the river water.

### Something to Howl about



A steadily growing gray wolf population in the western Great Lakes states and a highly successful reintroduction program in the northern Rocky Mountains have prompted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to change the status of gray wolves in these areas from "endangered" to the less serious "threatened" designation under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The reclassification finalizes an action first proposed by the FWS in 2000. It also establishes three "Distinct Population Segments" (DPS) for gray wolves under the ESA. The three segments encompass the entire historic range of the gray wolf in the lower 48

states and Mexico, and correspond to the three areas of the country where there are wolf populations and ongoing recovery activities.

Wolf populations in the eastern and western DPSs have achieved population goals for recovery. Actions are underway to give the public notice that FWS will soon begin work to propose delisting these populations.

Under the ESA, endangered species are those currently in danger of extinction. Threatened species, which receive many of the same protections under the Act, are species that are considered likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. "Threatened" is a more appropriate classification than "endangered" for wolves outside the Southwest because recovery programs have succeeded in reducing threats to gray wolves and vastly increasing their numbers and range.

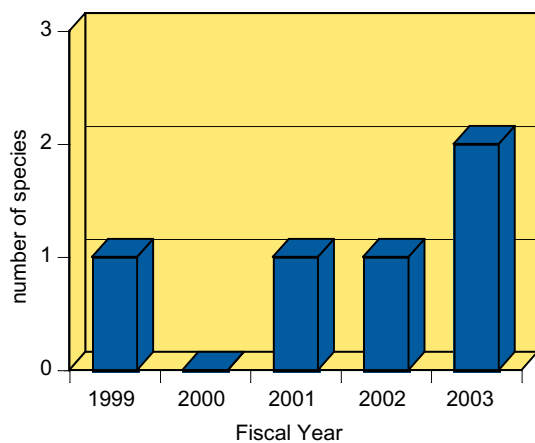
FWS proposes to remove gray wolves in the western and eastern United States from the endangered and threatened species list, once the agency has determined that all recovery criteria for wolf populations in those areas have been met and sufficient protections remain in place to ensure sustainable populations.

The health of the Nation's wildlife is another critical gauge of the health of our larger natural systems. Responsibility for the administration of the ESA is shared by Interior's FWS and the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service. The FWS works with State, local, and tribal governments to develop large-area, multiple-species habitat conservation plans. It also facilitates the implementation of recovery actions by partners such as conservation organizations and private landowners.

As of FY 2003, the FWS estimated that 332 species listed under the ESA as threatened or endangered a decade or more ago are either stable or improving. This is good news and shows estimated improve-

FIGURE 11

### Number of Species Delisted Due to Recovery



ments for an additional 12 species above the FWS performance target of 320. FY 2003 saw the delisting of 2 species due to recovery, against a target of 4 (Figure 11). Conservation agreements enabled another 3 species to avoid the “at-risk” list, against a target of 4.

Endangered and threatened species on park lands likewise benefit from Interior protection activities. In FY 2003, the NPS estimated that 57 of 442 species identified as having critical habitats on the lands it manages or that required NPS recovery actions improved their status, against a target of 64. An additional 100 species were estimated to have stable populations, against a target of 99.

Preserving, restoring or maintaining habitat is a significant component in the recovery of endangered species. Interior estimates that together, its bureaus have established, restored or enhanced 182,973 acres of wetlands and/or riparian habitat, to exceed a target of 144,719 acres, and 1,110 stream miles of habitat against a target of 1,429 stream miles.

In addition to meeting its water contracts, the Bureau of Reclamation assisted in the recovery of endangered and threatened species by providing 2.16 million acre feet (MAF) of water, against a target of 1.9 MAF, to enhance fish and wildlife habitats.

Interior also plays a major role in helping to ensure the continued viability of hundreds of species of

waterfowl, songbirds, and shorebirds that periodically migrate to or through the United States. The FWS is collecting population information about migratory birds of concern so that it can establish baselines and initiate or continue a monitoring program for these species. In FY 2003, the FWS achieved its target of baseline information for 22 of 146 migratory bird populations. It reported that 22 of 254 migratory bird populations of management concern demonstrated improvements in their population status, again achieving the FY 2003 target.

In addition to natural landscapes, our Nation's treasures include historic and cultural sites and items that link us to our past. In FY 2003, the NPS estimates that 70.7 percent of the preservation and protection standards for park museum collections were met, against a target of 69.9 percent. It also estimates the number of museum objects cataloged by the FWS at 47.7 million, an increase from the 1999 baseline number of 37.3 million objects cataloged. It has increased the number of ethnographic resources it manages from 400 in 1999 to an estimated 1,276 records in 2003, against a target of 1,140, offering that much more information for anthropological studies.

The NPS has also focused on maintaining and assessing the integrity of historic structures and cultural archeological sites. In FY 2003, NPS inventoried and evaluated 232 cultural landscapes and 57,752 archeological sites against a target of 240 and 58,759, respectively, an increase of 69.3 percent from the FY 1999 baseline of 137 landscapes and 19.8 percent from the baseline of 48,188 sites. Against a target of 31 percent, 31.7 percent of cultural landscapes contained within the Cultural Landscapes Inventory are in good condition. The annual target of 47.8 percent of recorded archeological sites were found to be in good condition, while 44.3 percent of inventoried historic structures (against a target of 46 percent) are in good condition. Further, the NPS estimates that 50 percent of known paleontological localities in parks (home of fossils and prehistoric bones) are in good condition. NPS restored an estimated 120,108 square feet of cave floor (against a target of 117,551) in parks like Carlsbad Caverns and Mammoth Cave.

## Collaboration in Action

The Department will depend on partnerships to address two of its most critical program issues: law enforcement and security, and wildland fire.

Interior manages the third largest Federal law enforcement force, with more than 4,400 law enforcement personnel spread among the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and National Park Service (NPS). In addition, there are about 1,700 tribal and contracted law enforcement and detention facility personnel in Indian country. We are responsible for the safety of our more than 70,000 employees and 200,000 volunteers, along with tribal members and about 1.3 million daily visitors. We maintain safety on over 507 million acres of tribal and public lands that include a number of sites of historical or national significance, along with the security of dams and reservoirs. The Department also assists in providing security for oil and gas production and transmission facilities on Federal lands, including 4,000 offshore production oil and gas facilities, 22,000 miles of pipeline, and 35,000 petroleum workers in the Gulf of Mexico.



The increased emphasis over the last few years on visitor protection, securing resources, and homeland security demands that Interior maintain a well-coordinated and highly professional law enforcement capability. Our staff is already spread thin, however, averaging one commissioned officer for about every 110,000 visitors and 118,000 acres of land. Our challenge over the next five years will be to get the maximum value from those professionals, balancing our ongoing, more conventional law enforcement activities with increasingly complex homeland security issues.

Bureau law enforcement personnel had always worked independently before 9/11. After 9/11 the combination of growing obligations and limited resources required them to work together. The Department's public safety structure was redesigned in July 2002, with a senior level executive and a small headquarters staff with a mandate to coordinate law enforcement policy and activities. Over the next five years we will develop a more coordinated Departmental approach to public safety, supported through common programs, standardized position descriptions, cross-training, and shared best practices.

Interior will continue to participate in multi-agency task forces as well. Organized by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Justice Department, the task forces share information, develop security protocols, and identify protective measures in order to prevent and respond to real and potential terrorist attacks.

The same strategy of multiple partnerships across bureau and agency lines underlies the Department's response to the issue of wildland fire.

Historic suppression of fires, which resulted in unnatural levels of fuel build-up, along with a lack of active forest and rangeland management and a number of seasonal droughts, have sent the risk of catastrophic wildland fire soaring. Today more than 190 million acres of public land and surrounding communities are at risk from extreme wildfires. Our ability to reduce that risk depends on our success in building long-term strategic consultation and collaboration with other interested Federal organizations, States, Tribes, local governments and citizens, an ambition formally supported by the National Fire Plan and the Implementation Plan for "A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment" (both developed in concert with the U.S. Forest Service); the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy; and the President's Healthy Forests Initiative.

Interior's firefighters have been working together since the 1999 launch of the National Fire Plan. The plan linked Interior's four firefighting bureaus—the BLM, NPS, FWS, and BIA—with the Forest Service, State foresters, Tribes, and local fire departments. Today these groups share planning and equipment, treating the causes of fires, and rehabilitating fire-damaged habitat across all 50 States.

Never before had so many levels and organizations from government come together to discuss a cohesive approach to enhancing fire preparedness, reducing hazardous fuels, and restoring and maintaining forest and rangeland health. Their success was a tribute to the power of coordination, communication, and consultation among the Nation's many firefighting and resource management organizations.

Under the 10-year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan, Federal wildfire agencies, affected States, counties, local governments and Tribes agreed to a common set of goals, implementation outcomes, performance measures and tasks that need to be accomplished by specific deadlines. The comprehensive agreement covers all phases of the fire program, including fire preparedness, suppression, and prevention; hazardous fuels management; restoration of burned areas; community assistance; and monitoring of progress. The initiative also includes changes in the regulatory process and legislation that will ensure more timely decisions and implementation of forest health projects.

## Looking Forward

Conservation will remain a key responsibility of the Department of the Interior for the foreseeable future. There will be a continued need for restoration and remediation of sites damaged through use, invasive species, resource extraction, or wildland fire. Increased water demands will make natural habitat issues more pressing.

To meet these challenges the Department will have to work to expand our conservation partnerships, to build collaborative skills that smooth dispute resolution, to strengthen our relationships with our large network of volunteers, and to create alliances across intra- and inter-agency lines to address such critical issues as wildland fire and homeland security.

Given the combination of rising needs and constrained budgets, we face continuing challenges in meeting our conservation goals. Our inventory of objects, structures, and sites continues to grow and will require ongoing care, including maintenance and security to prevent loss from vandalism and theft.

We have begun to recognize the silent scourge of some invasive plants and animals for what it is: one of the most serious ecological battles of the 21st century, costing the Nation billions of dollars annually in lost resources and productivity and affecting America's biological heritage. Interior scientists and land managers will need to find better ways to help build a coordinated strategy with Federal and non-Federal partners to fight this battle.

All of these responsibilities will demand that Interior personnel develop and refine their mediation skills and partnership capacity. We must continue listening to our customers and interested citizens and work with diverse interests in finding creative solutions, relying on consultation, communication, and cooperation to achieve our conservation aims.

## Performance and Costs at a Glance

*Tables 1 and 2* summarize FY 2003 performance and cost data for Strategic Goal 1.

Interior incurred costs of approximately \$4.5 billion for Strategic Goal 1, an increase of about 10% over FY 2002. The Department established 123 performance measures for Strategic Goal 1. Of the 123 performance measures, the Department achieved or exceeded the goals for 84 measures (68%). This was significantly higher than the 57% realized in FY 2002. Interior continues to use an exceptionally stringent requirement of being within .05% of the target to attain a "goal met" on performance. As a consequence, the Department did not meet the targets for 36 performance measures (29%). Most of the measures not met show significant progress toward completion as indicated in the Goals-at-a-Glance Table. In addition, Interior was unable to report performance information on 3 measures (2.4%) because data were not available at the time of printing.

Three GPRA program activities, "Sustainability of Fish and Wildlife Populations," Habitat Conservation—A Network of Lands and Waters," "Preserve Park Resources and Strengthen and Preserve Natural and Cultural Resources," accounted for about \$2.9 billion or 65.4% of Strategic Goal 1 costs. Of the 9 measures not meeting annual goals in these three program activities, one goal was not achieved because BLM did not provide funding for the Museum Partnership Program, several did not achieve their objectives because of collaboration complexities and continuing development of protocols for large-scale watershed assessments to support land use planning efforts, and other goals were not achieved because of the diversion of resources to address drought and fire conditions.

The Environmental Protection program activity had an additional \$98 million in resources directed to it in FY 2003, but the Department was still unable to fully achieve the performance measures based on estimated information available at the time of this report.

More detailed information concerning performance results is available in Part 3, Performance Section.



TABLE 1

Strategic Goal 1 FY 2003 Performance Measure Scorecard						
GPRA Program Activity	Number of Measures	Exceeded Goal	Met Goal	Did Not Meet Goal	No Report	Percent Exceeding or Meeting Goal
Resources Management	7	0	3	3	1	43%
Trust Services	11	3	4	2	2	64%
Preserve Natural and Cultural Heritage Resources	10	4	5	1	0	90%
Understand the Condition of Public Lands	5	1	2	2	0	60%
Restore At-Risk Resources and Maintain Functioning Systems	9	4	0	5	0	44%
Manage, Develop, and Protect Water and Related Resources	13	8	3	2	0	85%
Sustainability of Fish and Wildlife Populations	13	1	10	2	0	85%
Habitat Conservation—A Network of Lands and Waters	8	3	3	2	0	75%
Preserve Park Resources	22	1	15	6	0	73%
Strengthen and Preserve Natural and Cultural Resources	8	0	5	3	0	63%
Environmental Restoration	2	0	1	1	0	50%
Environmental Protection	2	0	0	2	0	0%
Overview	13	5	3	5	0	62%
TOTAL	123	30	54	36	3	68%

TABLE 2

Strategic Goal 1 Costs (in millions)		
GPRA Program Activity	FY 2003	FY 2002
Resources Management	\$283	\$359
Trust Services	148	179
Preserve Natural and Cultural Heritage Resources	173	175
Understand the Condition of Public Lands	195	157
Restore At-Risk Resources and Maintain Functioning Systems	241	214
Manage, Develop, and Protect Water and Related Resources	157	210
Sustainability of Fish and Wildlife Populations	651	610
Habitat Conservation—A Network of Lands and Waters	1,346	1,141
Preserve Park Resources and Strengthen and Preserve Natural and Cultural Resources	937	762
Environmental Restoration	191	194
Environmental Protection	154	56
Overview (Departmentwide Initiatives)	13	15
Total Gross Cost Prior to Eliminations	4,489	4,072
Less: Elimination of Intra-Department Activity	(63)	(47)
Total Gross Cost After Eliminations	\$4,426	\$4,025

