

News Release



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Interior Secretary Ken Salazar Announces More Than \$19 Million in Grants to Protect Coastal Wetlands Across the Nation

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced today the award of \$19.2 million to support 25 conservation projects benefiting fish and wildlife on more than 6,100 acres of coastal habitat in 11 states through the 2010 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program.

The federal grants will be matched by nearly \$26 million in partner contributions from state and local governments, private landowners and conservation groups.

The grants will be used to acquire, restore or enhance coastal wetlands and adjacent uplands to provide long-term conservation benefits to fish, wildlife and their habitat. States receiving funds include California, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

“There are few actions we can take that are more important to the health of our environment, our wildlife and ultimately our coastal communities and their economies than conserving and restoring these vital wetlands,” Salazar said. “The grants I am announcing today will enable us to continue to work in partnership with states, conservation organizations and other partners to acquire, protect and restore these vital areas and the fish and wildlife that depend on them.”

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and funded under provisions of the 1990 Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act. Funding is provided by Sport Fish Restoration Act revenue – money generated from an excise tax on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels.

Including the 2010 grants, the Service has awarded nearly \$240 million to coastal states and territories since the program began in 1992. When the 2010 projects are complete, over 260,000 acres of habitat will have been protected, restored or enhanced.

A complete list of projects funded by the 2010 grant program can be found online at:
<http://www.fws.gov/coastal/CoastalGrants/index.html>.

Several examples of projects include:

- **Lake Michigan Coastal Wetlands Protection, Shivering Sands Unit:** The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, partnering with The Nature Conservancy and Door County Land Trust, was awarded \$1 million to acquire 468 acres in Door County, Wisconsin. The site is characterized by lakeshore, coastal wetlands, dune-swale topography, embayment lakes and large tracts of mixed conifer forest. The proposed acquisition will become part of the Shivering Sands Unit of the Cave Point to Clay Banks State Natural Area, which encompasses 4,000 acres. The project will protect habitat for two federally listed species – the endangered Hines emerald dragonfly and threatened Dwarf lake iris.
- **Madsen-Ridge Conservation Easement Great Marsh Estuary:** The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, partnering with the Great Marsh Land Protection Team, was awarded \$353,500 to permanently protect 177 acres of coastal salt marsh and associated upland buffer through the purchase of a conservation easement. The property is located south of Plum Island Sound and the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. The Great Marsh is the largest salt marsh in New England covering 25,000 acres. It functions as a major shellfish and fin fish nursery and is a critically important foraging and resting area for migrating birds along the Atlantic Flyway.
- **Stanley Point/South Willapa Bay Conservation:** The Washington Department of Ecology was awarded \$1 million to protect more than 700 acres of high quality wetlands, including estuarine emergent salt marsh, eelgrass meadows, mud flats, marsh scrub-shrub and freshwater forested wetlands in southwest Washington. The project area includes Willapa Bay, one of the most productive areas for oyster cultivation in the Pacific Northwest. The project area is also adjacent to the 15,000-acre Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Coastal areas are vitally important to fish and wildlife. They comprise less than 10 percent of the nation's land area yet support the majority of wildlife species, including 75 percent of migratory birds, nearly 80 percent of fish and shellfish and about half of all threatened and endangered species. The Coastal Program is a vital tool in helping to recover listed species and maintaining populations of candidate species that depend on coastal habitats.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the Service's Coastal Program provides strategic conservation planning and assistance in coastal areas. It represents one of the Service's most popular and effective programs for voluntary, locally-based habitat restoration and protection efforts.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.