

Land Acquisition

Appropriations Language

For expenses necessary to carry out chapter 2003 of title 54, United States Code, including administrative expenses, and for acquisition of land or waters, or interest therein, in accordance with statutory authority applicable to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, [\$68,500,000,] \$58,655,000, to be derived from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and to remain available until expended[, of which, notwithstanding section 200306 of title 54, United States Code, not more than \$10,000,000 shall be for land conservation partnerships authorized by the Highlands Conservation Act of 2004, including not to exceed \$320,000 for administrative expenses: Provided,] That none of the funds appropriated for specific land acquisition projects may be used to pay for any administrative overhead, planning or other management costs (*Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016*).

Authorizing Statutes

The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as amended (16 U.S.C. 742a). Authorizes acquisition of additions to the National Wildlife Refuge System for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources by purchase or exchange of land and water or interests therein.

Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460). Authorizes acquisition of areas that are adjacent to or within existing fish and wildlife Conservation Areas administered by the Department of the Interior, and suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreation development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of listed, threatened, or endangered species, or (4) carrying out two or more of the above.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460l). Authorizes appropriations to the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire land for National Wildlife Refuges as otherwise authorized by law. Authorization of Appropriations: Expires September 30, 2018.

National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd). Established overall policy guidance, placed restrictions on the transfer, exchange, or other disposal of refuge lands, and authorized the Secretary to accept donations for land acquisition.

Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1534). Authorizes the acquisition of land, waters, or interests therein for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, including those that are listed as endangered or threatened species, with Land and Water Conservation Fund Act appropriations.

Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 3901). Authorizes the purchase of wetlands, or interests in wetlands, consistent with the wetlands priority conservation plan established under the Act.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Land Acquisition
Justification of Fixed Costs and Internal Realignments
(Dollars In Thousands)

Fixed Cost Changes and Projections	2016 Total or Change	2016 to 2017 Change
Change in Number of Paid Days This column reflects changes in pay associated with the change in the number of paid days between 2016 and 2017.	+38	-75
Pay Raise The change reflects the salary impact of the 1.6% programmed pay raise increases as provided in the June, 2015 Circular A-11.	+122	+148
Rental Payments The amounts reflect changes in the costs payable to General Services Administration (GSA) and others for office and non-office space as estimated by GSA, as well as the rental costs of other currently occupied space. These costs include building security; in the case of GSA space, these are paid to Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Costs of mandatory office relocations, i.e. relocations in cases where due to external events there is no alternative but to vacate the currently occupied space, are also included.	+0	+0

Appropriation: Land Acquisition

	2015 Actual	2016 Enacted	2017 Request				Change from 2016 Enacted (+/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Land Acquisition Management (\$000)	12,613	12,773	+73	0	+109	12,955	+182
Land Protection Planning (\$000)	0	465	0	0	0	465	0
Exchanges (\$000)	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	1,500	0
Inholdings / Emergencies and Hardships (\$000)	5,351	5,351	0	0	0	5,351	0
Highlands Conservation Act (\$000)	3,000	10,000	0	0	-10,000	0	-10,000
Sportsmen and Recreational Access (\$000)	0	2,500	0	0	0	2,500	0
Federal Refuges/Projects (\$000)	25,071	35,911	0	0	-27	35,884	-27
Subtotal, Land Acquisition-Discretionary (\$000)	47,535	68,500	+73	0	-9,918	58,655	-9,845
FTE	75	78	0	0	0	78	0
<u>LWCF Mandatory Legislative Proposal</u>							
Land Acquisition Management (\$000)	0	0	0	0	+3,000	3,000	+3,000
Land Protection Planning (\$000)	0	0	0	0	+1,541	1,541	+1,541
Exchanges (\$000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inholdings / Emergencies and Hardships (\$000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Refuges/Projects (\$000)	0	0	0	0	+74,426	74,426	+74,426
Land Acquisition – Mandatory (\$000)	0	0	0	0	+78,967	78,967	+78,967
FTE	0	0	0	0	+16	16	+16
Total, Land Acquisition (\$000)	47,535	68,500	+73	0	+69,149	137,622	+69,122
FTE	75	78	0	0	+16	94	+16

Summary of 2017 Program Changes for Land Acquisition (Discretionary)

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
• Land Acquisition Management	+109	0
• Land Acquisition Projects	-27	0
• Highlands Conservation Act	-10,000	0
Program Changes	-9,918	0

Justification of 2016 Program Changes

The 2017 discretionary budget request for Land Acquisition is \$58,655,000 and 78 FTE, a net program change of -\$9,918,000 and +0 FTE from the 2016 Enacted.

Land Acquisition Management (+\$109,000/+0 FTE)

Land Acquisition Management funds support land acquisition staff; the land acquisition program's share of Servicewide bills, such as IT infrastructure and leased space; and any efforts not specific to a single acquisition. These additional funds will help the Service keep pace with growing costs, particularly those for physical security and IT security.

Land Acquisition Projects (-\$27,000/+0 FTE)

The Service is requesting \$35,884,000 for Land Acquisition Projects in discretionary, which will fund 16 projects in 19 states. The project descriptions later in this section provide more detail about the natural resource values of the proposed projects and how they will further support the Department's network of connected conservation lands.

Highlands Conservation Act (-\$10,000,000/+0 FTE)

This funding is used to match conservation partnership grants to acquire lands for conservation in four states that make up the Highlands States (CT, NJ, NY, and PA). Projects are first identified by the Highlands States and then selected by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture. These projects incur overhead costs to award, monitor, and close out individual grants for up to three years after the final grant is approved. The Service will shift this funding to higher priority conservation projects across the country as identified by the Targeted Resource Acquisition Comparison Tool (TRACT) that have ready and willing sellers and support from partners and other stakeholders.

Legislative Proposal – LWCF Mandatory Appropriation

The Department of the Interior will submit a legislative proposal to permanently authorize annual funding, without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Starting in 2018, \$900 million annually in mandatory funds would be available. During the transition to full mandatory funding in 2018, the budget proposes \$900 million in total LWCF funding in FY 2017, comprised of \$425 million in mandatory and \$475 million in discretionary funds. The amounts requested include the authorized levels for the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture. In 2017, the proposal includes \$58.66 million in discretionary funding and \$78.97 million in mandatory funding for the Service's Federal land acquisition program.

Program Overview

The Service uses Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies appropriated by Congress to acquire and protect important fish, wildlife, and plant habitats. Acquired lands and waters become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System or National Fish Hatchery System. When acquired in fee title, these lands and waters provide the public opportunities to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation.

The Service's 2014 Strategic Growth Policy identifies conservation targets for the strategic growth of the National Wildlife Refuge System to prioritize what lands or waters should be added to the Refuge System. The Policy directs the Service to focus on acquiring lands and waters that support three conservation priorities:

1. Recovery of threatened and endangered species;
2. Implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; and
3. Conserving migratory birds of conservation concern.

Using these three priorities, a Service interdisciplinary team developed the Targeted Resource Acquisition Comparison Tool (TRACT). The TRACT provides a biological, science-based, transparent process for ranking proposed Refuge System land acquisitions by generating separate rankings for each of the three priorities, for each proposed acquisition. TRACT does not assign weights to the three priorities and does not produce a single numerical ranking that combines all of the Service's priorities. The TRACT's rankings are intended to provide decision makers with an objective analysis that is grounded in the best available science; it is a decision support tool to inform the decision maker, but does not make the decision.

As the oldest Federal conservation agency, the Service is uniquely positioned to protect our fish, wildlife, and plants for the American people. We do so by protecting land and waters in two ways—through fee acquisition of property that we then own and manage as part of our National Wildlife Refuge System or National Fish Hatchery System, and through conservation easements on land that remains privately owned but protected for the public's benefit. The Refuge System is intended to serve as a connected network of lands and waters, and each new refuge was strategically added to give migrating birds safe havens on their journeys, provide fish with clean waters when they return to spawn, or ensure our grandchildren have wild places to explore. The lands the Service proposes to acquire in FY 2017 are those that fit within this strategy and help move the needle in protecting specific fish, wildlife, and/or plants, while also having willing sellers interested in working with the Service to provide those environmental benefits. We purchase the minimum interest necessary to meet the Service's mission; if conservation easements will meet biological objectives, then typically the Service will pursue those rather than buying the land in fee. Conservation easements are often an attractive option when landowners are interested in conserving their lands, but want to continue ranching and farming while having the option of passing their land on to the next generation. For every project for which the Service requests LWCF funding, the Service has an approved Land Protection Plan and has completed the required National Environmental Policy Act review process.

The Land Acquisition appropriation includes the land acquisition management activity, five targeted land acquisition activities, and an activity for general land acquisition requests. Each of these elements is described below.

Land Acquisition Management

This activity applies to the acquisition of lands throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System. Funding in this activity supports all costs for staff and the administration, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of the Service's Federal land acquisition program in our Headquarters, Regional, and field offices. It also includes about \$2 million for the land acquisition program's share of Servicewide infrastructure needs, including lease space and information technology investments.

The staff provide specialty support for several realty-based functions, including:

- Assisting refuge staff in the preparation of land use plans;
- Providing guidance and assistance in the preparation of land acquisition requests;
- Working with willing sellers from the initial explanations of federal acquisition options to the final acquisition;
- Preparing responses to official information requests from a variety of sources;
- Investigating and resolving encroachment issues;
- Developing and maintaining tools that inform the decision-making process;
- Working collaboratively with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and (Forest Service) to acquire land for the protection and conservation of large, connected natural areas; and
- Creating, maintaining, and updating geospatial maps and supporting biological databases.

Land Protection Planning

Service staff evaluate potential land acquisitions to support the strategic growth of the National Wildlife Refuge System. This activity supports the development of Land Protection Plans (LPPs), a key function in implementing the Service’s Strategic Growth Policy. The LPP process does not necessarily result in recommending the fee acquisition of land; often acquisition of conservation easements can accomplish habitat conservation goals.

The LPP process may begin when refuge field stations, local governments, and other conservation partners suggest areas for added protection for migratory birds and other important species. If there is enough local support and interest, the Service may start the process for developing an LPP. In some cases, LPPs will be prepared to establish new refuges or, more likely, to expand existing refuges to address the needs of fish, wildlife, and plant communities. Specific activities include gathering background data; coordinating with State and local entities; involving the public; analyzing ecological, legal, and financial issues; and printing and distributing draft and final plan documents. By using landscape-scale conservation planning aids such as models of species-habitat interactions and decision support tools, Service staff can prioritize conservation and/or management actions needed to support or attain sustainable fish and wildlife populations at desired levels. Coordinating local actions with State and regional conservation goals improves the success of conserving large, connected natural areas. By working together, the Service and our conservation partners can accomplish much more than by working as separate entities.



Moosehorn NWR, ME—In 2015, the Service acquired a 277-acre tract that abuts Hobart Stream. This acquisition will enhance Service efforts to restore this former salmon spawning stream.

The Planning program is complemented by the Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, through



Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR, TX—In FY 2015, the Service acquired a conservation easement through a multi-partner land exchange. The Conservation Fund and the Friends of the Wildlife Corridor have been long-term conservation partners and were instrumental in the Service’s exchange of an isolated 2,701-acre tract with marginal wildlife value for a 7,428-acre conservation easement containing an expanse of woodlands, open pasture, and numerous pothole wetlands. Securing this property not only benefits resident wildlife and migratory birds, but it also is one of the most significant actions taken for the recovery of the critically endangered ocelot in Texas. The property supports one of the last two remaining breeding populations of ocelots, and provides important corridor connections to more than 10,000 acres of Service and privately-owned properties that in recent years have supported ocelots.

which the Service works with hundreds of private landowners annually on habitat restoration and enhancement projects on their lands. These projects connect and extend high-quality habitats, restore landscapes, and sustain high priority Federal trust species populations.

Exchanges

Land exchanges provide unique opportunities to work in partnership with other Federal agencies and State and local governments, private landowners and organizations, and local and national conservation groups. Land exchange projects leverage the collective expertise of these partners to conserve critical habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife within the Refuge System, decrease habitat fragmentation, and provide public access to natural areas to hunt, fish, photograph and observe wildlife, and participate in environmental education and interpretation.

The Service estimates that \$1,362,500 will be needed for acquisition costs for exchanges of at least 274,600 acres. Exchanges may involve on-going expenditures over a period of years.

A table following land acquisition project descriptions lists the National Wildlife Refuge, Waterfowl Production Area, Wetland Management District, and Alaska Native Corporation properties that are part of ongoing land exchange projects or are potential 2017 land exchange projects.

Inholdings / Emergencies and Hardships

The Service uses funding in this activity to expedite purchases of smaller tracts of land from willing sellers for three categories: inholdings, emergencies, and hardships. The Service defines any land within an approved acquisition boundary as an inholding. The Service frequently uses inholdings funding to purchase lands that connect with private or State-conserved lands to create larger contiguous blocks of protected wildlife habitat. An emergency that may be best addressed with land acquisition from a willing seller could be a proposed subdivision development or a conversion to agricultural uses that would result in the permanent loss of wildlife habitat. Funding is also used to purchase lands where the owner is experiencing financial hardship and must quickly sell his or her land that is within an approved refuge acquisition boundary. Historically, hardship cases include Alaskan Native Corporations that need to raise additional Tribal funds and older couples who faced significant medical expenses and needed to raise money by selling their land. This small amount of funding allows the Service to capitalize on emergent opportunities to conserve habitat.



Buenos Aires NWR, AZ—In July 2015, the Service purchased 5.46 acres of grassland and savannah habitat with Inholding Funds. The parcel is surrounded on all sides by Refuge lands. Because of this acquisition, the Service can more efficiently and effectively manage its land interest at the Refuge. In addition, the parcel has the potential for supporting a self-sustaining population of endangered masked bobwhite.

Use of Residual LWCF Funds

Federal land acquisition projects sometimes have small amounts of funds remaining after land has been acquired. These residual funds are insufficient to acquire additional land. The Service reallocates residual project funds of less than \$50,000 to the Inholdings line item to be used to protect other lands

that do not have project funding. This shift enables the Service to acquire valuable wildlife habitat within approved refuge acquisition boundaries that becomes available for acquisition between appropriations cycles. (Projects funded in 2009 and some 2010 projects are excluded from the policy due to existing reprogramming restrictions.)

Sportsmen and Recreational Access

This activity provides funding for acquisition of small parcels of land to conserve important wildlife habitat that also provide recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing. Refuges that do not have project funding, but have willing sellers, may request funds to acquire land to provide public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. The Service will be able to acquire choice lands quickly and make them accessible to young people and the country's growing urban population that lives within an hour's drive of a national wildlife refuge.

Federal Refuges/Projects

This activity funds individual land acquisition projects. Each year the Service acquires land in fee title or conservation easement through LWCF. The acquired lands provide habitat for wildlife and often enhance resource management capability. Fee title acquisitions generate economic benefits for local communities and provide the public with opportunities to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation.

FY 2015 acquisition highlights include:

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont

The Service, with help from the National Wildlife Refuge Association, established the Mascoma River Division of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Canaan, New Hampshire. The 762-acre conservation easement was acquired through a combination of project funding and a donation from the landowner, Bear Hill Conservancy Trust.



Silvio O. Conte NF&WR—A 762-acre conservation easement near Canaan, NH, will protect wildlife habitat and provide public recreational opportunities.

The property is nestled within a large, unfragmented forest block containing a suite of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and valuable habitat for migrating and breeding birds. It is dominated by northern hardwood forest interspersed with small amounts of wetland, grassland, and open water habitat. The addition is within a core area or range of many species of conservation concern, including brook trout, American woodcock, black-throated blue warbler, blackburnian warbler, purple finch, black-throated green warbler, wood thrush, Canada warbler, and chestnut-sided warbler. The Service acquired the right to manage the habitat for wildlife and provide public access for compatible wildlife-dependent outdoor recreation.

Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, Iowa and Minnesota

The Service, in cooperation with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, acquired a 150-acre tract in northwestern Iowa that permanently conserves 121 acres of remnant tallgrass prairie, 14 acres of wetland, and 1.25 miles of the Little Sioux River. In the 1940s, the Little Sioux River area was identified as one of the best native prairie sites in Iowa, and remains significant today. The tract holds potential for monarch butterfly habitat, recovery of the threatened prairie bush clover that exists in a county-protected area north of the acquired tract, and many nesting grassland birds such as dickcissel.

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, Washington

The Service acquired 392 acres of timberland at the southernmost end of Willapa Bay, which will contribute to the protection and overall health of the Willapa Bay watershed, the second largest estuary on the Pacific coast. This property also has great potential for western red cedar forest restoration to achieve late-successional, old-growth quality, creating habitat that would benefit a wide variety of species.

The property encompasses areas of riparian forest and some forested wetlands. The forested areas provide habitat for the marbled murrelet, currently federally listed as threatened, as well as the northern spotted owl, black bear, black-tailed deer, Roosevelt elk, bats, bobcats, and grouse. The cool, wet climate makes the area a hotspot of amphibian diversity.



View of Willapa Bay from newly acquired property. Credit: Charles Parrott, USFWS.

Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge, New Jersey

The Service acquired over 18 acres of wetland, forest, and open field habitat at Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge. The tract's relatively small size belies its importance to wildlife and water quality in the area. The natural spring-fed pond and upland wetlands on the newly acquired tract are integrally linked to the wetland ecosystem on adjacent existing refuge lands. The tract's wetlands drain onto meadowlands on the refuge, which provide ideal habitat for the federally threatened bog turtle. Forested habitats surround and buffer the pond and wetlands, helping maintain high water quality. The tract's open fields also provide habitat for a variety of nesting grassland bird species.

Land Acquisition Projects for FY 2017

The FY 2017 request includes 34 proposed land acquisition projects totaling almost 105,000 acres that are funded from discretionary and mandatory sources. The projects represent two selection processes: Collaborative Landscape Planning (CLP) and Core.

Collaborative Landscape Planning (CLP)

The national CLP priority projects contained in this document reflect the collaborative efforts between the Departments of Interior and Agriculture in specific focal areas.

As part of the landscape program, Interior bureaus collaborated extensively with the Forest Service and with government and local community partners to plan projects to achieve the highest priority shared landscape-scale conservation goals. An interagency team of BLM, FWS, NPS, and USFS experts

identified a number of ecosystems throughout the Nation where high priority shared conservation goals could be achieved based on existing locally-driven conservation efforts. The prospective projects were evaluated according to criteria that included:

- Process: Ensure proposals are community-driven, collaborative, and cost-effective;
- Outcome: Ensure proposals contribute to informed, science-based, important local landscape-scale outcomes, so that Federal resources strategically achieve land management objectives;
- Urgency: Ensure funding decisions acknowledge where funds much be spent sooner rather than later to achieve outcomes or prevent harm, versus areas where outcomes could be achieved even if funding were postponed; and,
- Contribution to National/Regional Priorities: Ensure outcome goals contribute to regional and national priorities.

After analyzing the results of this process, bureau directors advised the Secretary on the development of the final CLP acquisitions to be incorporated in the integrated land acquisition lists.

Core Projects

The Service uses several tools, including conservation design, to implement its 2014 Strategic Growth Policy. Conservation design combines geospatial data with biological information and models to create maps and other tools that evaluate every acre of habitat's potential to support a fish, wildlife, or plant population. The Service also works collaboratively with conservation partners to determine the kind, quality, and configuration of the needed habitat. With these tools and data, the Service can determine the current habitat-acre capability and what it needs to achieve specific biological objectives or outcomes.

The land acquisition projects proposed for the FY 2017 Budget reflect additional important factors, including contribution of leveraged funds, conservation partner participation, and urgency of project completion to protect natural areas from development or other incompatible uses. The proposed projects support the Service's mission-oriented priorities.

The list below is the current set of land acquisition proposals, in priority order, that has been vetted and approved by Service and Departmental leadership to meet the high priority programmatic needs of the Service. The project descriptions following the list provide details about the resource values of the lands and waters proposed for addition to the Department's network of conservation lands.



Everglades Headwaters NWR and CA, FL—The Service acquired nearly 1,500 fee acres and over 4,200 conservation easements acres in 2015 through donation and purchase. The preservation of a variety of habitats benefits many species, including sandhill cranes.

FY 2017 LWCF Discretionary Funding				
Rank	State(s)	Collaborative Landscape or Core\Project Name	Requested Funding	Type of Project
1	CLP: Islands Forest at Risk			
	HI	CLP: Islands Forest at Risk: Hakalau Forest NWR	\$6,200,000	CLP
2	ND/SD	Dakota Grassland Conservation Area	\$8,000,000	Core
3	CLP: High Divide			
	MT	CLP: High Divide: Red Rock Lakes NWR	\$2,000,000	CLP
4	ND/SD	Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area	\$3,000,000	Core
5	CLP: Rivers of the Chesapeake			
	MD	CLP: Rivers of the Chesapeake: Blackwater NWR	\$1,200,000	CLP
	VA	CLP: Rivers of the Chesapeake: James River NWR	\$900,000	CLP
6	FL	Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area	\$2,500,000	Core
7	CLP: National Trails System			
	PA	CLP: National Trails System: Cherry Valley NWR	\$2,200,000	CLP
8	AR	Cache River NWR	\$1,406,000	Core
9	IA/ MN	Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR	\$500,000	Core
10	TX	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR	\$1,500,000	Core
11	CLP: Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine			
	FL	CLP: Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine: St. Marks NWR	\$2,500,000	CLP
12	NC/TN	Mountain Bogs NWR	\$478,000	Core
13	MA/NH/CT/VT	Silvio O. Conte NFWR	\$1,009,000	Core
14	Pathways to the Pacific			
	WA	CLP: Pathways to the Pacific: Willapa NWR	\$991,000	CLP
15	MT	Montana NWRs	\$1,500,000	Core
Subtotal, Line Item Projects (Core)			\$19,893,000	
Subtotal, Line Item Projects (CLP)			\$15,991,000	
Total Line Item Projects - Discretionary			\$35,884,000	

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 1

Project / Unit: Islands Forest at Risk: Hakalau Forest NWR

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): HI

Congressional District(s): HI-2

Location: The Hakalau Forest Unit is 22 miles north of Hilo, as the crow flies, on the windward side of the Island of Hawai'i, and the Kona Forest Unit is near Honaunau on the leeward side of the island.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
7,591	\$6,200,000
Acquired to Date	
38,047	\$26,239,165
Remaining to be Acquired	
26,552	\$33,573,075

Project Description:

Funding will enable fee title acquisition of the final 3,126 acres of a 10,034 acre-site in the Kona Forest Unit of Hakalau Forest NWR. This site has significance for recovery of listed plants and endangered forest birds and their habitats. It provides important watershed values, including groundwater recharge and prevention of siltation of nearby marine environments. This area supports small but biologically important populations of rare native birds, including 'akiapoia'au, 'akepa, 'io, and Hawai'i creeper, as well as abundant populations of native 'elepaio, 'i'iwi, 'amkihi, and 'apapane. This property would provide additional acreage for the potential reintroduction of the Federally-listed endangered 'Alalā.

Funding will also enable fee title acquisition of one tract of 4,465 acres within the Hakalau Forest NWR approved refuge boundary, on the windward side of the Island of Hawai'i. Acquisition and management of this site will help recover listed plants and endangered forest birds and their habitats by supporting groundwater recharge and enhanced potential for ungulate and other invasive species removal. This high-elevation property is ideal habitat for palila, Federally listed as endangered, which depend on the mamane and manane/naio forests located near 7,550 feet elevation. Recovery criteria derived from the Revised Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Birds Forest (2006) for palila are based partly on increased mamane tree recruitment and growth resulting from ungulate eradication and removal and protection from predators and food competitors, and from fire, weeds, and other disturbances. These efforts require extensive land management, which will be provided following land acquisition. The northern and eastern slopes of Mauna Kea (where this property is located) were identified in the Recovery Plan as ideal locations for habitat protection.

Purpose / Need:

To protect and enhance populations of numerous threatened and endangered plant and forest bird species and the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of wet and or moderately wet forest ecosystems. Of note, this property includes land where the 'Alalā was last seen in the wild and land identified as critical habitat for the palila, an endangered finch-billed honeycreeper that is dependent on green mamane tree pods for 90 percent of its food. One of the identified elements of the Revised Recovery Plan for the 'Alalā includes the identification, protection, and management of suitable habitat, and the reduction of threats at the selected release sites, followed by reintroduction into the wild at suitably managed sites. The Revised Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds identifies the need to establish at least two more areas for viable palila populations to be reintroduced or bolstered. Acquiring these properties will help advance the Recovery Plan and also protect the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of wet ecosystems or those requiring a moderate water supply, such as mesic forests.

Cooperator(s): McCandless Ranch, The Nature Conservancy

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$80,000 Annual: \$70,000

Project / Unit: Islands Forest at Risk: Hakalau Forest NWR

Describe O&M: The service anticipates an initial expense of \$40,000 for boundary marking and sign posting for each property. Long term O&M would include \$70,000 for one maintenance FTE who would manage ungulate removal and boundary monitoring.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 2

Project / Unit: Dakota Grassland Conservation Area

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): ND SD

Congressional District(s): ND-AL, SD-AL

Location: North Dakota and South Dakota, lying east of the Missouri River

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
14,500	\$8,000,000
Acquired to Date	
44,416	\$20,498,175
Remaining to be Acquired	
1,881,084	\$940,241,509

Project Description:

Funding the Dakota Grassland Conservation Area (DGCA) will enable the Service to acquire easements on approximately 14,500 acres of grassland and wetland habitat. The DGCA is part of a landscape-scale habitat conservation effort in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) to protect a highly diverse and endangered ecosystem. This ecosystem consists of large, unique grassland and wetland complexes that provide habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, grassland birds, the endangered piping plover, and other wildlife. This ecosystem includes ranching and farming communities.

The PPR is threatened with habitat fragmentation and loss of grasslands and wetlands because of conversion of native prairie to cropland. Acquisition of perpetual easements will protect the landscape from habitat fragmentation and preserve the integrity of the native habitat, while maintaining traditional ranching and farming operations.

Purpose / Need:

Purchase perpetual wetland and grassland easements to protect wildlife habitats of native grassland and associated wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region.

Cooperator(s): North Dakota Game and Fish Department, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., The Nature Conservancy, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, and private landowners.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M:

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 3

Project / Unit: High Divide: Red Rock Lakes NWR

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): MT

Congressional District(s): MT-AL

Location: 28 miles east of Monida, MT

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
4,600	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
74,960	\$21,331,851
Remaining to be Acquired	
22,302	\$7,918,660

Project Description:

The mountains, valleys, and rivers of the High Divide are a fragile wildlife landscape along the spine of the continent in Idaho and Montana that links the world's first National Park, Yellowstone region, to Idaho's Frank Church Wilderness. In the heart of Montana's portion of the High Divide, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge provides core habitat and linkage corridors for elk, moose, pronghorn, grizzly, greater sage grouse, and grayling.

With its location, Red Rocks Lakes NWR is a critical component of the larger High Divide landscape. The High Divide Collaborative is a community-based partnership with landscape perspectives. Socially and economically, the High Divide supports a ranching way of life and fosters vital wildland recreation where youth can connect to nature. Ecologically, the High Divide is a continentally-scaled linkage between large core habitats. Culturally, the High Divide values ancient pathways, including the Nez Perce and Lewis & Clark National Historic Trails, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and the Oregon Trail.

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire a perpetual conservation easement on one tract of 4,600 acres within Red Rock Lakes NWR in the heart of the High Divide landscape. The easement will protect native wet meadows, wetlands, uplands, and mountain foothills for migratory birds, including waterfowl and trumpeter swans, and other wildlife, including grizzly bears, greater sage grouse, and grayling.

Purpose / Need:

There is increasing pressure to subdivide and develop this landscape for second home development and commercial uses. Development threatens to sever the critical wildlife corridors and undermine the traditional ranching economy of the High Divide. Protecting this tract with a conservation easement will prevent fragmentation and protect trust species habitat in one of the nation's best remaining intact ecosystems, all while maintaining the traditional ranching way of life.

Cooperator(s): The Conservation Fund; The Nature Conservancy; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Montana DNRC; Montana Wilderness Association; and Montana Audubon Society.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$1,000

Describe O&M: The Service estimates that annual monitoring and inspection of the 4,600 easement acres would require approximately \$1,000 annually.

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 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 4

Project / Unit: Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): ND SD

Congressional District(s): ND-AL, SD-AL

Location: North Dakota and South Dakota, lying east of the Missouri River

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
3,500	\$3,000,000
Acquired to Date	
66,559	\$12,377,551
Remaining to be Acquired	
119,941	\$51,101,289

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on approximately 3,500 acres of tallgrass prairie from willing sellers. Tallgrass prairie once covered 90 percent of the Dakotas. Today, less than three percent remains. The rate of conversion of this unique habitat to agricultural production has only accelerated over the last few years, and the rate of loss and the resulting fragmentation of the remaining tallgrass prairie continue to be the primary threats to this ecosystem. The Service plans to use grassland easements to protect 190,000 acres of the remaining tallgrass prairie in the eastern Dakotas, including 25,000 acres in North Dakota and 165,000 acres in South Dakota. These easement acquisitions will help to maintain traditional ranching operations while fostering landscape-level conservation.

The project area has a rich variety of plant, animal, and insect species, including more than 147 species of breeding birds ranging from neotropical migrants to waterfowl. Several candidate endangered species use the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, including Baird's sparrow, loggerhead shrike, ferruginous hawk, and rare butterflies such as the Dakota skipper. These large blocks of grasslands help to buffer prairie ecosystems.

Purpose / Need:

To protect the Prairie Pothole Region's northern tallgrass prairie ecosystem and associated wildlife.

Cooperator(s): States of North Dakota and South Dakota, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., The Nature Conservancy, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, and private landowners.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M:

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Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 5

Project / Unit: Rivers of the Chesapeake: Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): MD

Congressional District(s): MD-1

Location: Blackwater NWR is located 65 miles south of Baltimore, on the south central portion of Dorchester County on Maryland's eastern shore.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
683	\$1,200,000
Acquired to Date	
28,894	\$22,809,331
Remaining to be Acquired	
30,348	\$32,963,768

Project Description:

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge's mosaic of tidal marsh and creeks, forested wetlands, and upland forests provide habitat for several high-priority species, including American black duck, prothonotary warbler, wood duck, mallard, brown-headed nuthatch, and wood thrush. The refuge is home to the largest remaining natural population of recently-delisted Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrels, and is also home to the largest breeding population of American bald eagles on the east coast, north of Florida. The refuge contains one third of Maryland's tidal wetlands, which makes it an ecologically important area within the state. The wetlands also provide storm protection to lower Dorchester County, including the town of Cambridge. The refuge was recognized as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention; was named a priority wetland in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; and was designated as an Internationally Important Bird Area. The refuge has been referred to as the "Everglades of the North," and has been called one of the "Last Great Places" by The Nature Conservancy.

The Service will acquire and protect two tracts totaling 683 acres; these tracts have been identified as being resilient to sea level rise in a climate change adaptation study conducted by several partners, including the National Wildlife Refuge Association and The Conservation Fund. The largest tract is 550 acres and within the boundary of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument and its acquisition will help keep this historic landscape intact. Protection of both tracts will enhance compatible public recreational opportunities on the refuge.

Purpose / Need:

The acquisitions will protect high-quality habitat for the Delmarva fox squirrel (formerly listed as endangered) along with nesting and wintering habitat for the American bald eagle, migratory waterfowl, colonial waterbirds, shorebirds, and forest interior-dwelling bird species.

Cooperator(s): Chesapeake Conservancy, Department of Defense, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and National Park Service.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$10,000 Annual: \$3,000

Describe O&M: Start-up for boundary posting and annual \$3,000 for signage and boundary markings.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 5

Project / Unit: Rivers of the Chesapeake: James River National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): VA

Congressional District(s): VA-4

Location: James River NWR is located on the James River in Prince George County, VA.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
50	\$900,000
Acquired to Date	
4,324	\$10,379,922
Remaining to be Acquired	
174	\$802,400

Project Description:

James River NWR was established in 1991 and provides important breeding and roosting habitat for resident and migrating eagles, and supports hundreds of native plant and animal species in its forests, wetlands, and grasslands. The refuge is mostly forested riparian habitat, with tidal inlets supporting a bald cypress swamp as well as prothonotary warbler, wood thrush, Louisiana waterthrush, whip-poor-will, and other species of high or highest priority as identified by migratory bird conservation plans (Bird Conservation Region 30, Partners in Flight). The refuge is located in an area that boasts several sites with special conservation status, including the following:

- Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance: This site, including the refuge, was listed based on its rich diversity of estuarine habitats and associated fish and wildlife.
- Lower James River Important Bird Area: The 118,000-acre corridor supports an unusually large number of avian species. The oligohaline (low salinity brackish) waters, coupled with mature forest shorelines, offer high habitat value to fish-eating bird populations, including eagles, osprey, herons, and cormorants.
- Anadromous Fish Use Area: Several anadromous fish species, including alewife, American shad, Atlantic sturgeon, striped bass, blueback herring, yellow perch, and hickory shad, live in the James River next to the refuge.
- Other Designated Areas: Bald Eagle Concentration Area and the National Park Service's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

With funding from this request, the Service will acquire a 50-acre tract on the James River that is one of the two remaining tracts that would complete the refuge. This land is currently being marketed as a development property.

Purpose / Need:

The acquisition at James River NWR will protect roosting and breeding habitat for bald eagles; protect and manage habitat for breeding forest birds of conservation concern; and provide compatible recreational opportunities, particularly deer hunting.

Cooperator(s): Chesapeake Conservancy, Department of Defense, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Richmond Audubon Society, Chickahominy Tribe, James River Association, and the National Park Service.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$10,000 Annual: \$3,000

Describe O&M: Both start-up and annual costs are for signage and boundary markings.

Project / Unit: Rivers of the Chesapeake: James River National Wildlife Refuge

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 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 6

Project / Unit: Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): FL

Congressional District(s): FL-12, FL-15, FL-16

Location: Approximately 50 miles south of Orlando and 75 miles east of Tampa, in the counties of Polk, Osceola, Okeechobee, and Highlands.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
1,000	\$2,500,000
Acquired to Date	
1,502	\$2,745,000
Remaining to be Acquired	
148,498	\$461,825,791

Project Description:

With these funds the Service will acquire fee title on approximately 1,000 acres from one willing seller to help protect a large landscape of diverse and high-quality habitat, including habitat for the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow. Acquisition of fee title on this property would protect the headwaters, groundwater recharge, and watershed of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Kissimmee River, and Lake Okeechobee region, and improve water quantity and quality in the Everglades watershed, supporting the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan goals and protecting the water supply for millions of people.

Purpose / Need:

To protect and conserve habitat for 278 Federal and State listed species, including Florida panther, Florida black bear, Audubon's crested caracara, Florida scrub jay, red-cockaded woodpecker, whooping crane, Everglades snail kite, and most significantly, protect habitat for the Florida grasshopper sparrow, a federally endangered endemic species.

Cooperator(s): Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Cattlemen's Association, and Florida Farm Bureau.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$10,000 Annual: \$3,000

Describe O&M: The Service anticipates annual costs of up to \$3,000 for habitat management and restoration, including prescribed burning, hunting, and public use management.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 7

Project / Unit: National Trails System: Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): PA

Congressional District(s): PA-11, PA-15, PA-17

Location: Cherry Valley NWR lies approximately 60 miles northwest of New York City, and 60 miles north of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the southeastern section of Monroe County, Pennsylvania and just north of Northampton County, Pennsylvania.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
3,273	\$2,200,000
Acquired to Date	
335	\$1,800,000
Remaining to be Acquired	
15,552	\$10,451,000

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire mostly forested habitat along the Appalachian Trail to protect the Trail and its viewshed, as well as, threatened and endangered plants, fish, and wildlife. This project will ensure the resiliency and connectivity of terrestrial and watershed ecosystems. Cherry Valley protects a combination of wetland and upland habitat supporting several nationally-rare ecosystems. The area is home to several Federally-listed threatened and endangered species, a wealth of migratory birds, and numerous plant and animal species listed as threatened or endangered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Cherry Valley is recognized as one of the most unique and important areas for the Federal-listed threatened bog turtle, and Cherry Valley NWR is located in the Delaware Recovery Unit of the Bog Turtle Northern Population Recovery Plan, within the Delaware-West subunit. The refuge was established in 2010 specifically to help protect the bog turtles through ownership and management of habitats currently supporting healthy metapopulations. The Delaware Recovery Unit contains the highest densities of roads and major urban areas and has the highest number of lost bog turtle sites range-wide. Urban sprawl and habitat fragmentation are major conservation challenges, as is maintaining groundwater quality and quantity. Bog turtle experts indicate that Cherry Valley may be the most important site in the northern half of the species' range (from Maryland to Massachusetts).

The Kittatinny Ridge is recognized as a globally significant flyway, supporting up to 20,000 migrating raptors each fall. An historical record for Indiana bat, as well as appropriate summer foraging and roosting habitat and the proximity of bat hibernacula, are strong indicators that the species may still be present in the Valley. Of the Species of Conservation Concern listed in Pennsylvania's State Wildlife Action Plan, as many as 61 occur within or near the valley study area boundary, including at least 13 of the 37 species identified as species of greatest concern.

Purpose / Need:

The acquisition of land owned by PA American Water Company offers a rare opportunity to work with a variety of land conservation partners to protect the unique habitats of Cherry Valley at a fraction of the total cost. A number of important partnerships among the Service, The Nature Conservancy, the Pocono Heritage LandTrust, private landowners, and others have resulted in successful bog turtle habitat restoration projects. This proposal will enlarge these partnerships and management opportunities.

Cooperator(s): The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, The National Park Service, Pocono Natural Heritage Trust, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Open Space Institute.

Project / Unit: National Trails System: Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Estimated O&M Savings:	Start-up: \$0	Annual: \$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	Start-up: \$10,000	Annual: \$0

Describe O&M: The Service anticipates minimal additional costs associated with these acquisitions other than posting the boundary as the properties are located within the Refuge boundary and would create little additional workload.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 8

Project / Unit: Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): AR

Congressional District(s): AR-1

Location: Adjacent to the White and Cache Rivers, 75 miles northeast of Little Rock in Monroe, Prairie, Woodruff, Jackson, Cross, and Poinsett counties.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
639	\$1,406,000
Acquired to Date	
64,178	\$64,727,246
Remaining to be Acquired	
221,867	\$431,533,067

Project Description:

With these funds, the Service will acquire fee title to three tracts totaling approximately 639 acres from willing sellers. One tract consists of floodplain forest along Bayou Devew, a riparian corridor of critical importance to the Refuge and contains regenerating bottomland hardwood forest subject to annual flooding. The tract contains highly valuable waterfowl breeding, migrating and wintering habitat. One of the tracts is on a flood prone site with three streams flowing through the site, and this tract would be restored to bottomland hardwood forest flooding annually providing excellent habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl, waterbirds, raptors, and neotropical migrant songbirds in addition to other native wildlife. The other tract consists of a combination of floodplain forest, regenerating hardwood forest, moist soil management, grassland/shrub, agriculture. The agriculture portion will be reforested and is subject to annual flooding from Bayou Devew hosting a wide variety of nesting, migrating, wintering waterfowl species, wading birds, forest and grassland nesting birds, and other native wildlife. All three tracts are located near a state highway or county road providing excellent public access that will expand public use for hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation and photography.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of these tracts will contribute greatly to the Service's habitat conservation efforts in the Cache River project area, which encompasses some of the largest remaining expanses of forested wetlands on any tributary within the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. The Cache River Refuge project area is the most important wintering area for mallards in North America, and one of the most important for pintail and teal ducks, Canada geese, and other migratory waterfowl. This project will also provide public opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

Cooperator(s): The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Ducks Unlimited, and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$5,000 Annual: \$500

Describe O&M: The Service anticipates initial costs for posting and fencing, which the Service would fund from Refuge System base funding. Annual costs would be for maintenance.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 9

Project / Unit: Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): IA MN

Congressional District(s): IA-2, IA-3, IA-4, MN-1, MN-7

Location: Located in portions of 48 counties in MN and 37 in IA, the Refuge is bounded by the US-Canada border to the north and Des Moines, IA, to the south. The Refuge boundary weaves through the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands and Agassiz Beach Ridges of northwest MN and the Prairie Coteau regions of southwest MN and northwest IA.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
150	\$500,000
Acquired to Date	
8,233	\$6,486,491
Remaining to be Acquired	
68,617	\$173,570,805

Project Description:

The Service will acquire approximately 150 fee title acres or easement acres in western Minnesota and/or northwestern Iowa with these requested funds. The Service will develop stewardship agreements and provide management assistance in the interest of preserving the prairie landscape regardless of ownership. The project conserves and restores the rarest and most fragmented prairie/grassland ecosystem in America and one of the most important waterfowl production areas.

The Service's goal for the Refuge is to preserve 77,000 acres, about 25 percent of the remaining native prairie, across portions of 85 counties in western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa.

Federally threatened and endangered species on the Refuge include four plant and seven animal species, including western prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover, Dakota skipper and piping plover. The Refuge has nationally significant habitat for breeding migratory birds, such as the marbled godwit and the yellow rail, and waterfowl, including mallards and northern pintail. The Refuge is important habitat for American wigeon, cackling goose, canvasback, greater and lesser scaup, ring-necked duck, wood duck and blue-winged teal. Approximately 243 species of birds are known to regularly use the northern tallgrass prairie region at some period during the year including 152 breeding species. Grassland nesting birds present at the Refuge include black-billed cuckoo, bobolink, red-headed woodpecker, Connecticut warbler, dickcissel, and upland sandpiper. Several globally rare species can also be found here, including the last remaining populations of the Dakota skipper, and regal fritillary butterflies which are in steep decline. These grasslands also support native pollinators such as bumblebees and monarch butterflies.

Purpose / Need:

To protect, restore, and enhance the remaining northern tallgrass prairie habitat, one of the most rare and fragmented ecosystems in America, and conserve associated prairie wildlife species.

Cooperator(s): Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, several county conservation boards, and several local Chambers of Commerce.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$10,000 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M: Initial restoration and enhancement work (spraying, mowing, prescribed burns, public access signs). Annual

Project / Unit: Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

O&M depends on whether property is acquired in fee or easement.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
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Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 10

Project / Unit: Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): TX

Congressional District(s): TX-15, TX-28, TX-34

Location: South Texas; Lower Rio Grande Valley - Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acre	\$
800	\$1,500,000
Acquired to Date	
96,956	\$79,788,343
Remaining to be Acquired	
34,744	\$50,986,218

Project Description:

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (Valley) region has lost about 95 percent of its native Tamaulipan thornscrub habitat due to agriculture, urban expansion, and industrial development, and 99 percent of the native brush in riparian areas has been destroyed. The area is extremely rich in flora and fauna because of the climatic gradient that ranges from tropical to semi-arid. Eighteen federally-listed endangered or threatened species, including the ocelot and jaguarundi, nearly 400 birds, 300 butterflies, and over 1,100 plant species, are all found on the Refuge. The Valley is also a focal point of the Central Flyway for tens of thousands of birds migrating between North and South America each year. Many Mexican bird species, found nowhere else in the U.S., reach their northern range within the Refuge. To assist with recovery of endangered species, such as the ocelot, sustainably protect the Valley's rich plant and animal life, and fulfill the Refuge's purpose, the remaining lands containing native vegetation must be acquired before they are gone.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR is part of the South Texas Refuges Complex, which includes the Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana NWRs. The Refuge protects important biotic communities within four counties and has a land acquisition boundary of about 3.3 million acres. Strategic land acquisition is focused on acquiring lands within the specific wildlife corridor, primarily focusing on the Rio Grande and coastal areas, and creating connections between ranch lands in the northern regions of Hidalgo and Willacy Counties. The creation of north-south corridors is critical for wildlife movement from the Rio Grande to the northern areas of the Valley and beyond. Strategic land acquisition takes into account the impacts of anticipated sea-level rise and climate change, potential offsets through carbon sequestration from the Refuge's extensive brush restoration program, current and predicted road networks, needs for wildlife crossings, urban growth, outdoor recreation opportunities for the public, international border issues, private and conservation ownerships, landscape conservation cooperatives, and the needs of trust resources.

With these requested funds, the Service will acquire several large parcels (approximately 2,100 acres), including areas along the Rio Grande that will connect existing Refuge tracts with Texas Parks and Wildlife and the North American Butterfly Association lands in Hidalgo County, and, in Cameron County, create an additional north-south corridor for wildlife movement from the Refuge to Laguna Atascosa NWR. Anticipated impacts to habitat from climate-change and sea-level rise make it clear that wildlife corridors need to be expanded. Acquisition of these lands will enable the Refuge to enhance vegetational bridges for wildlife movement between existing areas of native habitat within the Valley.

Purpose / Need:

This proactive conservation endeavor aims to strategically provide the best long-term protection for many trust resources, while establishing a larger conservation footprint for the Refuge within the National Wildlife Refuge System. The pace of economic growth in the Valley has far out paced the Service's ability to acquire and protect enough lands to establish wildlife travel corridors, especially for threatened and endangered species. As the human population in the Valley continues to increase by four percent annually, large-acreage properties are going to give way to development, further reducing the Service's chances of creating safe havens for long-term conservation.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 11

Project / Unit: Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): FL

Congressional District(s): FL-4

Location: In the Florida Panhandle, 24 miles south of Tallahassee, Florida, in Wakulla County.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
1,000	\$2,500,000
Acquired to Date	
71,954	\$10,437,514
Remaining to be Acquired	
39,293	\$97,336,351

Project Description:

The Service will acquire approximately 1,000 fee acres from one willing seller with the requested funds. Acquisition will benefit federally-listed endangered species such as red-cockaded woodpecker, woodstork, and flatwood salamanders, as well as a variety of other resident and migratory species. This project will help preserve a tapestry of Federal, State, and private forest lands that provide over 1 million acres of unfragmented habitat for a variety of federally-listed threatened and endangered species. The project is located in a designated Important Bird Area and a Land Management Research and Demonstration Site for Longleaf Pine Ecosystems Funds and is a key segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Purpose / Need:

To conserve populations of threatened, endangered, rare, and imperiled plants and animals and their native longleaf pine habitats; restore former slash pine plantations to native longleaf pine; provide suitable black bear habitat, including corridors to link critical habitat for major population centers; provide high-quality habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, waterbirds, and marshbirds; and provide public opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

Cooperator(s): Sam Shine Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Florida Chapter of the Wildlife Society, The Florida Natural Areas Inventory, St. Marks Refuge Association, Florida Trail Association, Blue Goose Alliance, Apalachee Audubon Society, and Florida Wildlife Federation.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$50,000 Annual: \$20,000

Describe O&M: The Service estimates annual costs of up to \$20,000 for habitat management and restoration, prescribed burning, and hunting and public use management. Acquisition may produce efficiency improvements in Service law enforcement and boundary posting, which would reduce these costs. Costs associated with restoration work could be offset by hunting fees or outside funding.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 12

Project / Unit: Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): NC

Congressional District(s): NC-5, NC-11

Location: Located in Henderson, Ashe, and Watauga Counties within the southern Blue Ridge Mountains and the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
56	\$478,000
Acquired to Date	
36	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	
23,386	\$93,270,000

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire about 56 fee title and easement acres from five willing sellers. About 90 percent of the area's mountain bogs have been lost, and acquiring these lands will protect geographically isolated mountain bogs and portions of their watersheds within the Mountain Bogs NWR, a President's America's Great Outdoors initiative project. These acquisitions will protect the most critically important mountain bogs, which support numerous federally-listed species, and will aid in the recovery of these federally-listed species:

- Bog Turtle (threatened): Four tracts will protect wetlands where bog turtles occur or have been known to occur.
- Bunched arrowhead (endangered): Bogs containing two colonies within one of the 11 extant populations will be permanently protected as directed in the Recovery Plan.
- Mountain sweet pitcher (endangered): Bogs containing two of the four (50 percent) North Carolina populations will be protected as directed in the Recovery Plan.
- Swamp pink (threatened): Acquisition will permanently protect one population.

Acquisitions will help prevent listing of the purple pitcher plant (petitioned; two tracts); golden-winged warbler (petitioned; one tract); and eastern hellbender (petitioned; one tract). Acquisitions will also protect reservoirs of biological diversity identified as Portfolio sites in the Southern Blue Ridge Ecoregional Conservation Plan (TNC and SAFC 2000) and land targeted as a priority for conservation by the Southern Blue Ridge Forest Matrix Plan (TNC 2012).

Purpose / Need:

The purchase of these lands will;

- 1) Help achieve Land Protection Objectives of Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge and NC State Wildlife Action Plan.
- 2) Provide landscape-level conservation by connecting or adding to existing conservation lands.
- 3) Protect critically endangered mountain bogs and high elevation forest habitats and their associated rare endemic species.
- 4) Help meet recovery objectives for threatened and endangered species, and help prevent listing of species of concern, petitioned species, and other rare species.
- 5) Protect Partners in Flight priority birds and their habitats.

Cooperator(s): The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Senator Richard Burr, North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$5,000 Annual: \$10,000

Describe O&M: The Service estimates cost for travel, law enforcement, habitat improvement, hydrology restoration, and invasive plant removal to be covered by Refuge funds.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 13

Project / Unit: Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): CT MA NH VT

Congressional District(s): CT-1, CT-2, CT-3; MA-1, MA-2; NH-2; VT-AL

Location: The Refuge boundary encompasses the entire Connecticut River Watershed.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
1,009	\$1,009,000
Acquired to Date	
36,881	\$33,193,513
Remaining to be Acquired	
41,017	\$36,297,487

Project Description:

Funds will be used to acquire 1,009 acres in four Refuge divisions located within the Connecticut River watershed. Potential properties include: 350 acres of riparian habitat within the Westfield River Division (MA); 600 acres near the Mascoma River Division (NH) where unfragmented forest blocks are home to a variety of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and valuable habitat for migrating and breeding birds; 41 acres at Nulhegan Basin (VT) that would protect nesting songbird habitat and provide the public opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation; and 18 acres in the Refuge's Salmon River Division (CT), which contain extensive freshwater tidal marshes used by migrating and wintering waterfowl.

Acquisition of these tracts, in partnership with others, will enhance connectivity across area, elevation, latitude, aspect, and process within the 7.2 million-acre Connecticut River watershed. Improving connectivity across the landscape will help waterfowl (27 species), other migratory birds (247 species), and threatened and endangered species (9 species) be resilient to temperature, precipitation, and water level changes in their habitats. Connecting lands under Refuge stewardship within an extensive and expanding conservation mosaic will also promote representation, redundancy, and resiliency within the watershed. These benefits provide a robust foundation for nationally significant and vital wildlife habitat that will sustain high quality hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation opportunities for generations to come. The proposed acquisitions make clear and valuable contributions to each of the six legislated purposes for the Refuge while strategically integrating Service investments into the larger landscape.

Purpose / Need:

To protect fisheries and wildlife resources and provide public access to Refuge lands.

Cooperator(s): The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, the Kestrel Land Trust, the Middlesex Land Trust, the Connecticut River Watershed Council, Inc., and the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$7,000 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M: The Service anticipates minimal additional costs associated with these acquisitions other than posting because the properties are located within the Refuge boundary and would create little additional workload.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 14

Project / Unit: Pathways to the Pacific: Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): WA

Congressional District(s): WA-3

Location: Pacific County, WA, near the community of Long Beach, WA.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
194	\$991,000
Acquired to Date	
16,952	\$16,692,927
Remaining to be Acquired	
6,188	\$17,972,000

Project Description:

Willapa NWR encompasses many diverse ecosystems, including salt marsh, muddy tidelands, forest, freshwater wetlands, streams, grasslands, coastal dunes, and beaches. This rich mix of habitats provide places for more than 200 bird species, including more than 30 species of waterfowl (ducks and geese) and more than 30 species of shorebirds, to rest, nest, and winter.

Funds will be used to acquire tracts adjacent to the main unit of Willapa NWR, in two ownerships. The tracts will contribute to the protection and overall health and function of the watershed, which supports a healthy Willapa Bay and the aquatic species within it, and will create an opportunity to restore and enhance western red cedar forests, to re-establish late successional old-growth function for the benefit of many migratory birds and other species listed as threatened and endangered. The Federally-listed marbled murrelet recovery plan identifies southwest Washington as a significant gap in suitable nesting habitat along the Pacific northwest coast (USFWS 1997). Increasing available habitat in this area is critical to expanding the geographic distribution of the marbled murrelet within its threatened range (Raphael, et al, 2008).

Purpose / Need:

To protect, restore, and manage areas of forests, streams, and wetlands; provide refuge for breeding and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds; contribute to the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species; and provide for increased opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, education, and research.

Cooperator(s): The Nature Conservancy, Columbia Land Trust, and Forterra.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$15,000 Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M: Start-up costs associated with these acquisitions would include a boundary survey and marking. The Service anticipates minimal additional operations or maintenance costs associated with this acquisition because the parcels are located within Refuge boundaries and would add no additional workload. The Service would benefit from our cooperative relationship with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on the management of forest lands in the project area. TNC and the Service have an active partnership involving the study and management practices for restoration of old growth forest habitat for the benefit of the marbled murrelet and other species.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Project / Unit: **Montana Refuges (Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area/Blackfoot Valley Conservation Area/Swan Valley Conservation Area)**

Priority: 15
 Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): MT

Congressional District(s): MT-AL

Location: 65 miles northwest of Great Falls, MT

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
3,000	\$1,500,000
Acquired to Date	
122,506	\$46,145,761
Remaining to be Acquired	
283,994	\$127,490,069

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on three tracts totaling 3,000 acres primarily in three Conservation Areas (Rocky Mountain Front, Blackfoot Valley, and Swan Valley) within Montana's Crown of the Continent ecosystem. The diversity of the landscape includes sage steppe and mixed grass prairie, montane forests, lakes, rivers, and glaciers of the northern Rocky Mountains. This landscape is home to the highest density of Canada lynx in the Lower 48 and also provides key critical habitat for grizzly bear, gray wolf, and bull trout. Other species of special concern that depend on habitats within portions of the Crown include westslope cutthroat trout, yellow-billed cuckoo, and Sprague's pipits.

There is increasing pressure to subdivide and develop this landscape for second home development and commercial uses. Protecting these tracts with conservation easements would prevent fragmentation and protect wildlife habitat in one of the nation's best remaining intact ecosystems, while maintaining working lands and the traditional ranching economy. The Crown of the Continent is one of only 23 intact areas worldwide that has not suffered any vertebrate extinctions in the past 200 years; it is through proactive acquisitions that the Service ensures this will continue to hold true.

Purpose / Need:

To support long-term viability of fish and wildlife habitat on a large landscape-scale basis in the Crown of the Continent. Acquisition of perpetual conservation easements preserves habitat where existing plant and animal communities are functioning well and maintains the traditional rural economies for present and future generations of Americans.

The proposed acquisitions support the community-based conservation efforts within the Crown to build resiliency in ecological systems and communities, so that, even as climate conditions change, this collaborative area will continue to support a full range of native biodiversity. Building ecological resiliency includes maintaining intact, interconnected landscapes. The planned acquisitions complement the conservation goals of Montana's State Wildlife Action Plan and protect threatened and endangered wildlife, fish, and plant habitats and connectivity while fostering watershed health. The projects enhance cultural conservation and support working farms, ranches, and forests. The protection of the incredible wealth of water, wildlife, and recreation resources is critical to the economic well-being and quality of life within the landscape.

Cooperator(s): The Conservation Fund/Mellon Foundation; The Nature Conservancy; Rocky Mountain Front Landowner Advisory Group; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Lewis & Clark, Powell and Missoula County Commissioners; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; and Montana Wilderness Association.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$1,000

Describe O&M: The Service estimates that annual monitoring and inspection of the 3,000 easement acres would require approximately \$1,000 annually.

FY 2017 LWCF Mandatory Funding				
Rank	State(s)	Collaborative Landscape or Core\Project Name	Requested Funding	Type of Project
16	CLP: Islands Forest at Risk			
	HI	CLP: Islands Forest at Risk: Hakalau Forest NWR	\$8,000,000	CLP
17	FL	Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area	\$1,457,000	Core
18	CA	North Central Valley Wildlife Management Area	\$1,500,000	Core
19	MT	Montana NWRs	\$4,500,000	Core
20	KS	Flint Hills Conservation Area	\$1,500,000	Core
21	CLP: Rivers of the Chesapeake			
	VA	CLP: Rivers of the Chesapeake: Rappahannock River Valley NWR	\$8,500,000	CLP
22	MA/NH/CT/VT	Silvio O. Conte NFWR	\$4,328,000	Core
23	ND/SD	Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area	\$5,032,000	Core
24	CLP: National Trails System			
	ID	CLP: National Trails System: Grays Lake NWR	\$1,000,000	CLP
25	ND/SD	Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area	\$5,000,000	Core
26	MN/IA/WS/IL	Upper Mississippi River NWFR	\$2,000,000	Core
27	CLP: Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine			
	FL	CLP: Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine: St. Marks NWR	\$4,500,000	CLP
28	ID/UT/WY	Bear River Watershed Conservation Area	\$5,000,000	Core
29	CLP: Southern Blue Ridge			
	NC/TN	CLP: Southern Blue Ridge: Mountain Bogs NWR	\$12,600,000	CLP
30	TX	Balcones Canyonlands NWR	\$4,500,000	Core
31	Pathways to the Pacific			
	WA	CLP: Pathways to the Pacific: Steigerwald Lake NWR	\$2,649,000	CLP
	OR	CLP: Pathways to the Pacific: Tualatin River NWR	\$2,000,000	CLP
	WA/OR	CLP: Pathways to the Pacific: Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-Tailed Deer	\$360,000	CLP
Subtotal, Line Item Projects (Core)			\$34,817,000	
Subtotal, Line Item Projects (CLP)			\$39,609,000	
Total Line Item Projects - Mandatory			\$74,426,000	

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 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 16

Project / Unit: Islands Forest at Risk: Hakalau Forest NWR

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): HI

Congressional District(s): HI-2

Location: The Hakalau Forest Unit is 22 miles north of Hilo, as the crow flies, on the windward side of the Island of Hawai'i, and the Kona Forest Unit is near Honaunau on the leeward side of the island.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
13,230	\$8,000,000
Acquired to Date	
38,047	\$26,239,165
Remaining to be Acquired	
20,913	\$31,773,075

Project Description:

Funding will enable fee title acquisition of 13,230 acres within the Hakalau Forest NWR approved refuge boundary, on the windward side of the Island of Hawai'i. The Service will acquire one parcel reaching seaward down the east face of Mauna Kea, adjacent to the Refuge. Acquisition and management of this parcel will help recover listed plants and endangered forest birds and their habitats by supporting groundwater recharge and enhancing the potential for ungulate and other invasive species removal. Acquisition will also enhance the wildlife corridor connecting lower elevations to the already-protected areas of the Refuge, allowing species to migrate and adapt in the face of climate change and avian diseases.

Purpose / Need:

Funding of this fee title acquisition will provide protection and enhance populations of numerous threatened and endangered plant and forest bird species and the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of wet and moderately wet forest ecosystems.

Cooperator(s): The Trust for Public Land

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$50,000 Annual: \$70,000

Describe O&M: The Service anticipates an initial expense of \$50,000 for boundary marking and sign posting. Long term O&M would include \$70,000 for one maintenance FTE who would manage ungulate removal and boundary monitoring.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 17

Project / Unit: Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): FL

Congressional District(s): FL-12, FL-15, FL-16

Location: Approximately 50 miles south of Orlando and 75 miles east of Tampa, in the counties of Polk, Osceola, Okeechobee, and Highlands.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
583	\$1,457,000
Acquired to Date	
1,502	\$2,745,000
Remaining to be Acquired	
148,915	\$462,868,791

Project Description:

With these funds, the Service will acquire fee title on approximately 583 acres from one willing seller to help protect a large landscape of diverse and high-quality habitat, including habitat for the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow. Acquisition of fee title on this property protect the headwaters, groundwater recharge, and watershed of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Kissimmee River, and Lake Okeechobee region, and improve water quantity and quality in the Everglades watershed, supporting the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan goals and protecting the water supply for millions of people.

Purpose / Need:

To protect and conserve habitat for 278 Federal and State listed species, including Florida panther, Florida black bear, Audubon's crested caracara, Florida scrub jay, red-cockaded woodpecker, whooping crane, Everglades snail kite, and most significantly, protect habitat for the Florida grasshopper sparrow, a federally endangered endemic species.

Cooperator(s): Florida Fish and Wildlife, Conservation Commission, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Cattlemen's Association, and Florida Farm Bureau.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$7,500 Annual: \$2,500

Describe O&M: The Service anticipates annual costs of up to \$2,500 for habitat management and restoration, including prescribed burning, hunting, and public use management.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 18

Project / Unit: North Central Valley Wildlife Management Area

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): CA

Congressional District(s): CA-1, CA-3, CA-9, CA-11

Location: The Central Valley floor between the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Red Bluff, California.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
333	\$1,500,000
Acquired to Date	
17,845	\$26,425,934
Remaining to be Acquired	
26,293	\$146,482,821

Project Description:

The funding will support the acquisition of easements on two tracts totaling approximately 333 acres. These easements will continue the Service's effort to protect important remaining wetlands and restored wetlands suitable for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species, including threatened and endangered species. This wetland community is one of the most important wildlife habitats in California and North America, and was identified as a priority habitat area in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan of 1986 and the Central Valley Joint Venture Implementation Plan of 2006. The continued acquisition of lands within this project boundary will secure over 44,000 additional wetland acres in the northern Central Valley and will be the Service's contribution to the successful completion of the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture Implementation Plan.

Purpose / Need:

To preserve wetland habitat for wintering waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species, including threatened and endangered species.

Cooperator(s): The cooperators include the public and non-governmental organizations of the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture and cooperating private landowners.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$2,000 Annual: \$1,500

Describe O&M: Estimated startup O&M would consist of one-time administrative, cartography, and logistical work to initiate the management of new easement properties in the Sacramento NWR Complex. Annual O&M costs would be annual on-site compliance visits, annual aerial compliance flights, and any follow up compliance or wildlife management actions.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Project / Unit: **Montana Refuges (Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area/Blackfoot Valley Conservation Area/Swan Valley Conservation Area)**

Priority: 19
 Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): MT

Congressional District(s): MT-AL

Location: 65 miles northwest of Great Falls, MT

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
9,000	\$4,500,000
Acquired to Date	
122,506	\$46,145,761
Remaining to be Acquired	
277,994	\$124,490,069

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on three tracts totaling 9,000 acres primarily in three Conservation Areas (Rocky Mountain Front, Blackfoot Valley, and Swan Valley) within Montana's Crown of the Continent ecosystem. The diversity of the landscape includes sage steppe and mixed grass prairie, montane forests, lakes, rivers, and glaciers of the northern Rocky Mountains. This landscape is home to the highest density of Canada lynx in the Lower 48 and also provides key critical habitat for grizzly bear, gray wolf, and bull trout. Other species of special concern that depend on habitats within portions of the Crown include westslope cutthroat trout, yellow-billed cuckoo, and Sprague's pipits.

There is increasing pressure to subdivide and develop this landscape for second home development and commercial uses. Protecting these tracts with conservation easements would prevent fragmentation and protect wildlife habitat in one of the nation's best remaining intact ecosystems, while maintaining working lands and the traditional ranching economy. The Crown of the Continent is one of only 23 intact areas worldwide that has not suffered any vertebrate extinctions in the past 200 years; it is through proactive acquisitions that the Service ensures this will continue to hold true.

Purpose / Need:

To support long-term viability of fish and wildlife habitat on a large landscape-scale basis in the Crown of the Continent. Acquisition of perpetual conservation easements preserves habitat where existing plant and animal communities are functioning well and maintains the traditional rural economies for present and future generations of Americans.

The proposed acquisitions support the community-based conservation efforts within the Crown to build resiliency in ecological systems and communities, so that, even as climate conditions change, this collaborative area will continue to support a full range of native biodiversity. Building ecological resiliency includes maintaining intact, interconnected landscapes. The planned acquisitions complement the conservation goals of Montana's State Wildlife Action Plan and protect threatened and endangered wildlife, fish, and plant habitats and connectivity while fostering watershed health. The projects enhance cultural conservation and support working farms, ranches, and forests. The protection of the incredible wealth of water, wildlife, and recreation resources is critical to the economic well-being and quality of life within the landscape.

Cooperator(s): The Conservation Fund/Mellon Foundation; The Nature Conservancy; Rocky Mountain Front Landowner Advisory Group; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Lewis & Clark, Powell and Missoula County Commissioners; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; and Montana Wilderness Association.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$3,000

Describe O&M: The Service estimates that annual monitoring and inspection of the 9,000 easement acres would require approximately \$3,000 annually.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 20

Project / Unit: Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): KS

Congressional District(s): KS-1, KS-2, KS-4

Location: The Flint Hills of eastern Kansas run north-south in a long, narrow band.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
3,750	\$1,500,000
Acquired to Date	
6,214	\$2,164,450
Remaining to be Acquired	
1,090,036	\$436,155,800

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on 3,750 acres of tallgrass prairie from several different willing sellers. With less than four percent of the original acreage remaining, tallgrass prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States. Residential, commercial, and industrial development and woody vegetation encroachment have all fragmented this important habitat. Acquisition of perpetual conservation easements from willing sellers provides permanent protection for tallgrass prairie and fosters landscape-level conservation, while maintaining traditional ranching communities. Landowner interest is high, and the Service will focus on lands with high quality tallgrass habitat and minimal fragmentation and woody vegetation encroachment. Conservation easements also protect habitat important for the threatened Topeka shiner and a wide variety of grassland-dependent birds. The Service will use these easements to ultimately protect 1,100,000 acres of the remaining Flint Hills tallgrass prairie.

Purpose / Need:

To protect the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie ecosystem and associated grassland-dependent wildlife species.

Cooperator(s): The Nature Conservancy, Kansas Land Trust, The Ranchland Trust of Kansas, Tallgrass Legacy Alliance, and the local community.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M:

Department of the Interior
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 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 21

Project / Unit: Rivers of the Chesapeake: Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): VA

Congressional District(s): VA-1

Location: The property is located in Richmond County, VA, on the Northern Neck, the northernmost of three peninsulas on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. The area is bounded on the north by the Potomac River and on the south by the Rappahannock River.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
977	\$8,500,000
Acquired to Date	
8,719	\$16,906,570
Remaining to be Acquired	
10,304	\$27,793,430

Project Description:

The Fones Cliff area is listed among the highest priorities for conservation in the Land Protection Plan for the Rappahannock River Valley Refuge. These forested bluffs reach heights of nearly 100 feet above the river shore and support high concentrations of bald eagles throughout the year. Surveys conducted by boat during winter months show the highest densities of eagles, ranging from 141 to 395 eagles along a 30-mile stretch, with Fones Cliff consistently supporting dozens of birds.

Many other migratory bird species use the forests, swamps, and steep ravines found on the property. Several of these bird species are listed as species of conservation concern by the Service or the Commonwealth of Virginia. They include: Louisiana waterthrush, ovenbird, prothonotary warbler, Kentucky warbler, worm-eating warbler, yellow-throated vireo, wood thrush, scarlet tanager, chuck-will's widow, and whip-poor-will, all of which are confirmed breeders on the Refuge.

The site is also rich in cultural and historical resources. The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail passes by the property and Fones Cliff is the site of a documented interaction between John Smith's party and the Rappahannock Tribe. An adjacent boat ramp operated by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries was recently renovated, offering the public direct river access. This offers great potential for educational and interpretive opportunities for visitors once the property is protected.

Purpose / Need:

To provide nesting and roosting habitat for bald eagles, waterfowl, and other migratory birds by protecting forested bluffs above the Rappahannock River shore. Protection and management of this site would contribute to the goals of Executive Order 13508, Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration, in terms of both ecosystem conservation and increased public access. Currently, the property is proposed to be developed into 718 single family residences, a 116-room lodge, a restaurant, a golf course, and other "improvements." The landowner recently received approval for a rezoning request for this property. The Trust for Public Land has agreed to work with the landowner toward a conservation alternative to his development plans.

Cooperator(s): The Trust for Public Land, Chesapeake Conservancy, Department of Defense, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Northern Neck Land Conservancy, Essex County Countryside Alliance, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Commonwealth of Virginia, and the National Park Service.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$10,000 Annual: \$3,000

Describe O&M: The Service estimates annual O&M costs at \$3,000 from NWRS base funding for signage and boundary markings and start-up for boundary posting.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 22

Project / Unit: Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): CT MA NH VT

Congressional District(s): CT-1, CT-2, CT-3; MA-1, MA-2; NH-2; VT-AL

Location: The Refuge boundary encompasses the entire Connecticut River Watershed.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
4,328	\$4,328,000
Acquired to Date	
36,881	\$33,193,513
Remaining to be Acquired	
37,698	\$32,978,487

Project Description:

Funds will be used to acquire 4,328 acres in seven Refuge divisions located within the Connecticut River watershed. Potential properties include: 305 acres of riparian habitat within the Westfield River Division (MA) and the Mill River Division (MA); 2,400 acres near the Mascoma River Division (NH) where unfragmented forest blocks are home to a variety of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and valuable habitat for migrating and breeding birds; 75 acres of northern boreal forest that includes 35 acres in Pondicherry, 40 acres in the Mohawk River Division (NH); 1,530 acres at Nulhegan Basin (VT) that will protect nesting songbird habitat and provide the public opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation; and 18 acres in the Refuge's Salmon River Division (CT), which contain extensive freshwater tidal marshes used by migrating and wintering waterfowl.

Acquisition of these tracts, in partnership with others, will enhance connectivity across area, elevation, latitude, aspect, and process within the 7.2 million-acre Connecticut River watershed. Improving connectivity across the landscape will help waterfowl (27 species), other migratory birds (247 species), and threatened and endangered species (9 species) be resilient to temperature, precipitation, and water level changes in their habitats. Connecting lands under Refuge stewardship within an extensive and expanding conservation mosaic will also promote representation, redundancy, and resiliency within the watershed. These benefits provide a robust foundation for nationally significant and vital wildlife habitat that will sustain high quality hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation opportunities for generations to come. The proposed acquisitions make clear and valuable contributions to each of the six legislated purposes for the Refuge while strategically integrating Service investments into the larger landscape.

Purpose / Need:

To protect fisheries and wildlife resources and provide public access to Refuge lands.

Cooperator(s): The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, the Kestrel Land Trust, the Middlesex Land Trust, the Connecticut River Watershed Council, Inc., and the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$15,000 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M: The Service anticipates minimal additional costs associated with these acquisitions other than posting

Project / Unit: Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

because the properties are located within the Refuge boundary and would create little additional workload.

Department of the Interior
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 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 23

Project / Unit: **Dakota Grassland Conservation Area**

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): ND SD

Congressional District(s): ND-AL, SD-AL

Location: North Dakota and South Dakota, lying east of the Missouri River

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
9,100	\$5,032,000
Acquired to Date	
44,416	\$20,498,175
Remaining to be Acquired	
1,886,484	\$943,209,509

Project Description:

Funding the Dakota Grassland Conservation Area (DGCA) will enable the Service to acquire easements on about 9,100 acres of grassland and wetland habitat. The DGCA is part of a landscape-scale habitat conservation effort in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) to protect a highly diverse and endangered ecosystem. This ecosystem consists of large, unique grassland and wetland complexes that provide habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, grassland birds, the endangered piping plover, and other wildlife. This ecosystem includes ranching and farming communities.

The PPR is threatened with habitat fragmentation and loss of grasslands and wetlands because of conversion of native prairie to cropland. Acquisition of perpetual easements will protect the landscape from habitat fragmentation and preserve the integrity of the native habitat, while maintaining traditional ranching and farming operations.

Purpose / Need:

Purchase perpetual wetland and grassland easements to protect wildlife habitats of native grassland and associated wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region.

Cooperator(s): North Dakota Game and Fish Department, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., The Nature Conservancy, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, and private landowners.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M:

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 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 24

Project / Unit: National Trails: Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): ID

Congressional District(s): ID-2

Location: Approximately fifty miles east of Pocatello, Idaho.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
2,514	\$1,000,000
Acquired to Date	
20,125	\$2,345,993
Remaining to be Acquired	
11,102	\$18,330,591

Project Description:

Located in the shadow of the historic Caribou Mountain (9,803 feet), Grays Lake NWR provides breeding habitat for more than 200 species of mammals, fish, amphibians, and waterfowl and other migratory birds. The refuge has the world's largest hardstem bulrush marsh, and contains high elevation (6,400 ft.) montane wetlands, riparian inflows and outflows with willow shrublands, and sagebrush-steppe uplands. The refuge also hosts a large nesting population of greater sandhill cranes with as many as 1,200 individuals are counted in the valley during migration and staging times. The Refuge also attracts large numbers of ducks, Canada geese, and trumpeter swans, and provides important habitat for a variety of other native plant and wildlife species. The California National Historic Trail, which led more than 250,000 gold-seekers to the gold fields of California during the 1840s and 1850s, is located within the project area.

Funding will be used for fee acquisition both in the lakebed and uplands. The acquisitions will protect plants, fish, and wildlife; enable the Service to restore sagebrush habitat for the benefit of sagebrush-obligate species, including the Greater Sage grouse; help protect working farms, ranches, and forests; and protect special landscapes and historic and cultural resources.

Purpose / Need:

To protect and restore the historic Grays Lake marsh and provide nesting and feeding habitat for migrating waterfowl by maintaining and protecting the existing integrity of functional native habitat and restoring the natural range of degraded habitats. The acquisition will also provide essential forage for waterfowl and landbirds within the Pacific and Rocky Mountain migratory corridors.

Cooperator(s): Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, State of Idaho, Senator James Risch, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Teton Land Trust, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$10,000 Annual: \$3,000

Describe O&M: Negligible, consolidation of DOI (FWS/BIA) ownership of lakebed lands requires minimal infrastructure.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 25

Project / Unit: Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): ND SD

Congressional District(s): ND-AL, SD-AL

Location: North Dakota and South Dakota, lying east of the Missouri River

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
5,800	\$5,000,000
Acquired to Date	
66,559	\$12,377,551
Remaining to be Acquired	
117,641	\$49,101,289

Project Description:

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on approximately 5,800 acres of tallgrass prairie from willing sellers. Tallgrass prairie once covered 90 percent of the Dakotas. Today, less than three percent remains. The rate of conversion of this unique habitat to agricultural production has only accelerated over the last few years, and the rate of loss and the resulting fragmentation of the remaining tallgrass prairie continue to be the primary threats to this ecosystem. The Service plans to use grassland easements to protect 190,000 acres of the remaining tallgrass prairie in the eastern Dakotas, including 25,000 acres in North Dakota and 165,000 acres in South Dakota. These easement acquisitions will help to maintain traditional ranching operations while fostering landscape-level conservation.

The project area has a rich variety of plant, animal, and insect species, including more than 147 species of breeding birds ranging from neotropical migrants to waterfowl. Several candidate endangered species use the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, including Baird's sparrow, loggerhead shrike, ferruginous hawk, and rare butterflies such as the Dakota skipper. These large blocks of grasslands help to buffer prairie ecosystems.

Purpose / Need:

To protect the Prairie Pothole Region's northern tallgrass prairie ecosystem and associated wildlife.

Cooperator(s): States of North Dakota and South Dakota, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., The Nature Conservancy, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, and private landowners.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M:

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 26

Project / Unit: Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): MN IL IA WI

Congressional District(s): MN-1, IA-1, IA-4, IL-16, IL-17, WI-3

Location: 261 miles along the Mississippi River from Wabasha, MN to Rock Island, IL

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
500	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
209,474	\$7,124,910
Remaining to be Acquired	
20,984	\$62,952,000

Project Description:

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge stretches along the Mississippi River and includes Districts in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Established in 1924, the 240,000-acre Refuge covers 261 miles of the River valley from Wabasha, Minnesota, to Rock Island, Illinois and is divided into four districts: the Savanna, Winona, McGregor, and LaCrosse Districts.

The Refuge includes broad pools, islands, braided channels, extensive bottomland forest, floodplain marshes, and occasional sand prairie. These habitats are critical to mammals, waterfowl, songbirds, raptors, amphibians, and reptiles. Over 160 bald eagle nests and a yearly average of 15 active heron colonies with a total of 5,000 nests exist on the Refuge. The Refuge and the River support 119 fish species, which make up a strong commercial and recreational fishery.

With the requested funds, the Service will acquire 500 acres in fee title in multiple counties in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa to protect floodplain and bluff land habitat for migrating waterfowl such as lesser and greater scaup, as well as green-winged teal and mallard, both Service-identified surrogate species. Habitat protected within the Refuge will also be important for shorebird use, in particular lesser yellowlegs, and use by inter-jurisdictional fish, including paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon. Habitat on the Refuge is recognized as continentally significant, a globally Important Bird Area, a Wetland of International Importance, and in some areas, critical habitat for federally endangered freshwater mussels.

Purpose / Need:

To protect, restore, and manage grassland and wetland habitat for migratory birds, including waterfowl, resident wildlife, federal and state threatened and endangered species, and public recreation.

Cooperator(s): U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, the Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin DNR, Iowa DNR, Illinois DNR, Friends of the Refuge Headwaters (Winona), Upper Mississippi River Interpretive Association (LaCrosse), Friends of Pool 9 (McGregor), Friends of Pool 10 (McGregor).

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$10,000

Describe O&M: The Service estimates a cost of \$10,000 from Refuge base funds for restoration and enhancement work (spraying, mowing, burning, fencing supplies, and signage).

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 27

Project / Unit: Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): FL

Congressional District(s): FL-4

Location: In the Florida Panhandle, 24 miles south of Tallahassee, Florida, in Wakulla County.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
1,800	\$4,500,000
Acquired to Date	
71,954	\$10,437,514
Remaining to be Acquired	
38,493	\$95,336,351

Project Description:

The Service will acquire 1,800 fee acres from one willing seller with the requested funds. Acquisition will benefit federally-listed endangered species such as red-cockaded woodpecker, woodstork, and flatwood salamanders, as well as a variety of other resident and migratory species. This project will help preserve a tapestry of Federal, State, and private forest lands that provide over 1 million acres of unfragmented habitat for a variety of federally-listed threatened and endangered species. The project is located in a designated Important Bird Area and a Land Management Research and Demonstration Site for Longleaf Pine Ecosystems Funds and is a key segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Purpose / Need:

To conserve populations of threatened, endangered, rare, and imperiled plants and animals and their native longleaf pine habitats; restore former slash pine plantations to native longleaf pine; provide suitable black bear habitat, including corridors to link critical habitat for major population centers; provide high-quality habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, waterbirds, and marshbirds; and provide public opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

Cooperator(s): Sam Shine Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Florida Chapter of the Wildlife Society, The Florida Natural Areas Inventory, St. Marks Refuge Association, Florida Trail Association, Blue Goose Alliance, Apalachee Audubon Society, and Florida Wildlife Federation.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$90,000 Annual: \$36,000

Describe O&M: The Service estimates annual costs of up to \$36,000 for habitat management and restoration, prescribed burning, and hunting and public use management. Acquisition may produce efficiency improvements in Service law enforcement and boundary posting, which would reduce these costs. Costs associated with restoration work could be offset by hunting fees or outside funding.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 28

Project / Unit: Bear River Watershed Conservation Area

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): ID UT WY

Congressional District(s): ID-2, UT-1, WY-AL

Location: Northeastern corner of Utah, extending into southeastern Idaho and southwestern Wyoming.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
6,173	\$5,000,000
Acquired to Date	
0	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	
913,827	\$740,200,000

Project Description:

The Service will acquire perpetual conservation easements on approximately 6,173 acres in the Bear River watershed with the requested funds. Wetlands and riparian areas in the watershed's lower elevations provide some of the most important resting, staging, feeding, breeding, and nesting areas for migratory birds in the Pacific and Central Flyways.

The watershed supports millions of birds, including 46 percent of the white-faced ibis, 24 percent of the marbled godwits, and 18 percent of the black-necked stilts in North America. The watershed also provides habitat for the greater sage grouse, and habitat essential to the Bonneville cutthroat trout's survival. Existing refuges and adjacent protected lands in the watershed provide habitat for over 270 different species, and the acquisition of conservation easements for the Conservation Area would improve connectivity among these protected lands. Acquisition of conservation easements from willing sellers would protect habitat that is important for focal species, while helping to preserve the agricultural heritage of the landscape.

The Conservation Area is located in parts of 12 counties: Bannock, Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power in Idaho; Box Elder, Cache, Rich, and Summit in Utah; and Lincoln and Uinta in Wyoming. A number of landowners have expressed interest in selling conservation easements, and the Service is currently identifying lands that contain high quality wildlife habitat for easement acquisition.

Purpose / Need:

To conserve aquatic, riparian, wetland, and upland habitats; provide wildlife habitat connectivity and migratory corridors; maintain healthy populations of native wildlife species; protect and maintain water quality and quantity; increase the watershed's resiliency during climate and land use changes; conserve the area's working landscapes, and promote partnerships for a coordinated watershed-level conservation. Conservation partners are working to preserve this landscape that, in some areas, is undergoing rapid conversion to residential development.

Cooperator(s): The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, Western Rivers Conservancy, local Audubon chapters, PacifiCorp, State and local land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, State agencies, tribes, and other Federal agencies.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$5,000

Describe O&M: Easement monitoring and enforcement.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 29

Project / Unit: Southern Blue Ridge: Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): NC

Congressional District(s): NC-5, NC-11

Location: Located in Henderson, Ashe, and Watauga Counties within the southern Blue Ridge Mountains and the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
3,155	\$12,600,000
Acquired to Date	
36	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	
20,287	\$81,148,000

Project Description:

The requested funds will acquire about 3,155 acres of Long Hope Valley from a willing seller. Acquisition will protect 13 percent of the land targeted for acquisition within the Mountain Bogs NWR (a President's America's Great Outdoors initiative project), and will help achieve land protection objectives for the North Carolina State Wildlife Action Plan. Long Hope Valley is considered the crown jewel of the Refuge. The complex of southern Appalachian mountain bogs and high elevation forests are critically endangered ecosystems that contain numerous endemic species. Long Hope Valley supports ten high-quality natural communities, and is one of the most important mountain bogs, including the highest quality bogs known in the South. The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program has identified this area as a top conservation priority for over 30 years. Long Hope Valley supports and would conserve an Exceptional (R1) State Natural Area: Long Hope Valley/Elk Knob/The Peak. Long hope Valley is an Action and Portfolio Site within the Southern Blue Ridge Ecoregional Plan (TNC and SAFC 2000), and also lies within the Amphibolite Mountains, a priority (T1) forest matrix (TNC 2010). It is within a golden-winger warbler focal area and an Audubon Important Bird Area. The acquisition area lies adjacent to Elk Knob State Park, a North Carolina Plant Conservation preserve, a North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Gameland, and a Nature Conservancy preserve. The total conserved lands would represent more than 50,000 contiguous acres of protected habitat.

Acquisition of the acquired acreage would secure a habitat stronghold for the endangered Carolina Northern flying squirrel, helping to meet its recovery objectives and ensuring its long-term viability in the southern Appalachians. Acquisition would also conserve bog turtle-occupied habitat as well as six Federal species of concern and 53 other rare species.

Acquisition would protect trout designated streams, including Long Hope Creek and Pine Orchard Creek, as well as the Upper New River Headwaters (north and south fork).

Purpose / Need:

- The purchase of these lands will;
- 1) Help achieve Land Protection Objectives of Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge and NC State Wildlife Action Plan.
 - 2) Provide landscape-level conservation by connecting or adding to existing conservation lands.
 - 3) Protect critically endangered mountain bogs and high elevation forest habitats and their associated rare endemic species.
 - 4) Help meet recovery objectives for threatened and endangered species, and help prevent listing of species of concern, petitioned species, and other rare species.
 - 5) Protect Partners in Flight priority birds and their habitats.

Cooperator(s): The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Senator Richard Burr, North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$5,000 Annual: \$10,000

Project / Unit: Southern Blue Ridge: Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge

Describe O&M: The Service estimates cost for travel, law enforcement, habitat improvement, hydrology restoration, and invasive plant removal to be covered by Refuge funds.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 30

Project / Unit: **Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge**

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): TX

Congressional District(s): TX-10, TX-25, TX-31

Location: Approximately 35 miles northwest of Austin, Texas

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
1,000	\$4,500,000
Acquired to Date	
24,457	\$31,040,862
Remaining to be Acquired	
21,543	\$25,129,123

Project Description:

The Balcones Canyonlands NWR is in a region known as the Texas Hill Country. The region includes oak-juniper woodlands, post-oak grassland savannahs, and deciduous forests, as well as stream-bottom riparian forests, prairie areas, and low shrub communities. The Canyonlands area supports a wide range of wildlife and provides critical nesting habitat for the endangered golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo. More than 270 bird species have been recorded in or near the refuge. At least 40 mammal species, 50 species of amphibians and reptiles, and 80 species of fish are also found in the area. The Central Flyway, one of the four major bird migration routes in North America, passes through this region. The area is also important for monarch migration.

Funding will be used to acquire several tracts including the Peaceful Springs Ranch. The proposed acquisition of the 525-acre Peaceful Springs Ranch containing public outdoor facilities will encourage greater public use and participation in activities, such as, hunting, wildlife viewing, and hiking. Acquisition of the ranch and other tracts will protect important habitat for the federally listed endangered native golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo, and serve as migratory habitat for the monarch butterfly. By acquiring these lands, the refuge will prevent fragmentation of habitat from urban development, while providing recreational opportunities for residents of nearby Austin.

Purpose / Need:

To protect important habitat for the federally-listed endangered native songbirds, including the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo, and provide migratory habitat for the monarch butterfly, and important habitat for numerous other wildlife and plants. There are also underground karst ecosystems and forested limestone hills that are a unique feature on the properties and the Refuge. Numerous endemic invertebrate species are found in these karst features.

Cooperator(s): The Trust for Public Land, Friends of Balcones Canyonlands NWR.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$2,000 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M: The Service estimates there will be a one time cost of \$2,000 associated with the posting of refuge boundaries, which the Service would fund from Refuge System base funding.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 31

Project / Unit: Pathways to the Pacific: Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): WA

Congressional District(s): WA-3

Location: Steigerwald Lake NWR is approximately 14 miles from Portland, OR, in Clark County, WA.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
249	\$2,649,000
Acquired to Date	
1,046	\$2,763,000
Remaining to be Acquired	
450	\$1,188,671

Project Description:

Steigerwald Lake NWR provides habitat for more than 20 species of mammals, 15 species of reptiles and amphibians, and a wide variety of insects and plants. Much of the surrounding economy depends on recreation, fishing, resource industries, and tourism, all of which are affected by ecosystem health and public access.

The proposed acquisitions will fill crucial gaps in the region's network of conserved private and public lands; protect native wildlife, fish, and migratory bird habitat; and improve public access to wildlife-dependent recreation. The proposed acquisitions will also help protect threatened and endangered species, including 13 salmon and steelhead species.

Purpose / Need:

The acquisition helps link a system of conserved and restored lands in order to stabilize and recover 17 listed species, including 16 fish stocks. Iconic species such as the Columbia white-tailed deer will benefit through targeted habitat protection and restoration. Considering threats from population growth and climate change, a successful conservation strategy for a riverine system targets acquisitions that support habitat resiliency by protecting key tributaries and estuaries from incompatible human uses and by promoting compatible and improved public recreation opportunities.

Cooperator(s): US Army Corps of Engineers, Columbia Land Trust, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, and Friends of the Columbia River Gorge.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$20,000 Annual: \$0

Describe O&M: Start-up cost includes survey and marking; most of the restoration work is funded by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Priority: 31

Project / Unit: Pathways to the Pacific: Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

Discretionary

Mandatory

State(s): OR

Congressional District(s): OR-1

Location: Tualatin River NWR is approximately 11 miles southwest of Portland, OR, in Washington County, OR.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
144	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	
1,384	\$9,107,550
Remaining to be Acquired	
1,647	\$10,607,399

Project Description:

The 144-acre acquisition at Tualatin River NWR will protect and enhance almost two miles of river frontage and riparian corridor, and will complete the largest continuous block of about 600 acres in conservation in that part of the Willamette Valley. This property could also be considered for expansion of the youth recreation program at the Refuge, which is located near the largest urban population in Oregon.

Much of the surrounding economy depends on recreation, fishing, resource industries, and tourism, which are all affected by ecosystem health and public access. The proposed acquisition will fill a crucial gap in the region's network of conserved private and public lands to help stop and reverse the impacts to native wildlife, fish, and migratory bird habitat, and will improve public access.

Purpose / Need:

The acquisition helps link a system of conserved and restored lands in order to stabilize and recover 17 listed species, including 16 fish stocks. Considering threats from population growth and climate change, a successful conservation strategy for a riverine system targets acquisitions that support habitat resiliency by protecting key tributaries and estuaries from incompatible human uses and by promoting compatible and improved public recreation opportunities.

Cooperator(s): US Army Corps of Engineers, Columbia Land Trust, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, and Friends of the Columbia River Gorge.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0

Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$544,000 Annual: \$16,800

Describe O&M: Start-up costs would include riparian and mixed forest restoration. The annual costs are estimated at \$16,800.

Department of the Interior
 LWCF Project Data Sheet
 Revised September 2015

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Budget Justification FY2017

Project / Unit: **Pathways to the Pacific: Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-Tailed Deer (JBH)**

Priority: 31
 Discretionary
 Mandatory

State(s): OR WA

Congressional District(s): WA-3, OR-1

Location: Julia Butler Hansen Refuge is approximately 16 miles west of Longview, WA, in Clatsop and Columbia Counties, OR.

Proposed for FY 2017	
Acres	\$
161	\$360,000
Acquired to Date	
6,056	\$4,135,661
Remaining to be Acquired	
727	\$496,471

Project Description:

Originally established in 1971 to protect and manage endangered Columbian white-tailed deer, Julia Butler Hansen Refuge contains more than 6,000 acres of pastures, forested tidal swamps, brushy woodlots, marshes, and sloughs along the Columbia River in both Washington and Oregon. The diverse habitats that support the deer also benefit a large variety of wintering and migratory birds, Roosevelt elk, river otter, reptiles and amphibians (including painted turtles and red-legged frogs), and nesting bald eagles, great horned owls, and osprey.

The proposed fee title acquisition of the 161-acre tract will support the delisting of the Columbia white-tailed deer by increasing valuable habitat. The acquisition will also ensure connectivity of terrestrial/water ecosystems and enhance public recreational access.

Purpose / Need:

These acquisitions help link a system of conserved and restored lands in order to stabilize and recover 17 listed species, including 16 fish stocks. Iconic species such as the Columbia white-tailed deer will benefit through targeted habitat protection and restoration. Considering threats from population growth and climate change, a successful conservation strategy for a riverine system targets acquisitions that support habitat resiliency by protecting key tributaries and estuaries from incompatible human uses and by promoting compatible and improved public recreation opportunities.

Cooperator(s): US Army Corps of Engineers, Columbia Land Trust, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, and Friends of the Columbia River Gorge.

Estimated O&M Savings: Start-up: \$0 Annual: \$0
 Estimated O&M Costs: Start-up: \$50,000 Annual: \$50,000

Describe O&M: Start-up costs would include survey and marking; annual costs for managing and monitoring.

2017 Potential Land Exchange Projects

STATE	POTENTIAL EXCHANGES	ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED	MANAGEMENT COSTS
ALASKA	Arctic NWR - Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation	2,000	\$10,000
ALASKA	Izembek NWR - State of Alaska	52,000	\$150,000
ALASKA	Kenai NWR - CIRI	3,000	\$10,000
ALASKA	Selawik NWR - NANA Corp.	30,000	\$80,000
ALASKA	Yukon Delta NWR - Aniak	Undetermined	\$10,000
ALASKA	Yukon Delta NWR - Cherfornak	40,000	\$10,000
ALASKA	Yukon Delta NWR - Chevak	30,000	\$15,000
ALASKA	Yukon Delta NWR - Kotlik	Undetermined	\$25,000
ALASKA	Yukon Delta NWR - Napakiak	55,000	\$65,000
ALASKA	Yukon Delta NWR - Napaskiak	45,000	\$15,000
ALASKA	Yukon Delta NWR - NIMA Corp	5,000	\$10,000
ALASKA	Yukon Delta NWR - Scammon Bay	3,600	\$10,000
ARKANSAS	Cache River NWR	255	\$10,000
ARKANSAS	Felsenthal NWR	44.27	\$15,000
ARKANSAS	Felsenthal NWR	185	\$20,000
CALIFORNIA	Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR	7	\$20,000
COLORADO	Arapaho NWR	45	\$10,000
COLORADO	Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR	10	\$10,000
FLORIDA	Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR	2,586	\$20,000
GEORGIA	Bond Swamp NWR	188	\$10,000
GEORGIA	Savannah NWR	10	\$5,000
ILLINOIS	Cypress Creek NWR	109	\$20,000
ILLINOIS	Cypress Creek NWR	109	\$20,000
INDIANA	Patoka River NWR	16	\$20,000
INDIANA	Patoka River NWR	Undetermined	\$20,000
LOUISIANA	Big Branch Marsh NWR	5	\$5,000
LOUISIANA	Bogue Chitto NWR	4	\$2,000
LOUISIANA	Delta NWR	816	\$10,000
MAINE	Moosehorn NWR	1,500	\$50,000
MAINE	Rachel Carson NWR	47	\$5,000
MASSACHUSETTS	Monomoy NWR	2	\$25,000
MASSACHUSETTS	Oxbow NWR	20	\$10,000
MICHIGAN	Shiawassee NWR	302	\$50,000
MINNESOTA	Pope County WPA	40	\$10,000
MINNESOTA	Stearns County WPA	20	\$10,000
MINNESOTA	Tamarac NWR	10	\$10,000
MINNESOTA	Upper Mississippi River NW&FR	2	\$10,000

STATE	POTENTIAL EXCHANGES	ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED	MANAGEMENT COSTS
MISSOURI	Neosho NFH	2	\$10,000
MONTANA	Pablo NWR	2	\$10,000
NEVADA	Stillwater NWR	272	\$20,000
NEW JERSEY	E. B. Forsythe NWR	1	\$10,000
NEW JERSEY	Wallkill NWR	10	\$10,000
NORTH CAROLINA	Mackay Island NWR	383	\$10,000
NORTH DAKOTA	Various North Dakota WPAs & WMAs	100	\$80,000
OREGON	Hart Mountain NAR	40	\$40,000
SOUTH DAKOTA	Various South Dakota WPAs & WMDs	160	\$55,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley - Hidalgo Co Irrigation District #3	5	\$5,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley Cameron County CCRMA	73	\$10,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Brownsville (207)	17	\$5,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Champion Bend (284)	82	\$10,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Shuster	80	\$20,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Jeronimo Banco (286)	288	\$15,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Jeronimo Banco (286a)	11	\$5,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Palo Blanco (253)	30	\$5,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Phillips Banco (279)	338	\$20,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR - Villanueva	405	\$20,000
TEXAS	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR FM 800	6	\$2,000
TEXAS	Trinity River NWR - Sheppy Land Company	4	\$2,500
UTAH	Bear River MBR	21	\$10,000
VERMONT	Silvio O. Conte NFWR	100	\$25,000
WASHINGTON	Willapa NWR	86	\$71,000
WISCONSIN	Dane County WPA	13	\$10,000
WISCONSIN	Necedah WMA (Legacy/Youngs)	61	\$25,000
WISCONSIN	Necedah WMA (Eagle's Nest)	5	\$10,000
WISCONSIN	Necedah WMA (Wetherby)	107	\$15,000
WISCONSIN	Upper MS River NWFR - WI DOT	Undetermined	\$25,000
Total Exchange Acres and Management Costs		274,633.93	\$1,362,500

Standard Form 300 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE LAND ACQUISITION			
Program and Financing (in millions of dollars) Identification Code 010-18-14-5020	2015 Actual	2016 Estimate	2017 Estimate
Combined Schedule (X)			
Obligations by program activity:			
0001 Land Acquisition Management	12	12	15
0002 Exchanges	1	1	1
0003 Emergencies, Hardships, and Inholdings	5	5	5
0004 Highlands Conservation Act	0	8	2
0005 Land Acquisitions	39	43	60
0006 Sportsmen and Recreational Access	0	2	26
0007 Land Protection Planning	0	0	1
0799 Total direct obligations	57	71	110
0801 Land Acquisition (Reimbursable)	2	1	1
0900 Total new obligations	59	72	111
Budgetary resources:			
Unobligated balance:			
1000 Unobligated balance brought forward, Oct 1	46	37	36
1021 Recoveries of prior year unpaid obligations	1	1	1
1050 Unobligated balance (total)	47	38	37
Budget authority:			
Appropriations, discretionary:			
1101 Appropriation LWCF [014-5005]	48	69	59
1160 Appropriation, discretionary (total)	48	69	59
Appropriations, mandatory:			
1221 Appropriations transferred from other acct [014-5005]	0	0	79
1260 Appropriations, mandatory (total)	0	0	79
Spending authority from offsetting collections, discretionary:			
1700 Collected	2	1	1
1701 Change in uncollected payments, Federal sources	-1	0	0
1750 Spending auth from offsetting collections, disc (total)	1	1	1
1900 Budget authority (total)	49	70	60
1930 Total budgetary resources available	96	108	176
Memorandum (non-add) entries:			
1941 Unexpired unobligated balance, end of year	37	36	65
Change in obligated balance:			
Unpaid obligations:			
3000 Unpaid obligations, brought forward, Oct 1	22	16	23
3010 Obligations incurred, unexpired accounts	59	72	111
3020 Outlays (gross)	-64	-64	-100
3040 Recoveries of prior year unpaid obligations, unexpired	-1	-1	-1
3050 Unpaid obligations, end of year	16	23	33
Uncollected payments:			
3060 Uncollected pymts, Fed sources, brought forward, Oct 1	-3	-2	-2
3070 Change in uncollected pymts, Fed sources, unexpired	1	0	0
3090 Uncollected pymts, Fed sources, end of year	-2	-2	-2

Standard Form 300			
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE LAND ACQUISITION			
Program and Financing (in millions of dollars)	2015	2016	2017
Identification Code 010-18-14-5020	Actual	Estimate	Estimate
Memorandum (non-add) entries:			
3100 Obligated balance, start of year	19	14	21
3200 Obligated balance, end of year	14	21	31
<u>Budget authority and outlays, net:</u>			
Discretionary:			
4000 Budget authority, gross	49	70	60
Outlays, gross:			
4010 Outlays from new discretionary authority	24	29	25
4011 Outlays from discretionary balances	40	35	43
4020 Outlays, gross (total)	64	64	68
Offsets against gross budget authority and outlays:			
Offsetting collections (collected) from:			
4030 Federal sources	-2	-1	-1
Additional offsets against gross budget authority only:			
4050 Change in uncollected pymts, Fed sources, unexpired	1	0	0
4070 Budget authority, net (discretionary)	48	69	59
4080 Outlays, net (discretionary)	62	63	67
Mandatory:			
4090 Budget authority, gross	0	0	79
Outlays, gross:			
4100 Outlays from new mandatory authority	0	0	32
4160 Budget authority, net (mandatory)	0	0	79
4170 Outlays, net (mandatory)	0	0	32
4180 Budget authority, net (total)	48	69	138
4190 Outlays, net (total)	62	63	99

Object Classification (O)			
<u>Direct obligations:</u>			
11.1 Full-time permanent	6	6	7
12.1 Civilian personnel benefits	2	2	3
23.1 Rental payments to GSA	1	1	1
25.2 Other services from non-Federal sources	3	3	4
25.3 Other goods and services from Federal sources	2	2	2
32.0 Land and structures	43	57	93
99.0 Subtotal, obligations, Direct obligations	57	71	110
<u>Reimbursable obligations:</u>			
32.0 Land and structures	2	1	1
99.9 Total new obligations	59	72	111

Employment Summary (Q)			
1001 Direct civilian full-time equivalent employment	75	78	94

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