

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Coastal Program

2013 Annual Accomplishment Report



Message from the Refuge Chief

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has the responsibility to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The environmental legacy that we pass on to future generations largely depends on our ability to protect and restore habitat on which plants and animals depend for their survival.

Coastal habitats support 40% of the Service's National Wildlife Refuges and are vital to fish and wildlife because 40% of our federally listed species, 25% of our wetlands, and over 30% of North American wintering waterfowl occur in our nation's coastal areas. Coastal wetlands are also important breeding grounds and nurseries for commercial and sport fish.

The Coastal Program is the Service's primary conservation tool for voluntary, citizen and community-based fish and wildlife habitat restoration and protection activities on public and privately-owned coastal lands. Coastal land ownership is often a mosaic of public and private entities, which necessitates an ability to implement landscape conservation on different types of lands.

Coastal Program staff provide technical and financial assistance to landowners and conservation partners for the restoration and protection of coastal habitats throughout the nation and our trust territories. With staff located in 24 priority areas, including the Atlantic, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes, and the Pacific, the Coastal Program provides valuable technical expertise and implements vital habitat restoration projects that benefit the Service's conservation mission.

This annual accomplishment report showcases some of the great work that the Coastal Program and our conservation partners are achieving for the conservation of our Nation's wildlife. To date, the Coastal Program has worked with other Service programs, many federal, tribal, state, and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, corporations, and private landowners across the country to restore 334,796 acres of wetland, 148,160 acres of upland, and 2,176 miles of stream habitat, and to protect 2,072,381 acres of coastal habitat. We will continue to build a strong legacy of wildlife conservation through strategic habitat conservation and effective partnerships.

Jim Kurth
Chief
National Wildlife
Refuge System



Our approach is straightforward: engage willing partners and landowners, and provide technical and/or financial assistance to conserve and protect fish and wildlife resources on their property.

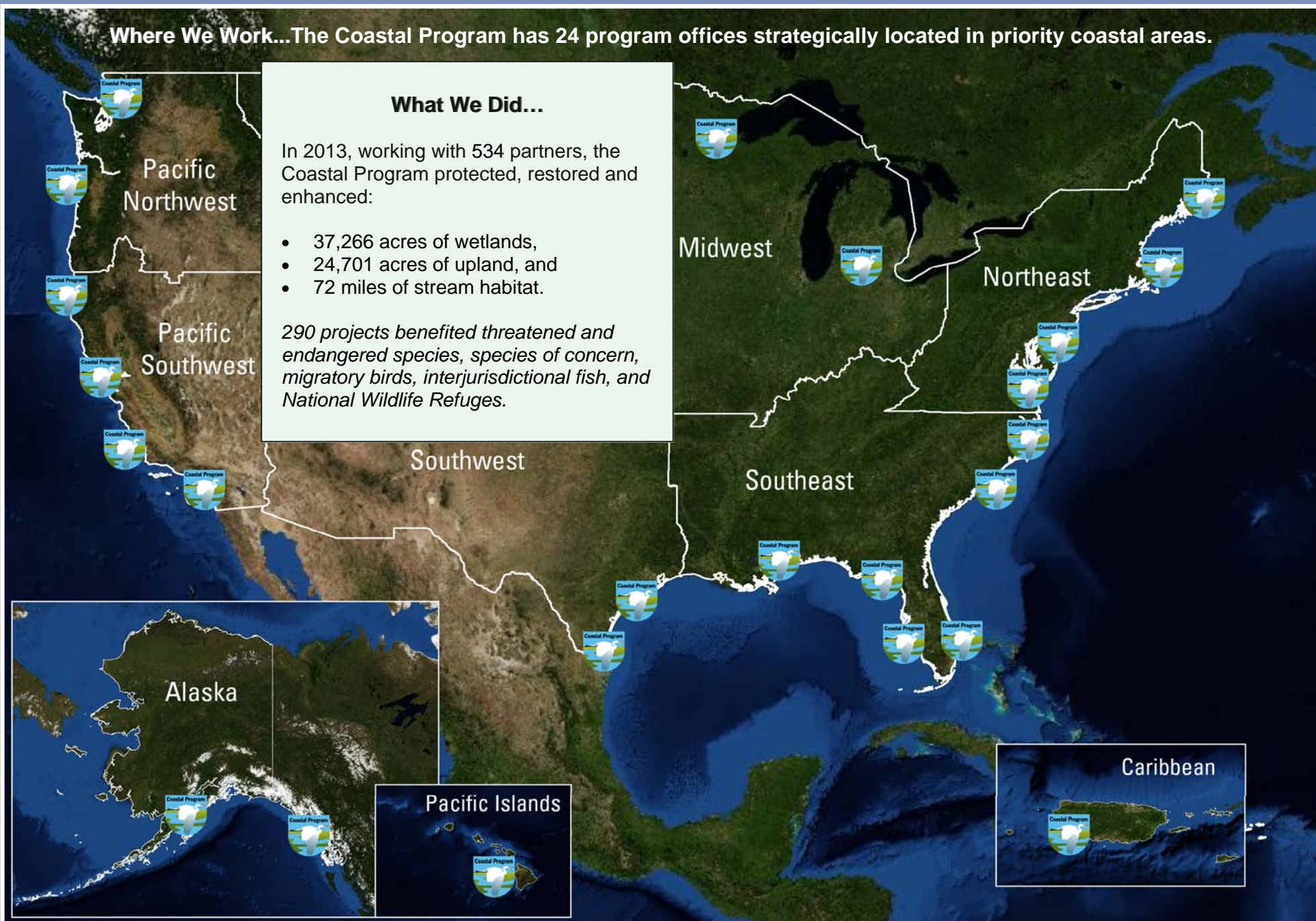
Where We Work...The Coastal Program has 24 program offices strategically located in priority coastal areas.

What We Did...

In 2013, working with 534 partners, the Coastal Program protected, restored and enhanced:

- 37,266 acres of wetlands,
- 24,701 acres of upland, and
- 72 miles of stream habitat.

290 projects benefited threatened and endangered species, species of concern, migratory birds, interjurisdictional fish, and National Wildlife Refuges.



Region 1: Pacific Northwest and Pacific Islands

2013 Project Locations

2013 REGIONAL SUMMARY

Accomplishments (Restored/ Protected):

- 39 Projects
- 130 Upland acres
- 473 Wetland acres
- 14 Stream miles
- 8 Fish barriers removed

Project Contributions:

- Coastal Program: \$600,231
- Project Partners: \$6,524,352

Points may represent multiple
accomplishments



Background photograph: Lindsey Meghan Kearney (USFWS)

Inset photographs (clockwise from left to right): Sea turtle hatchlings: USFWS, John Klavitter (USFWS) and Sheldon Plentovich (USFWS)

Kure Atoll Restoration and Marine Debris Removal Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

Only 20% of marine debris is from commercial fishing, and the remaining 80% is from land-based sources. To save wildlife and protect important habitat, recycle and properly dispose of your trash.



Marine debris is a growing global pollution problem, affecting 86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all sea bird species, and 43% of marine mammal species. Both terrestrial and aquatic wildlife are accidentally ingesting or becoming entangled in the refuse, which is leading to their death.

Coastal Program staff worked with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources to remove marine debris from over 280 acres of coral reefs and beaches on Kure Atoll in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The project restored seabird nesting habitat making it possible for the future translocation of federally endangered Laysan ducks to the atoll. This project also benefited the federally endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal and sea turtles. In addition to project planning, our staff secured a grant that helped fund the project and participated in project monitoring.



Laysan ducks

In 1912, the Laysan duck population consisted of only 7 adults and 5 juveniles on Laysan Island.



Monk seals

PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

Funding Contribution:

Coastal Program: \$9,900

Partner contribution: \$554,000

Total project cost: \$563,900

Partners:

- Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources

Landscape Conservation Cooperative:

- Pacific Islands

Service Cross-Program Collaboration:

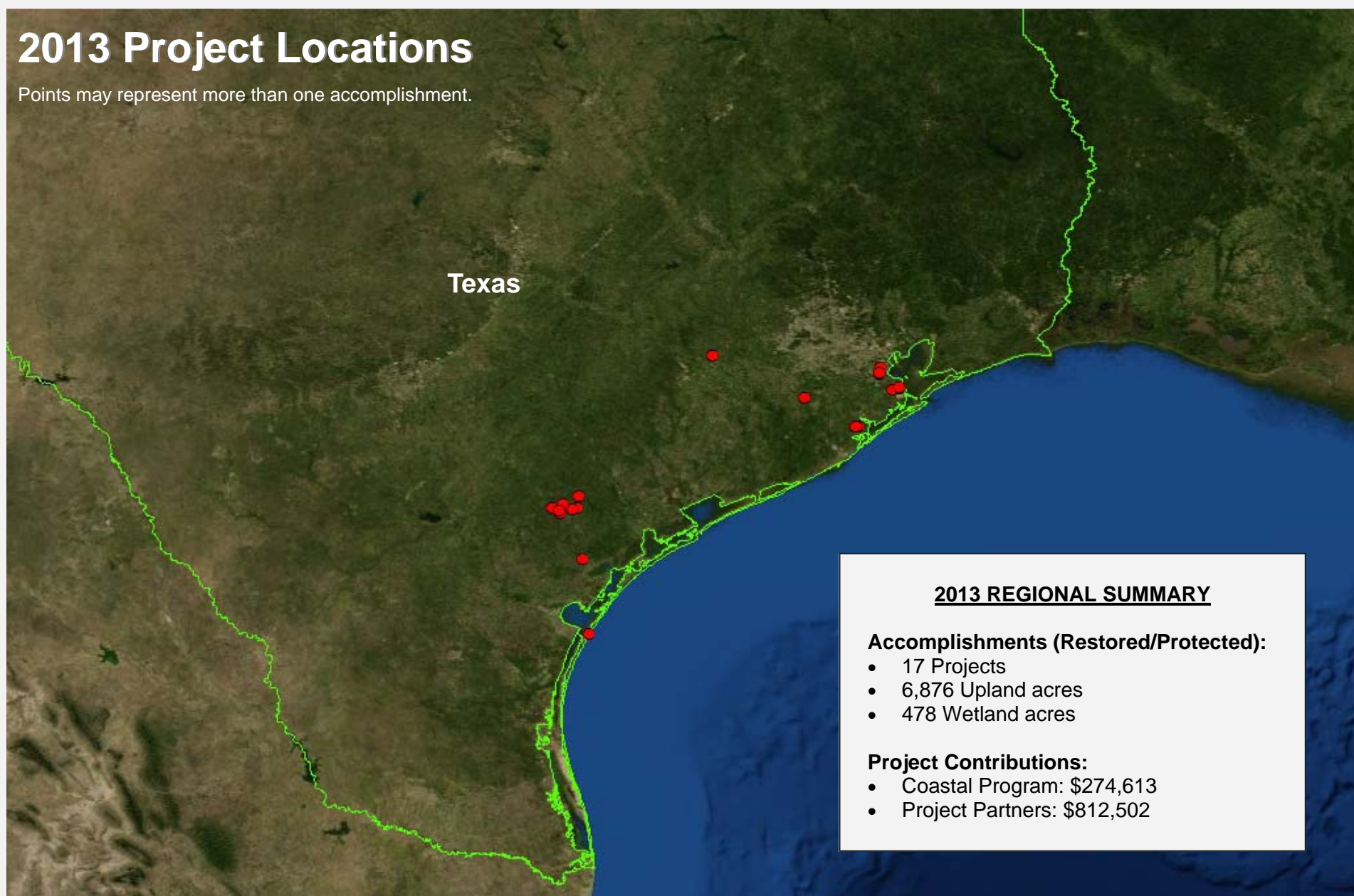
- Ecological Services and Endangered Species, and Migratory Birds

Region 2: The Southwest

2013 Project Locations

Points may represent more than one accomplishment.

Texas

A satellite-style map of Texas with a green outline of the state. The word "Texas" is written in white in the central part of the map. Along the southern coast, there are several red dots representing project locations. The Gulf of Mexico is visible to the south and east of the coast.

2013 REGIONAL SUMMARY

Accomplishments (Restored/Protected):

- 17 Projects
- 6,876 Upland acres
- 478 Wetland acres

Project Contributions:

- Coastal Program: \$274,613
- Project Partners: \$812,502

Coastal Prairie Enhancement Project

Colorado County, Texas

The Gulf Coast Conservation Initiative (GCCCI) is a partnership among private landowners, conservation organizations and government agencies focused on restoring and protecting habitat along the Gulf Coast, including the rare coastal prairie ecosystem.



Attwater National Wildlife Refuge



Attwater's Prairie-chicken

The Attwater's prairie-chicken is a subspecies of the Greater prairie chicken found along the coast of Texas and Louisiana. Habitat loss has reduced the population of this highly endangered species from 1 million birds to fewer than 100 in the wild.

The Coastal Program supports the GCCCI and recovery of the Attwater's prairie chicken. In 2013, Coastal Program staff provided technical and financial assistance to restore over 2,600 acres of coastal prairie by eradicating fire ants and managing brush habitat in southeastern Texas. The restoration area encompassed the nesting sites of the last eight Attwater's prairie chickens remaining outside of the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge. The treatments were intended to enhance Attwater's prairie-chicken survival, particularly brood survival.

PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

Funding Contribution:

Coastal Program: \$28,800

Partner contribution: \$3,200

Total project cost: \$32,000

Partners:

- Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program

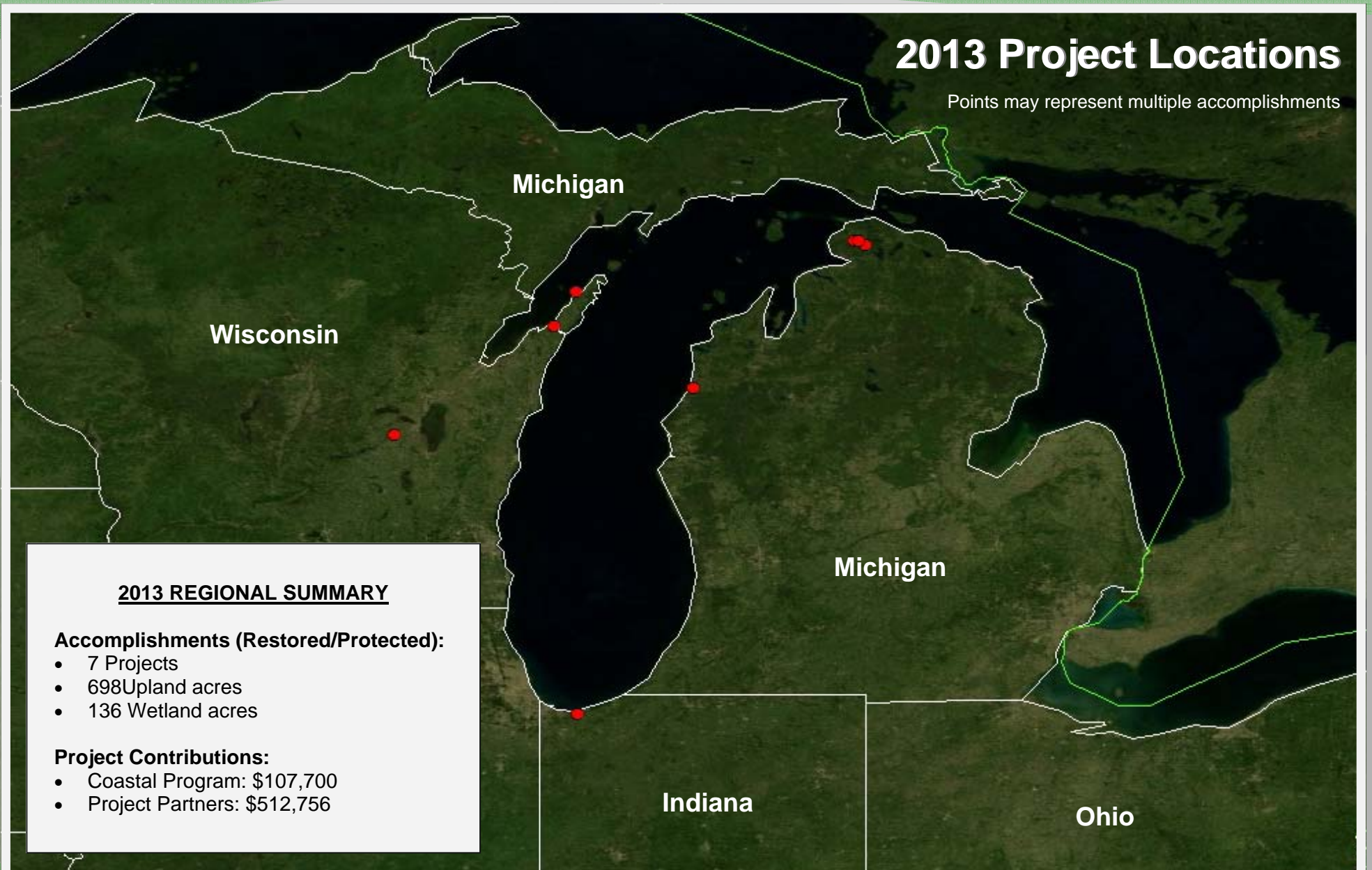
Landscape Conservation Cooperative:

- Gulf Coast Prairie

Service Cross-Program Collaboration:

- Ecological Services, Endangered Species, and National Wildlife Refuge System

Region 3: The Midwest



Background photograph: USFWS

Inset photographs (from top to bottom): Leopold Wetland Management District: USFWS and Eastern prairie white-fringed orchid: USFWS

Uihlein Marsh Restoration Project

Winnebago County , Wisconsin



PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

Funding Contribution:

Coastal Program: \$40,000

Partner contribution: \$453,200

Total project cost: \$493,200

Partners:

- Ducks Unlimited

Landscape Conservation Cooperative:

- Upper Midwest and Great Lakes

Service Cross-Program Collaboration:

- Ecological Services, Endangered Species, Migratory Birds, and National Wildlife Refuge System

The Coastal Program's ability to work on public and private lands helps the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) to implement landscape conservation beyond their boundaries, and maintain habitat connectivity and continuity. Working with Ducks Unlimited, Coastal Program staff restored 310 acres of marsh on the Uihlein Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) in Wisconsin.

This WPA, located in the Leopold Wetland Management District, is a premier migratory bird area within the Lake Michigan watershed and is managed by the NWRS. The WPA offers exceptional waterfowl breeding, nesting, and migration habitat and is open to the public for a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits. In addition to financial assistance, our staff provided technical assistance including habitat assessments, restoration recommendations, and project design review.

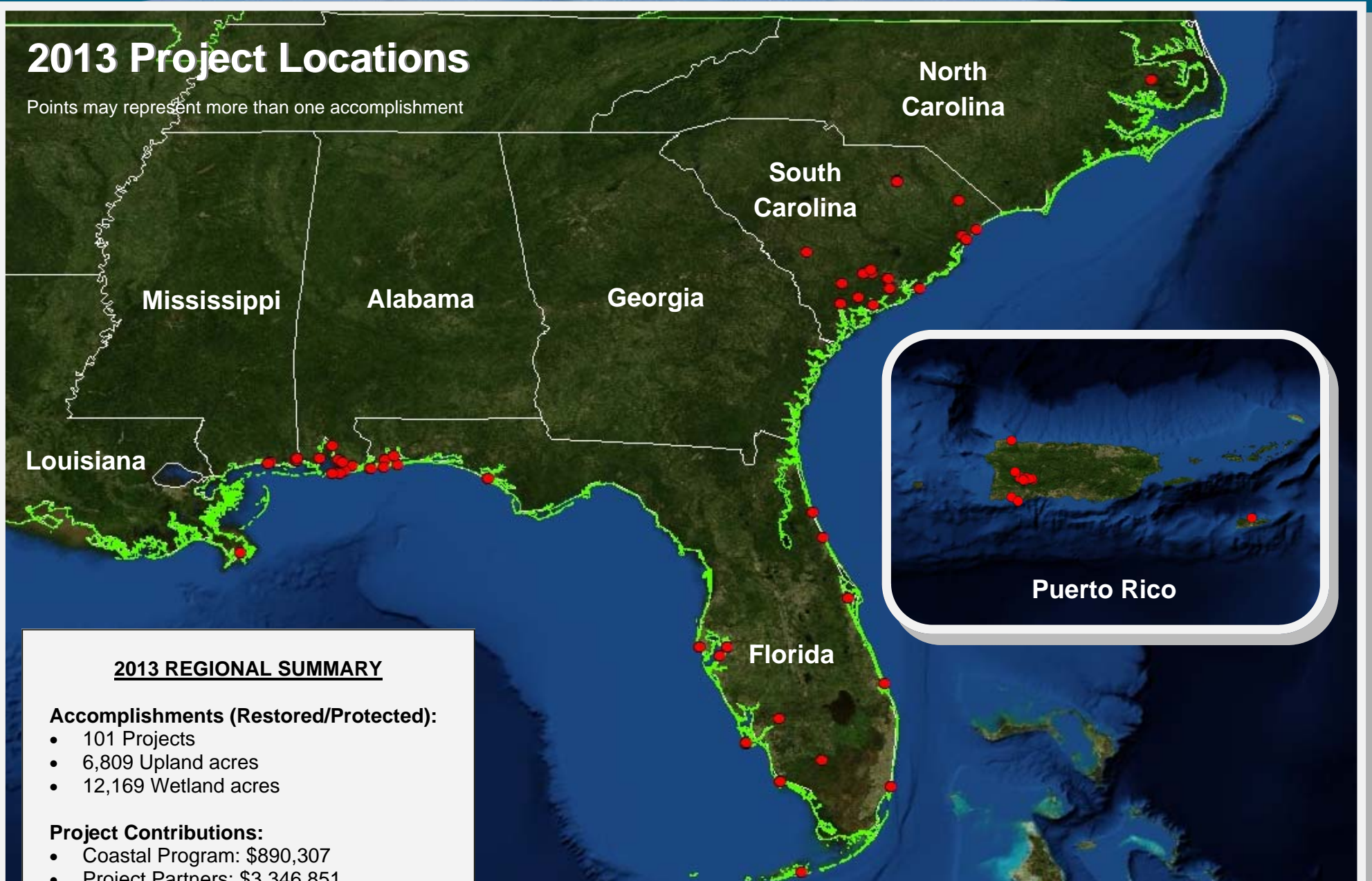
Uihlein Waterfowl Production Area is also home to the federally threatened Eastern prairie white-fringed orchid.



Region 4: The Southeast

2013 Project Locations

Points may represent more than one accomplishment



2013 REGIONAL SUMMARY

Accomplishments (Restored/Protected):

- 101 Projects
- 6,809 Upland acres
- 12,169 Wetland acres

Project Contributions:

- Coastal Program: \$890,307
- Project Partners: \$3,346,851

Babcock Ranch Preserve Project Charlotte and Lee County, Florida

PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

Funding Contribution:

Coastal Program: \$52,500
Partner contribution: \$198,300
Total project cost: \$250,800

Partners:

- Babcock Ranch, Inc. and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Landscape Conservation Cooperative:

- Peninsular Florida

Service Cross-Program Collaboration:

- Ecological Services, Endangered Species, and Migratory Birds



Invasive species are plants or animals that are introduced into a habitat beyond their natural range. The problem with invasive species is that they can thrive in these new habitats and displace native species, which can offset the balance of an ecosystem. Acquisition of the 73,000-acre Babcock Ranch Preserve represented the largest land acquisition by the State of Florida. This project conserved five unique habitats, which contain dozens of state and federally protected plants and wildlife species in south-central Florida.

In 2013, Coastal Program staff assisted with the development of an invasive species management and monitoring program. Program funds also supported a forestry technician who implemented the management plan and restored 884 acres of habitat. The project removed invasive plants, including Brazilian pepper, Cogon grass, Old world climbing fern, and Water hyacinth through prescribed burns and herbicides. After treatment, the project was monitored for wildlife response including amphibians and the federally threatened Florida scrub-jay and Red-cockaded woodpecker.



The Florida scrub-jay is the only species of bird endemic to the state of Florida.

Region 5: The Northeast

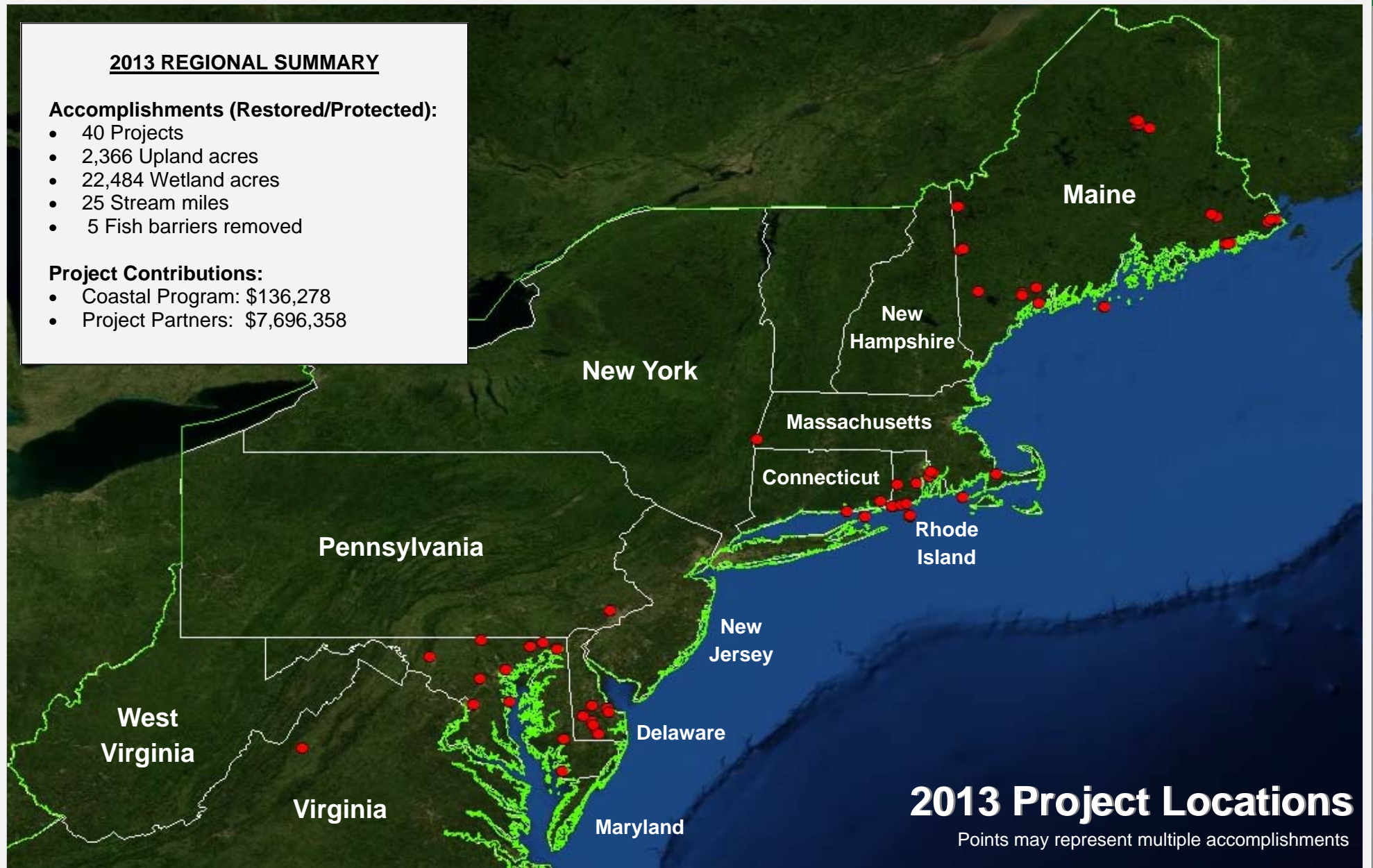
2013 REGIONAL SUMMARY

Accomplishments (Restored/Protected):

- 40 Projects
- 2,366 Upland acres
- 22,484 Wetland acres
- 25 Stream miles
- 5 Fish barriers removed

Project Contributions:

- Coastal Program: \$136,278
- Project Partners: \$7,696,358



Sussex County Technical High School Project

Sussex County, Delaware



As his Eagle Scout project, one enterprising student created a vegetation guide for this outdoor classroom. Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts of America.



In March 2014, Interior Secretary Sally Jewel announced a Secretarial Order to implement the Department of the Interior Youth Initiative, which aims to inspire millions of young people to play, learn, serve, and work in the outdoors. Connecting youth with the outdoors has been a longstanding priority for the Service. The Coastal Program has supported this priority through our involvement in the Schoolyard Habitat Program and other educational programs.

In Delaware, the Coastal Program provided technical and financial assistance to create an outdoor classroom at Sussex County Technical High School, a National Blue Ribbon-recognized school. The outdoor classroom consisted of a pond, wetland, grassland, and forest habitat. Originally completed in 1999, it supports one of the school's most popular programs – the Landscape Management - Environmental Science Program.

In 2013, Coastal Program staff, partners and students worked together to improve and expand this outdoor classroom by developing a new management plan, upgrading water control structures, addressing erosion issues, removing invasive plant species, and planting native forest habitat.

PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

Funding Contribution:

Coastal Program: \$5,000

Total project cost: \$5,000

Partners:

- Sussex Conservation District

Landscape Conservation Cooperative:

- North Atlantic

Service Cross-Program Collaboration:

- Ecological Services



Background photograph: Gerri Wilson

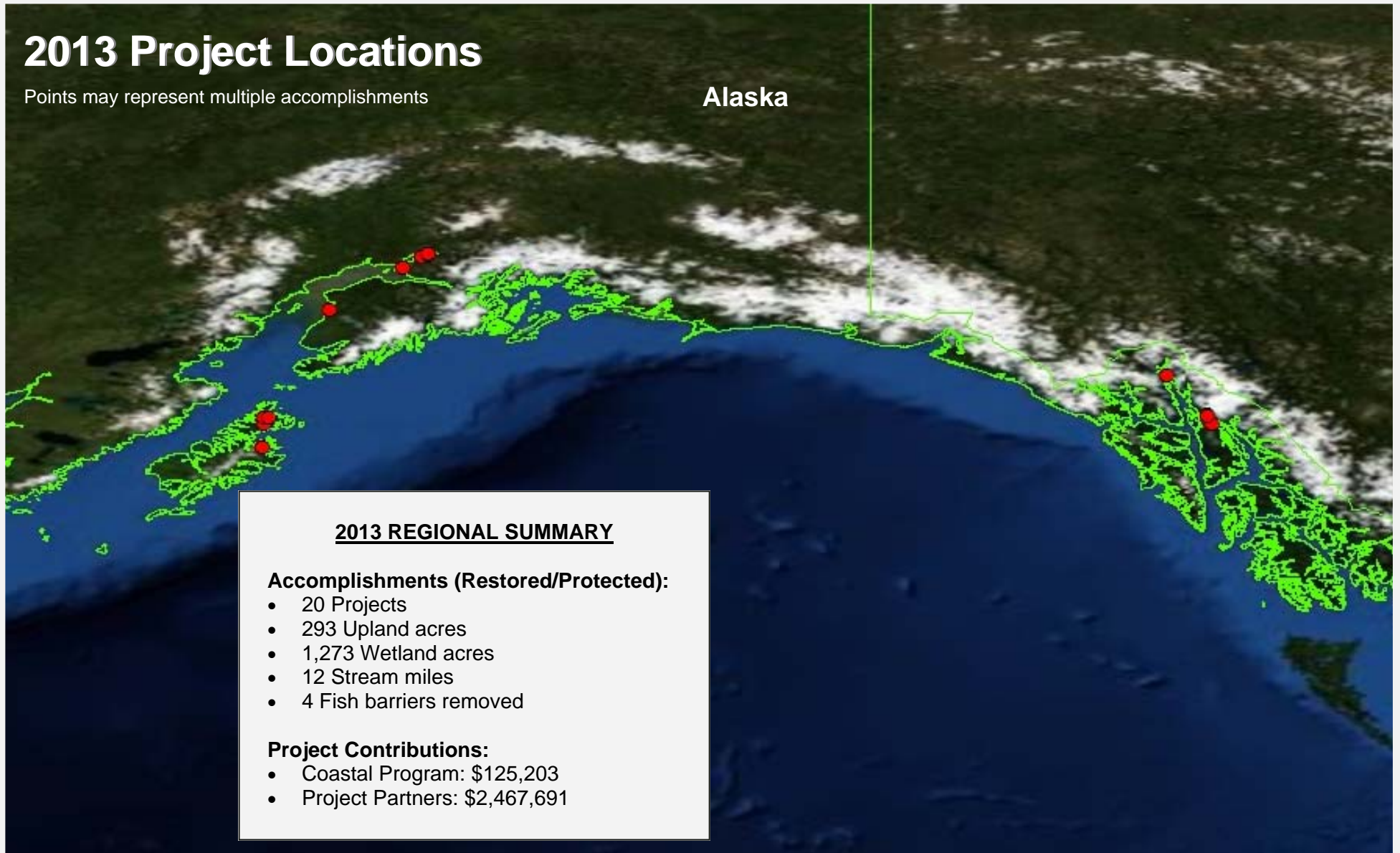
Inset photographs (from left to right): Secretary Sally Jewel with students: DOI and Students inspecting fish from a seine net: G. L. Jefferson (Sussex County Technical High School)

Region 7: Alaska

2013 Project Locations

Points may represent multiple accomplishments

Alaska



Background photograph: Katrina Mueller (USFWS)

Inset photographs (top to bottom): Sandhill cranes: USFWS and Coho salmon: USFWS

Upper Cook Inlet Habitat Conservation Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska



Sandhill cranes

Our staff provided technical assistance for prioritizing lands for protection, with a special emphasis on native-owned lands. We were instrumental in gaining landowner support through our outreach and education efforts, and our financial assistance for land conveyance expenses. We also provided training and assistance to landowners on effective long-term management and restoration practices.

This project will protect vitally important coastal habitat, and benefit anadromous fish, such as the Coho salmon, and migratory birds, such as the Sandhill cranes. Strategically balancing the demands for development and conservation is critically important, especially since the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is one of the most populous and rapidly growing regions of Alaska. In addition, the salmon produced in this region support commercial and recreational fishing, over 1,900 local jobs and contributes millions of dollars to the Alaskan economy. In 2013, this project received the Coastal America Partnership Award.



Coastal Program staff are working with Eklutna Inc. - the largest private landowner in Alaska, and other partners to conserve over 1,350 acres of important wetland and upland habitat, and nearly 10 miles of riparian and stream habitat, in the Upper Cook Inlet, Alaska.

PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

Funding Contribution:

Coastal Program: \$50,000

Non-federal contribution: \$1,507,000

Total project cost: \$1,557,000

Partners:

- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Eklutna, Incorporated
- Great Land Trust
- Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership
- Mat-Su Borough
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Native Village of Eklutna
- Pacific Coast Joint Venture
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Several private landowners

Landscape Conservation Cooperative:

- Northwest Boreal Forest

Service Cross-Program Collaboration:

- Ecological Services, Endangered Species, and Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation

Region 8: Pacific Southwest



Background photograph: USFWS

Inset photograph (from left to right): California least tern: Mark Pavelka (USFWS) and Colorado Lagoon: Carolyn Lieberman (USFWS)

Colorado Lagoon Habitat Restoration Project

Los Angeles County, California



Despite its urban location, Colorado Lagoon hosts native salt marsh that provides habitat for over 75 species of marine birds, including the state and federally endangered California least tern. It is also one of the first estuaries along the southern route of the Pacific Flyway where migrating birds can rest and feed after traveling through Los Angeles.

PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

Funding Contribution:

Coastal Program: \$73,400

Partner contribution: \$13,673,000

Total project cost: \$13,746,400

Partners:

- California Coastal Conservancy
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Native Plant Society
- California State Water Resources Control Board
- City of Long Beach
- Friends of Colorado Lagoon
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Recreational Equipment Incorporated
- San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Wells Fargo

Landscape Conservation Cooperative:

- California

Service Cross-Program Collaboration:

- Ecological Services and Migratory Birds



Urban conservation, particularly along the flyways, is increasingly important to migrating birds and waterfowl because of habitat loss and fragmentation. It also provides an excellent opportunity to educate the public about environmental stewardship. In Long Beach, California, the Coastal Program provided technical

and financial assistance to restore an 18-acre lagoon. The Colorado Lagoon is part of a 500-acre remnant of the Los Cerritos Wetlands, which once included over 2,400 acres of coastal wetlands.

Working with 12 federal, state and local partners, Coastal Program staff assisted with planning, regulatory compliance, and securing funds for the project. Since 2008, our staff also helped facilitate over 300 community events, including invasive species removals and native vegetation plantings, which were critical to building support for a large-scale restoration project.

Eric Zahn of the Friends of Colorado Lagoon (FOCL) commented, "*The partnership that was forged between FOCL and the USFWS Coastal Program has been so critical to the Colorado Lagoon Restoration Project. The funding allowed for FOCL to be the vanguard for restoration at Colorado Lagoon, along with restoring vital salt marsh habitat. FOCL was able to rally local citizens around the large-scale restoration project through the community-based programming.*"

Technical Assistance

The Coastal Program provides technical assistance to support coastal conservation efforts ranging from habitat assessments, adaptive habitat management, conservation design and monitoring, grant administration, and national policy development. Our staff possess diverse skills and expertise to provide assistance to other Service programs, federal, state and local agencies, tribes, conservation groups, universities, corporations, and private landowners. Our technical assistance provides broader benefits to federal trust species by helping partners develop policies and conduct landscape-scale conservation planning. It also enables us to enlist the support of partners to achieve the Service's conservation priorities.

The Coastal Program also encourages community stewardship through outreach and training. By developing conservation tools and protocols, we promote ecologically sound decision making and improve the delivery of successful habitat conservation. These efforts improve the science of restoration and reduce the overall cost of habitat conservation.



Invasive Species Coordination



Background photograph: Leo Miranda (USFWS)

Inset photographs (clockwise from top left): Joe Milmoie (USFWS); Christopher Eng (USFWS); Christopher Darnell (USFWS); Sandy Davis (USFWS) and Steve Kendrot (APHIS)

Opposite inset photographs (top to bottom): USFWS and Molly Martin (USFWS)

GULF COAST OIL SPILL RECOVERY PLANNING

The impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill were catastrophic to the Gulf Coast region, ecologically and economically. The Service is drafting a blueprint for the ecological restoration of the Gulf Coast. Coastal Program staff are instrumental in the development of this blueprint and Service's Vision for a Healthy Gulf of Mexico, which articulates the Service's science-based conservation priorities in the Gulf. The vision document will serve as a catalyst for coordinating restoration efforts among the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force – a partnership of federal and state agencies tasked with developing and implementing a Gulf Coast restoration strategy.



CENTRAL EVERGLADES PLANNING

The Coastal Program in Florida provided technical assistance to the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP). The goal of the project is to improve the quantity, quality and distribution of water flows to the central Everglades. The project area includes the Everglades National Park, Water Conservation Areas – tracts of remnant Everglades marsh, and southern coastal systems. Coastal Program and other Service staff provided background information on coastal ecosystems, evaluated the best strategies to restore water flows, and assessed benefits to federal trust species, such as the wood stork, Manatees and American crocodile.



American crocodile

Technical Assistance

STREAM RESTORATION TRAINING

Coastal Program staff helped teach three river assessment and restoration courses at the National Conservation Training Center: Applied Fluvial Geomorphology, River Morphology and Applications, and River Assessment and Monitoring. Each course had 40 participants from federal, state, and local agencies, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. This training benefits stream resources through better watershed management, project review and regulations, and stream assessment and restoration. Based on past survey data, participants use the training annually on at least four restoration projects totaling approximately two miles of stream.



LISIANSKI ISLAND SURVEY

Lisianski Island is part of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and according to some sea level rise predictions, it will be one of the Hawaiian atolls to remain above water. The Lisianski Island was identified as the highest priority for the expansion of federally-listed endangered Nihoa finch, Laysan finch, and Laysan duck populations.

Coastal Program staff were instrumental in acquiring a grant that evaluated the suitability and feasibility of translocating these endangered species to Lisianski Island, which was the first time anyone has visited the island to assess habitat conditions since 2006. The grant also funded seabird nesting, insect and vegetation surveys, including invasive species. Coastal Program staff worked closely with refuge personnel to plan, coordinate, and implement the habitat assessment.

Background photograph: Joe Milmoie (USFWS)

Inset photographs (clockwise from top left): Northeastern stream: Ryan Hagarty (USFWS); Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge: Tom Carlisle (USFWS); Pink salmon: Kentaro Yasui and Nihoa finch: USFWS

BLUE CARBON WORKSHOPS

Coastal Program staff represents the Service on the Interagency Coastal Blue Carbon Team and is sponsoring three regional workshops on coastal habitat conservation and carbon sequestration, with the non-profit organization Restore America's Estuaries. The workshops are designed to educate federal, state, and local planners, land managers and restoration practitioners about the environmental and economic benefits of protecting and restoring coastal habitats, which can be highly effective at sequestering large amounts of carbon. Workshop participants will acquire tools they can use to identify and prioritize coastal habitats for conservation and work on real world case studies to apply the information and skills.



PRIORITIZING FISH PASSAGE PROJECTS

Small streams provide important spawning habitat for anadromous fish, such as salmon. In Southeast Alaska, poorly designed road crossings are the primary impediments to these spawning grounds and have serious impacts on fish populations and diversity.

Due to limited resources, it is important to prioritize fish passage projects in order to be strategic and maximize the ecological benefits. In partnership with the Takshanuk Watershed Council, Coastal Program staff evaluated 37 crossings and prioritized 21 crossings for restoration in Haines Borough, Alaska. As funds become available, this strategic approach will ensure that we maximize our return on investment for salmon conservation.



Background photograph: Joe Milmo, USFWS

Front cover photographs (Left to Right): Atlantic puffin (USFWS), Dam removal (Mark Secrist, USFWS) and Coral reef (Jim Maragos, USFWS)

Back cover photographs (Left to Right): Sea turtle (JP Zegarra), River Herring (Jones River Watershed Association) and Schaus swallowtail (Dr. Thomas Emmel, University of Florida)