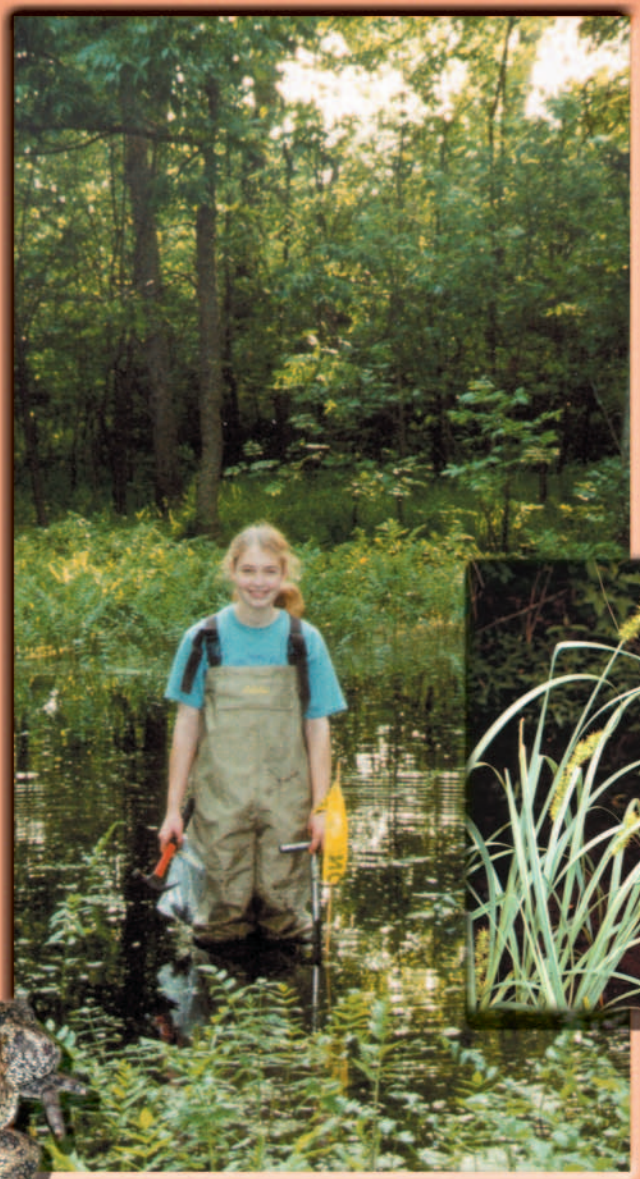


Working Together

Tools for Helping Imperiled Wildlife on Private Lands

From Our Partners

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Private landowners, large and small, play a vital role conserving habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants. In fact, more than two-thirds of the nation's threatened and endangered species use habitat found on private land. If not for the efforts of caring landowners, we would lose the rich diversity of our nation's heritage.

Private landowner accomplishments to protect listed species have been impressive since Congress passed the Endangered Species Act in 1973. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) programs described in this booklet are intended to assist landowners who want to continue the important work of conserving species.

It is useful to think of the different programs described in the booklet as tools. Not every tool is right for every job. The booklet is intended to guide you to some of the tools that will best fit your needs and management goals. The USFWS Landowner Incentive Program and several U.S. Department of Agriculture programs also provide assistance for habitat conservation. For more information, contact either the USFWS or any of the undersigned organizations.

It is important to understand that all of the programs described are voluntary. They are designed to allow interested landowners to fashion a conservation strategy that is consistent with their land management objectives. We hope you will consider these programs and become a partner to help recover imperiled species.

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Forest Foundation

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Environmental Defense

National Association of Conservation Districts

Cover photographs (left to right) are courtesy of:
©John Rae NYC 2004,
Dr. Michael Forstner, Texas State University, San Marcos,
the Gale Larue family, USDA,
Ursula C. Petersen, Biologist, Endangered Species Habitat Program, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection,
Thomas Meyer, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

"Conservation districts have long advocated that natural resources conservation must come from voluntary, incentive-based approaches. For species conservation, it is clear that success lies in flexible tools and incentives that promote diverse habitat yet still allow economic use of private lands. Thank you, FWS, for collecting information on these tools in a landowner-friendly fashion."

Bill Wilson
President
National Association
of Conservation Districts

"The greatest successes occur when landowners promote these tools to their peers."

Laurence Wisemen
President
American Forest Foundation

"With more than two-thirds of listed species living on private lands, there has to be cooperation between government agencies and landowners if the Endangered Species Act is going to be successful. Farmers and ranchers of the nation understand the need to preserve species, and they are willing to voluntarily participate in habitat conservation programs that are incentive-based but still provide protection for their private property rights."

Bob Stallman
President
American Farm Bureau Federation

"Private individuals, families, and farmers own the bulk of the South's 215 million acres of forestland. Cooperative initiatives such as Safe Harbor are critical because they encourage stewardship and reduce landowner uncertainty while enhancing habitat for threatened and endangered species."

H. Glenn Hughes, PhD
Extension Professor
Mississippi
State University
Extension Service

"The State fish and wildlife agencies clearly appreciate the merits and value of working with private landowners to achieve fish and wildlife conservation and recognize the significant contribution of these USFWS incentive programs to that effort."

John Baughman
Executive Vice President
International Association
of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

"Working with private landowners on conservation projects since 1995 has affirmed our belief that landowners are essential and willing partners in wildlife conservation—if they have the resources needed. Incentive tools such as Safe Harbor Agreements and conservation banks work for both landowners and rare wildlife. Financial, technical, and regulatory incentives all encourage farmers, ranchers, family foresters, and other landowners to be good stewards of our nation's natural heritage."

Michael Bean, Co-director
Center for Conservation Incentives
Environmental Defense

From Our Secretary

Dear Citizens:

This booklet provides information for citizen stewards and landowners, who embody President Bush's vision of cooperative conservation—a vision built upon innovation, local ideas, inspiration and incentives, and on-the-ground action. This pamphlet highlights tools that we hope you find useful in your conservation efforts.

Aldo Leopold, a visionary 20th century conservationist, imagined a nation of citizen stewards. Environmental progress, he proposed, ultimately resides in the efforts of all of us to apply a caring hand to the landscape. It resides in our own actions, in our backyards, at our places of work, on our farms and ranches and factories, and in our communities.

Citizen stewards like yourselves have the sort of "on-the-ground, in-the-dirt, everyday, nose-to-the grindstone" knowledge that improves land management decisions. You have knowledge of time, place, and situation—the details that make one location different from another and that determine what works where.

The Fish and Wildlife Service embraces cooperative conservation—and encourages citizen stewardship through a variety of policy tools that help the Service work with landowners to protect wildlife. One Texas rancher, using these tools, summed up his experience saying, "We're just 'wildlifing' it all over the place, and we're happy to do it."

Through an expanding set of cooperative conservation tools, the Service is helping nurture a nation of citizen stewards 'wildlifing' it all over the place. As this booklet describes, a power company in Georgia is helping reintroduce a fish, the robust redhorse, back into the Ocmulgee River using a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances. More than 300 landowners have enrolled over 3.6 million acres in 32 Safe Harbor Agreements that protect 36 species listed as endangered or threatened—species such as the northern aplomado falcon, San Joaquin kit fox, and red-cockaded woodpecker.

In Wisconsin, under a Habitat Conservation Plan, 38 partners including timber companies, The Nature Conservancy, state agencies, local highway departments, power companies, and other landowners are protecting over 250,000 acres of habitat for the endangered Karner blue—a butterfly. Across the nation, other habitat plans are helping conserve 590 species on over 39 million acres.

This upwelling of citizen stewardship across the Nation marks a coming of age of cooperative conservation. Through these efforts, our children and grandchildren will continue to enjoy this nation's rich natural diversity. I thank each of you who are lending a caring hand to our lands, waters, and wildlife.

Gale A. Norton
Secretary
Department of the Interior

Photograph courtesy of Tami A. Heilemann, DOI

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Programs

More than one tool may describe the status of species on your property and meet your specific goals

Question	Your Needs and Concerns	U.S. FWS Tool
Do you have a listed species (or habitat for one) on your land?	Would you like to manage your land in a way that aids in species recovery and provides flexibility in the use of your land?	Take a look at Safe Harbor Agreements —pages 1, 2
	Are you considering an activity that could adversely impact the species or its habitat?	A Habitat Conservation Plan may cover your land-use activities and conserve listed species—pages 3, 4
	Would you like to manage your land in perpetuity for the species if you could generate income by doing so?	Conservation Banks may be of interest to you —pages 5, 6
	Are you considering a Habitat Conservation Plan or permanently protecting the habitat?	A Section 6 Grant may be a source of funds —pages 7, 8
Do you have a candidate or at-risk species (or habitat for one) on your land?	Would you like to conserve the species to prevent the need to list under the Endangered Species Act?	See Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances —pages 9, 10
		Explore Candidate Conservation Agreements —pages 11, 12
Would you like to help to maintain or restore habitat for imperiled species on your property?		Private Stewardship Grants may be a source of funds —pages 13, 14
		Partners for Fish and Wildlife may be a source of funds —pages 15, 16

To assist you in learning our language, a glossary of terms is on page 17.

1.

Safe Harbor Agreements

What are SHAs?

Agreements that provide regulatory assurances for landowners who voluntarily aid in the recovery of species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

What is the landowner's role?

Voluntarily agrees to implement management actions that will contribute to the recovery of a listed species for a specified period of time. Works with the Service to develop a management plan and the agreement.

What are the benefits?

For the landowner: Receives regulatory assurances that he/she can alter or modify property enrolled in the SHA and return it to originally agreed upon "baseline" conditions at the end of the agreement (even if this means incidentally "taking" the covered species).
For the species: Progress towards recovery.

Who can participate?

Any non-Federal property owner. Whole parcels or portions of the owner's property may be enrolled in the SHA.

Property owners also can enroll in an existing programmatic or "umbrella" SHA that is designed for a region or an entire State and is administered by a State or local agency or other entity.

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Michael Forstner
Texas State University, San Marcos

A Texas Cattle Rancher Who "Became a Believer"

"We're just 'wildlifing' it all over the place, and we're happy to do it," Bob Long said. Long is enhancing habitat on his 550-acre property to benefit the Houston toad, an endangered species. His Safe Harbor Agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service will expand areas for Houston toads to use for breeding, foraging, and hibernating.

After fencing off ponds, Long has done the same for a major wetland and while providing new livestock watering facilities, he's using rotational grazing to prevent cattle from trampling toads during the six-month breeding season. Along with keeping trees for shade—particularly important during Texas summers—Long has removed invasive eastern red cedar, planted native bunchgrasses, and conducted prescribed burns to clear low-growing scrub so that the Houston toad can move through corridors that link ponds and woodlands.

Now, with help from the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, he's putting in a pipeline to divert water from a creek to the ponds during drought. In addition, Long will plug a drainage ditch and reopen an inlet to restore a 28-acre marsh to benefit Houston toads and other wetland dependent wildlife. "You can say that I'm a landowner willing to try innovative measures," he said.

"We just found out three years ago that we had Houston toads. As a matter of fact, it was kind of a shock to us. . . the survey showed that we had 25 calling toads at night, the largest number in the county."
—Bob Long

Photograph courtesy of the Long Family

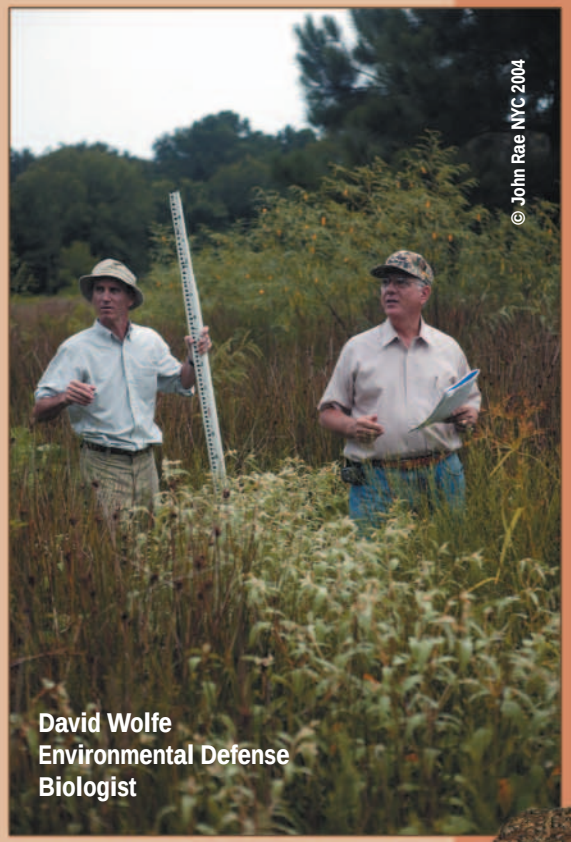
Environmental Defense, a nonprofit organization, was the key in reaching out to Long and provided funding for biologists to conduct population surveys for the toad on his property. Long is helping Environmental Defense and the Service promote Safe Harbor Agreements with private landowners.

Long also is working with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Department of Agriculture. His Safe Harbor Agreement will last until 2014, when he will decide whether to renew it.

His family has lived in Texas for generations. "I do love the land," Long said. "This is my heritage."

For more information:

http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/harborqa.pdf
http://endangered.fws.gov/policy/safe_har.htm
www.fws.gov/endangered/index.html
Service regional contacts are listed on page 18.



David Wolfe
Environmental Defense
Biologist

Safe Harbor Agreements

Private landowners are crucial for the recovery of listed species that occur mostly or solely on privately owned land. Through SHAs, landowners can put their conservation ethic to work, confident that their efforts will not result in increased restrictions on how they can use their land.

Voluntary actions by landowners with SHAs may include habitat maintenance or restoration activities or reintroducing a listed species on their land.

Photograph courtesy of Mike Barnett, Texas Farm Bureau

"Incentive programs, such as those represented by Safe Harbor Agreements, are much more effective in preserving species than the use of regulatory approaches. Partnership agreements that recognize the property rights of landowners while enhancing habitat present opportunities to make all participants winners."

—Daniel Dierschke (second from left), Texas Farm Bureau, District 8 Director
Also pictured are Bobby Long, landowner (far left), Melinda E. Taylor, Environmental Defense (third from left), and Bob Long.

By June 2005, more than 325 landowners had enrolled over 3.6 million acres in 32 Safe Harbor Agreements. Among the 36 listed species covered are the northern aplomado falcon, red-cockaded woodpecker, California red-legged frog, gopher tortoise, San Joaquin kit fox, and Schaus swallowtail butterfly.

3.

Habitat Conservation Plans

What are HCPs?
Plans that allow for economic development in conjunction with endangered species conservation. If an HCP meets the specified criteria, including minimizing and mitigating the anticipated take of listed species, the Service issues an incidental take permit that allows the landowner to legally take listed species while proceeding with development or other activities.

What is the landowner's role?
The landowner develops an HCP with the Service that includes an assessment of the likely impacts to the species from the proposed project, the steps he/she will take to minimize and mitigate those impacts, and the funding available to implement the steps. The plan also identifies alternative actions to the taking and the reasons why those alternatives are not being used. The landowner then applies for an incidental take permit.

An HCP may exist in your area that you can join. Such plans are known as programmatic HCPs and are often county- or region-wide plans such as the San Diego Multiple-Species Conservation Program. Plans may include plants and non-listed species as well as listed species.

Photograph courtesy of Thomas Meyer
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Karner Blue—A Butterfly Captivates Wisconsin

"Instead of hearing, 'I don't have that butterfly on my property,' I hear, 'How can I get some of that wild lupine seed?,' 'You should see the lupine patch I have going!,' or 'I saw my first Karner blue on my land!'" That's Dave Lentz, Karner Blue Habitat Conservation Plan coordinator with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, talking about small, private landowners.

Not long after the butterfly was listed as endangered, forestry companies contacted the DNR to make sure that their timber-harvesting activities were lawful. They had been trying to prevent the disturbance of lupine, the host plant for the larval stage of the Karner blue. The discussion expanded to utility companies, similarly committed to ensuring that mowing rights-of-way was in keeping with conserving the butterfly. The result was a landscape-scale Habitat Conservation Plan. Under the Statewide HCP, the Wisconsin DNR has a permit authorizing the "incidental take" of the species in connection with otherwise lawful activities. Along with avoiding harm to the butterfly and performing surveys for it, partners conduct prescribed burns to benefit wild lupine—deliberately making sure that sunlight reaches it—or they plant lupine and nectar plants. Also, partners develop community outreach tools such as Alliant Energy Company's brochure, and International Paper Company's "Spotlight on the Environment" video.

The HCP has 38 partners, including the DNR, Wisconsin county forest departments, gas and electric companies, timber companies, town and county highway departments, The Nature Conservancy, and the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and Agriculture. The HCP applies to more than 250,000 acres where the majority of the butterflies are found.

"We're exploring a new approach—not a heavy-handed one, but one where landowners embrace a stewardship ethic and apply their knowledge. We're trying to encourage good people to do the right thing. So far, it's been a validation of the voluntary strategy."
—Dave Lentz

Photograph courtesy of Thomas Meyer,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

"We will be building a walking trail adjacent to Karner blue habitat, with interpretive signs to let trail users know about barrens habitat and the butterfly."
—Randy Poelma, Biologist
Ho-Chunk Nation

Photograph courtesy of Randy Poelma of the Ho-Chunk Nation

Nearly 350 private landowners are voluntarily participating in a variety of activities that also benefit the butterfly and its habitat including farmers, family forest owners with fewer than 1000 acres, and individual homeowners.

With about 12,000 acres of land in more than 24 counties in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois, the Ho-Chunk Nation, a Native American tribe, is working on habitat projects for the species.

"I let them know that private landowners are not obligated to do anything under the recovery plan for endangered Karner blue butterflies," says Wisconsin middle school teacher Bob Welch, another partner. With assistance from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Welch and his wife, Deb Martin, have grown lupine from seed from stock on their farm and worked with neighbors in a 10-mile radius to plant more than 100 acres of the host plant.

"By maintaining forests, barrens, savannas, and rights-of-way, partners are implementing the HCP on Wisconsin's working landscape," said Cathy Carnes, the Service's Endangered Species Coordinator in Green Bay.

For more information: www.fws.gov/endangered/HCP/index.html
www.dnr.state.wi.us
Service regional contacts are listed on page 18.

"And we work with the DNR to show people where the habitat is, and everybody is excited about it... We have something that's on the endangered species list that's flourishing around here. It's kind of cool."
—Carol Grassman
Waarik Drug Store Owner

Photographs courtesy of Mike Engel, USFWS

Habitat Conservation Plans

What are the benefits?
For the landowner: After receiving an incidental take permit to cover his/her activities that may result in take of listed species, they can move ahead with the assurance that their actions are not in violation of the ESA.
For the species: Permanent protection and management of habitat for specific species covered by the HCP.

Who can participate?
Any non-Federal landowner.

As of June 2005, incidental take permits have been issued for 484 HCPs, covering more than 39 million acres. These HCPs assist in the conservation of 590 species. Among the species benefitting from HCPs are the bull trout, Hawaiian stilt, northern flying squirrel, coastal California gnatcatcher, red-cockaded woodpecker, and willowy monardella.

5. Conservation Banks

What are conservation banks?
Conservation banks are lands that are permanently protected and managed as mitigation for the loss elsewhere of listed species and their habitats. Conservation banking is a free market enterprise based on supply and demand of mitigation credits. By mitigating multiple development projects at a single site, a conservation bank, all parties involved, including the species, benefit from economies of scale.

What is the landowner's role?
Contacts the Service to see whether his/her land is suitable. Appropriate land generally has habitat and is occupied by one or more listed species or is located strategically to contribute to the recovery of such species. If the habitat is suitable, the landowner agrees to preserve and manage this land in perpetuity. He/she is given "mitigation credits" to sell to other landowners who need to mitigate their land development impacts on listed species.

What are the benefits?
For the landowner: Retains title to his/her land while making money selling mitigation credits.
For the species: Provides permanently preserved habitat, generally in larger parcels than would otherwise occur, specifically managed for them.

Photographs courtesy of Larry Serpa

Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp

Dove Ridge Conservation Bank: Preserving a California Landscape

When the California Department of Transportation offered to buy an almond ranch and adjacent grazing land in the Sacramento Valley as mitigation for a highway construction project, the landowners, Loafer Creek LLC did some fast research about the Endangered Species Act and vernal pools (also known as seasonal wetlands). It turned out that the property has value in mitigating for development elsewhere.

About 90 miles north of Sacramento, the 2400 acres are particularly valuable because of a stream that runs through them as well as vernal pools that are home to the threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp, endangered vernal pool tadpole shrimp, and endangered Butte County meadowfoam, a plant.

Loafer Creek LLC had planned to develop the property, but after conducting meticulous biological inventories, they decided to preserve it. Working with the Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies, they established the Dove Ridge Conservation Bank. The bank's property is preserved in perpetuity through an easement, management plan, and endowment.

In return, Loafer Creek LLC has a total of 466 "preservation credits" which have been selling for $100,000 each.

"After the studies, the company decided to buy a Bell 407 helicopter, along with remote sensing cameras, infra-red cameras, and topographical technology to measure within 10 centimeters of the property. Now, with more investors and 20,000 acres in the county, we're trying to protect the whole watershed."

—Angi Orlandella
Technology and Landscape Applications Director
Loafer Creek LLC

Photograph courtesy of Chris Stewart/San Francisco Chronicle

"It's one of the largest conservation banks in the State and has been beautifully preserved as a natural landscape. It's a good model for others."

—Susan Hill
Biologist
Fish and Wildlife Service

Photograph courtesy of Loafer Creek, LLC.

Loafer Creek LLC started out as a California-based real estate development company. They've added mitigation banking, conservation land acquisitions, and other environmental services to their business and are now working with the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the State Water Resources Control Board to add wetland mitigation banking to increase the site's marketability.

The Dove Ridge Conservation Bank has demonstrated that permanently setting aside large parcels of environmentally sensitive land in perpetuity, while allowing development elsewhere, makes ecosystem conservation compatible with a market-based economy.

For more information: www.fws.gov/endangered/landowner/index.html
www.LoaferCreek.com/MitigationBanking/DoveRidgeConservationBank.aspx
Service regional contacts are listed on page 18.

Photograph courtesy of Chris Stewart/San Francisco Chronicle

"Protection of our environment should be the benchmark for and the protection of our economic way of life."

—Steve Mardigian
Loafer Creek LLC

Conservation Banks

Who can participate?
Any landowner, public or private. Federal lands may require special consideration.

In general, ranches, farms, timber operations, forested or wooded areas, undeveloped lands, and any other lands with natural resource value are good choices for conservation banks if one or more listed species occur on the site.

As of June 2005, more than 45 conservation banks have been approved. Banks in Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, and Texas cover more than 35,000 acres with habitat for more than 40 species including the vernal pool tadpole shrimp, California red-legged frog, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, San Joaquin kit fox, golden-cheeked warbler, gopher tortoise, and several plant species.

7.

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants

What are Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation (Section 6) Grants?
Federal assistance to States and Territories to participate in voluntary conservation projects for candidate and listed species; private landowners are important partners.

Conservation Grants **provide funds to States and Territories to implement projects such as species status surveys and development of management plans for candidate and listed species.**

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants **provide funds to States and Territories to develop Habitat Conservation Plans through baseline surveys.**

Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grants **provide funds to States and Territories to acquire land associated with approved HCPs. Grants do not fund the mitigation required of an HCP permittee; instead, they support conservation actions by State or local governments that complement mitigation.**

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants **provide funds to States and Territories to acquire habitats essential for recovery of threatened and endangered species.**

© Jason Dunham, Boise Forestry Sciences Laboratory, U.S. Forest Service

Montana: Endangered Species Grants Help Keep "Big Sky Country" Big

"That's one of the most productive bull trout streams in the country," said Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Bob Lee of the headwaters of the Bull River in Montana. The area is now a part of almost three square miles of property that belongs to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, thanks to the support of Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants.

"The property is associated with Plum Creek Timber Company's Habitat Conservation Plan for native fish—bull trout and cutthroat trout—and is designed to enhance the conservation effects of the HCP," said Lee. "We identified parcels that would benefit other wildlife, too—gray wolves, grizzly bears, Canada lynx, and fishers—by providing a travel corridor to unite populations and expand their gene pools."

The grants helped the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks purchase the land from Plum Creek Timber Company, while the Avista Corporation (a utility company) and the Conservation Fund donated a 559-acre conservation easement to match the Federal money. At the ceremony dedicating the area, Mark Elsbree, Vice President and Northwest Director of The Conservation Fund, termed the habitat, protected for grizzly bears, bull trout, and other wildlife "spectacular" and applauded "the confluence of the economic side and environmental side of what's being done today." The Conservation Fund helped negotiate the land transfer and provided early funding.

The 1800-acre Bull River Wildlife Management Area protects a half-mile of frontage on Bull Lake, along with a stretch of the Bull River, wetlands, riparian areas, and upland forests—prime real estate for development but crucial for conserving endangered and threatened species. The area is open to the public for hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, and horseback riding.

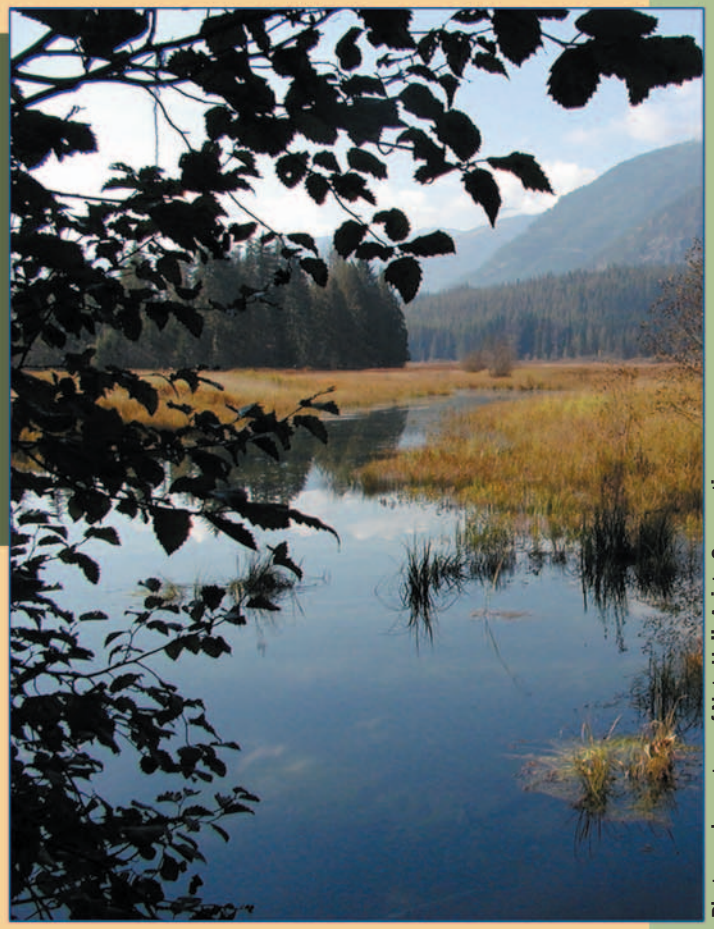
Photograph courtesy of Don Morgan, USFWS

Bull River Wildlife Management Area Dedication Ceremony

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants

"The creation of the Bull River Wildlife Management Area is a great example of how the HCP Land Acquisition Grant Program has worked in Montana. Through the efforts of a dedicated and diverse group of partners, we have conserved one of the most wildlife-rich areas in the Bull River Valley for future generations."

—Tim Bodurtha
Supervisor
Kalispell, Montana
Fish and Wildlife Service Office



Photograph courtesy of Nate Hall, Avista Corporation

Tim Swant, manager of the Avista Utilities Clark Fork License, echoed the value of cooperation on this project. "Throughout this process we all worked together to develop a course of action that fit everyone's goals," he said. "We were able to come up with an outcome that protected the habitat and met the needs of the cooperators."

What is the landowner's role?

Private landowners are important partners with States and Territories in the section 6 grants program. While only States and Territories can apply to the Service for a section 6 grant, landowners work with States to develop proposals for grants to support the development of HCPs and to protect habitat to conserve listed species. Counties, cities, and large and small landowners have received sub-awards from States and Territories.

What are the benefits?

For the landowner: Landowners may receive funds to offset the costs associated with developing an HCP or to protect land in perpetuity for the purpose of species conservation.

For the species: Recovery and HCP land acquisition grants provide a source of funds to acquire the habitat most important for the recovery and conservation of listed species.

Who can participate?

States and Territories with a cooperative agreement with the Service. Private landowners, communities, and Tribes may participate as partners in developing HCPs or protecting habitats for listed species.

For more information:
http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/Section6/index.html
Service regional contacts are listed on page 18.

Photograph courtesy of Nate Hall, Avista Corporation

"This is an incredible example of a private timber company, a private utility company, a conservation organization, and State and Federal agencies working together for the benefit of wildlife."

—Jim Williams,
Regional Wildlife Program Manager,
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

In FY 2005, the Service will award approximately $78 million to States and territories for projects to support endangered species conservation.

9.

Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances

Photograph courtesy of Jimmy Evans, Georgia DNR

What are CCAAs?
Agreements that provide incentives for landowners to implement conservation measures for candidate and at-risk species.

What is the landowner's role?
Voluntarily agrees to implement specific conservation measures for candidate or at-risk species. Works with the Service to develop a management plan and the agreement that lasts for a certain number of years.

What are the benefits?
For the landowner: Regulatory assurances that if the species is later listed, the landowner will not be required to do anything beyond what is specified in the agreement.
For the species: Lessens threats and stabilizes or improves habitat.

Who can participate?
Any non-Federal property owner. Whole parcels or portions of the owner's property may be covered by the CCAA.

Property owners can also enroll in an existing programmatic or "umbrella" CCAA that is administered by a State or local agency or other entity and that is designed for a region or an entire State.

Robust Redhorse Conservation and the Georgia Power Company

In 2002, Georgia Power, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the Fish and Wildlife Service signed a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the robust redhorse, an at-risk species rediscovered in the early 1990s in central Georgia's Oconee River. Two objectives of the agreement are to re-establish a robust redhorse population in the Ocmulgee River and to increase understanding of habitat requirements and the life history of the species.

In return for the specific conservation activities described in the agreement, the Service issued a permit that ensures that the Georgia Power Company will not be required to undertake additional measures if the at-risk species is listed under the Endangered Species Act.

In addition to helping re-establish the robust redhorse in the Ocmulgee River, Georgia Power has implemented a new regime for the Sinclair Dam, providing flows to emulate seasonal discharges in the Oconee River. The Georgia DNR has collected brood fish, set up temporary hatcheries, tagged and released fish in several rivers, and monitored their progress. The results are encouraging. Stocked populations are surviving and maturing, and our knowledge of the biology of the robust redhorse has increased significantly.

"Whoever wrote this policy could not have come up with a better solution. Whenever you have a rare species you want to conserve, you want boundaries to the commitments should the species be listed. It was a great fit for us."
—Mike Nichols
Environmental Laboratory Manager
Georgia Power Company

Photograph courtesy of Jimmy Evans, Georgia DNR

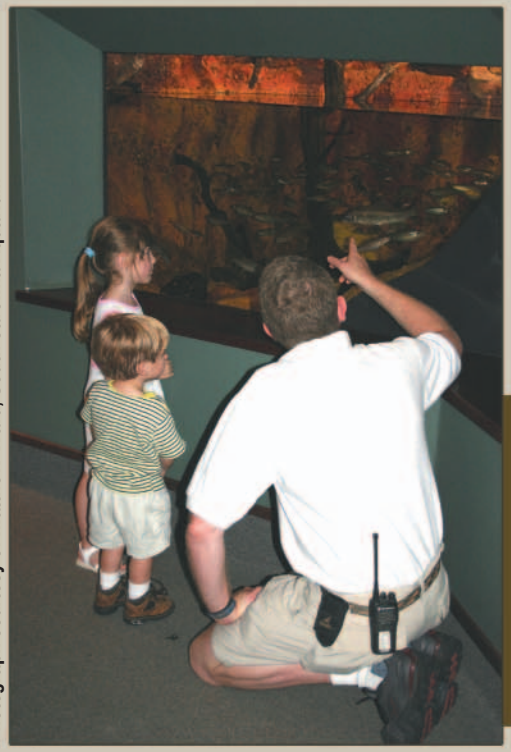
"How could a fish that may reach 30 inches in length and weigh more than 15 pounds exist undiscovered in some of the most heavily sampled rivers in the United States?"

—Georgia DNR biologist Jimmy Evans

Photograph courtesy of Jimmy Evans, Georgia DNR

Shortly after the species was rediscovered, a group of 13 Federal, State, industry, and private interests formed the Robust Redhorse Conservation Committee to implement conservation measures to help the fish and possibly preclude the need for a Federal listing. Georgia Power funded Federal and State research on the preferred habitat, population numbers, and the best conditions for re-introducing the fish.

"Numerous partners contributed resources—Georgia Power Company, Duke Power, Carolina Power and Light, and South Carolina Electric and Gas, all the Federal and State natural resources agencies, the South Carolina Aquarium, the Georgia Wildlife Federation—it is a big partnership across a three-State region," said Jimmy Evans of the Georgia DNR.



Photograph courtesy of Matthew Ward, South Carolina Aquarium

For more information:

http://endangered.fws.gov/listing.cca.pdf
www.fws.gov/endangered/landowner/index.html
http://endangered.fws.gov/policy/ccaa.htm
Service regional contacts are listed on page 18.

"Education is primarily what we do. During the past four years about 250,000 school children have seen the robust redhorse exhibit and learned how conservation initiatives are helping to keep this species from being on the list. Visitors are amazed at what partners are doing in the recovery of the robust redhorse."

—David Wilkins
South Carolina Aquarium Biologist

Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances

CCAAs offer all non-Federal landowners the unique opportunity to help ensure that a species does not decline to the point that it needs the protection of the ESA.

Participants in CCAAs range from individual landowners who own less than an acre to large corporations with thousands of acres. In 2005, 286 species are candidates for listing.

As of June 2005, 10 Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances have been approved for 24 species. Some of these species are the Washington ground squirrel, the lesser prairie-chicken, the Oregon spotted frog, the Colorado River cutthroat trout, and the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse.

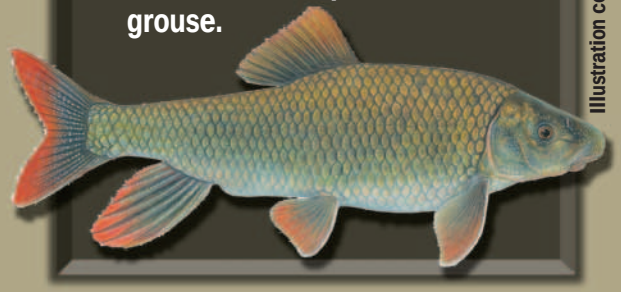


Illustration courtesy of Joe Tomelleri

11.

Candidate Conservation Agreements

What are CCAs?
Agreements between one or more parties that address the conservation needs of candidate or at-risk species. Both Federal and non-Federal landowners can be CCA partners. CCAs do not provide the landowner with regulatory assurances.

What is the landowner's role?
Voluntarily agrees to implement described actions for a specified period of time to remove or reduce the threats to the species. Works with the Service to design conservation measures.

What are the benefits?
For the landowner: Provides guidance and a formal management plan that identifies specific conservation actions for covered species and/or habitats.
For the species: Helps to remove threats and/or improve habitats so that listing may not be necessary.

Who can participate?
Any landowner, Federal or non-Federal.

Photograph courtesy of Don Saenz
U.S. Forest Service, Southern Research Station

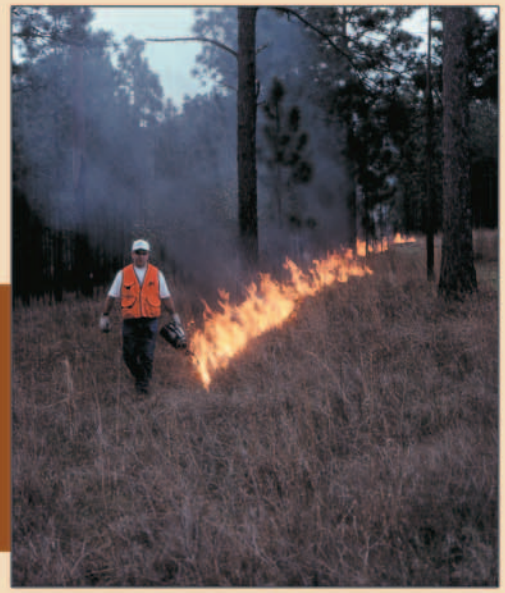
Conserving the Elusive Louisiana Pine Snake: Partners Take Action

"It's a big step forward. Everyone is looking at management actions that could benefit the Louisiana pine snake," said Debbie Fuller, Fish and Wildlife Service biologist in Lafayette, Louisiana, of the Candidate Conservation Agreement for the species. This agreement involves eight partners—Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Fort Polk Military Installation, Texas National Forests, Kisatchie National Forest, U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station, and the Southeast and Southwest Regions of the Service. Adopted in December 2003, the CCA guides the partners to avoid and minimize impacts to the snake, exchange information on successful management practices, and coordinate research efforts.

The Louisiana pine snake, a candidate for Federal listing, historically occurred in the longleaf pine ecosystem of northwest Louisiana and east central Texas. Always limited in range, the snake has been reduced to six small and isolated pineland fragments—three in Texas and three in Louisiana. "Habitat is changing from land uses," said Dr. Craig Rudolph, a research ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service's Southern Research Station in east Texas. "Short rotation silviculture and fire suppression are two major issues, and road mortality is also a factor."

Louisiana pine snakes prey primarily on pocket gophers, which feed on bluestem grasses and leafy plants in pine stands. Frequent fire maintains the grassy groundcover essential for the pocket gopher and the pine snake.

"We're cooperatively involved with Dr. Rudolph in surveys for the Louisiana pine snake. There are so few to be found. We are using the Service's section 6 grant funds in a support role."
—Ricky Maxey
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department



Photograph courtesy of Joan Walker, USFWS

Candidate Conservation Agreements

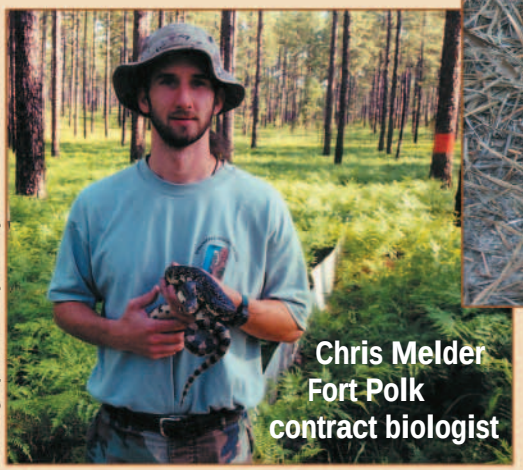
"Just see how big this longleaf pine has grown! I do have a passion for growing longleaf pine."
—Ricky Gay
Forest Management Consultant

Photograph courtesy of Ricky Maxey
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

To improve habitat on private property, landowners in east Texas are planting longleaf pine with funding from the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the Texas Landowner Incentive Program.

In Louisiana, International Paper Company's Bienville Parish property is home to one of the largest remaining populations. IP is managing 1800 acres specifically for the pine snake, removing loblolly and slash pine, planting longleaf pine, conducting prescribed burns, and controlling hardwoods. The Service has provided important funds to help implement the CCA, including funds from the Landowner Incentive Program for improving habitat on IP land, and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is supporting research there on both the snake and the pocket gopher.

Both the Forest Service and Fort Polk have been conducting prescribed burns to restore and maintain habitat. The Forest Service is also limiting off-road vehicle use in pine snake habitat to reduce mortality, and Fort Polk is studying pocket gopher distribution and habitat needs.



Chris Melder
Fort Polk
contract biologist

Photograph courtesy of Troy Mallach, USFWS

Pocket Gopher

Photograph courtesy of Steve Shively
Kisatchie National Forest

For more information:
http://www.fws.gov/endangered/candidates/index.html
Service regional contacts are listed on page 18.

Current participants include ranchers, farmers, corporations, cities, counties, water and park districts, non-governmental organizations, zoos, aquariums, universities, State wildlife and fisheries agencies, State transportation agencies, State forestry agencies, Tribes, the Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

As of June 2005, more than 100 candidate conservation agreements have been signed for more than 140 candidate and at-risk species. CCAs have been important in determining that the protection of the ESA is not necessary for species such as the Camp Shelby burrowing crayfish, slickspot peppergrass, Mt. Ashland lupine, Pecos pupfish, and Henderson's horkelia.

13.

Private Stewardship Grants

What are Private Stewardship Grants?
Financial and technical assistance to individuals and groups to support voluntary conservation efforts on private property for the benefit of imperiled species.

What is the landowner's role?
Implement conservation measures that benefit imperiled species on private lands. Individuals and groups submit project proposals that include:

- Description of voluntary conservation efforts on private lands;
- Benefits to listed and candidate species, or other at-risk species native to the U.S.;
- Cost-share of at least 10% of total project cost (may be met by in-kind contributions);
- Landowner participation information;
- Budget information; and
- Measures to evaluate the project.

Photograph courtesy of the Gale Larue family

Private Stewardship Grants: Not Just for Big Projects

"I read about Private Stewardship Grants in a magazine," said Mr. Gale Larue, whose family raises cattle, sheep, and goats on a farm in Groveport, Ohio, not far from Columbus. "Then Mr. Fasbender, of the Fish and Wildlife Service walked us through the process." Pete Fasbender is the Endangered Species Grants and Permits Coordinator in the Service's Twin Cities Regional Office.

"At the same time our daughter, Bethany, was doing her science fair project on wetlands, the Environmental Protection Agency was conducting a study on one nearby. Bethany talked them in to coming over to evaluate ours," Mr. Larue said.

It turns out that the Larues' property is one of only four sites in Ohio where the raven's foot sedge, a plant species that the State lists as threatened, has been found. The wetland-dependent plant had found refuge in their wetland but was threatened by trampling and dumping. The family decided that fencing would help them continue to provide a safe home for the imperiled plant.

It took about a month to remove the old fence and put in a new one to create a barrier to trash-dumping and redirect traffic that had gone through the nine-acre, wooded wetland to a field. With parents Gale and Vicki providing encouragement, the Larue children—Clayton, Ross, Elena, Bethany, and Alyssa—did the work.

"We want to preserve what's there and keep it for the next generation. This is a great program. It gives people the resources to do what should be done."

—Gale Larue

Photograph courtesy of the Gale Larue family

Private Stewardship Grants

"I have always been extremely concerned with preserving our environment, and I feel that the Private Stewardship Grants Program provided an excellent opportunity to help achieve this goal."
—Bethany Larue

Photograph courtesy of the Gale Larue family

Interested in biology, Bethany likes the wetland even more because of the raven's foot sedge. The plants are now thriving in their protected habitat.

The 282-acre farm has been in the Larue family for five generations.

For more information: http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/private_stewardship/index.html
Service regional contacts are listed on page 18.

Photograph courtesy of USDA

"This was a small grant—$8,200—to fence a wetland to protect a State-listed plant species on a family farm. The project was a family initiative. The Fish and Wildlife Service provided the material, and the Larues did everything else. They were a real pleasure to work with."
—Pete Fasbender
Fish and Wildlife Service

What are the benefits?
For the landowner: Allows private landowners to submit project proposals directly to the Fish and Wildlife Service and offers a low cost-share ratio to assist landowners in implementing conservation measures.
For the species: Restores or protects habitats for species, may improve species status, may reduce cost associated with recovery of listed species, and helps build partnerships for the species.

Who can participate?
Individuals and groups engaged in conservation efforts on privately held lands.

In FY 2005, the Service will award approximately $6.5 million to private landowners in support of projects that benefit imperiled species.

15.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

What is the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program?
Through voluntary agreements the Partners program provides expert technical assistance and cost-share incentives directly to private landowners to restore fish and wildlife habitats.

What is the landowner's role?
A phone call or letter initiates the process. The landowner works one-on-one with a local Service biologist to develop a project plan addressing the goals and objectives of the landowner and the Service to benefit fish and wildlife species on his/her land.

To implement a project, a cooperative agreement with a minimum duration of 10 years is signed. The landowner is reimbursed after project completion, based on the cost-sharing formula in the agreement.

What are the benefits?
For the landowner: Fulfilling habitat conservation goals on the land by working one-on-one in partnership with the local Service biologist.
For the species: Restoring important habitats on private lands that may result in the recovery of imperiled species.

Photographs courtesy of Leopoldo Miranda, USFWS

A One-on-One Relationship with Private Landowners

In 2002, Dr. Luis Ramos, a rancher and coffee grower in Puerto Rico, contacted the Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program searching for assistance in managing his ranch for the benefit of native and endemic fish and wildlife species. That was the start of a long-lasting partnership between this landowner and the Service. His 1400-acre ranch, named Hacienda Pellejas, is located in the heart of the island of Puerto Rico. It is managed for cattle ranching and as a coffee producing hacienda.

Later that year, Ramos signed a voluntary agreement with the Service to restore the native shade canopy on 25 acres of his coffee plantation. This project is providing and enhancing habitat for many species including the endangered Puerto Rican boa, the Puerto Rican sharp-shinned hawk, the Puerto Rican parrot and many other imperiled species.

Ramos signed a second Partners agreement in 2003 to restore the remaining acres of the coffee plantation. He is looking forward to restoring and protecting as many habitats as possible within his property for the benefit of imperiled species.

"My immediate vision is to have a sustainable agricultural business that, at the same time, protects and enhances the living conditions of native and endemic species. My long-term objective is that the Hacienda Pellejas will provide habitat for the successful expansion of the endangered Puerto Rican parrot."
—Dr. Luis Ramos

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

"The value of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is incalculable, not because of its financial incentives but because of the one-on-one and coffee-table relationship with the Service biologists. They are always there when you need them!"

—Dr. Luis Ramos

Besides the habitat improvements, one of the most important accomplishments of this project is that it has became an example to other private landowners. The Hacienda Pellejas project has been featured in the local press. As a result, other landowners now know that having abundant wildlife and helping the Puerto Rican parrot can happen.

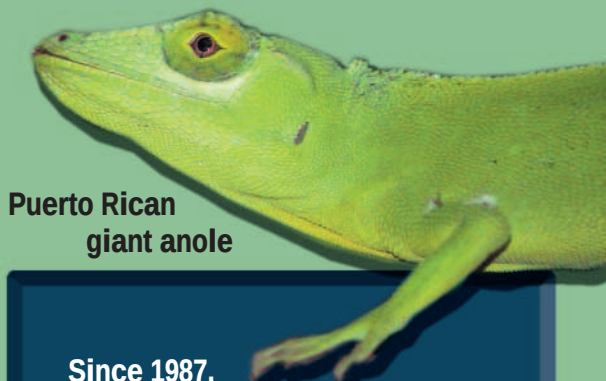
For more information:
http://www.fws.gov/partners
Service regional contacts are listed on page 18.

"One of the best Interior cooperative programs is the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which involves about 27,000 private landowners who are enhancing natural habitats on their lands."

—Lynn Scarlett
Assistant Secretary of Policy, Management, and Budget
Department of the Interior
January 15, 2003

Photographs courtesy of Leopoldo Miranda, USFWS

Who can participate?
Any privately-owned land is potentially eligible for restoration. Most applicants are individual landowners. For the purposes of this program, "privately-owned" means lands not owned by a State or the Federal Government.



Puerto Rican giant anole

Since 1987, USFWS has entered into over 35,000 landowner agreements.

"From 2001 to 2003, one of our cooperative conservation programs, our Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, restored more than 700,000 acres of prairie and 150,000 acres of wetands, working with nearly 9000 partners."

—Secretary Gale Norton
Department of the Interior
March 4, 2004

Glossary

Species Status categories:

at-risk species—species of plants and animals that are Federal candidate species and those that the Service has not identified as candidate species, but are facing threat(s) and are potential candidates in the near future.

candidate species—species of fish, wildlife and plants for which the Service has sufficient information on their biological status and threats to propose them as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act, but for which developing a proposed listing regulation is precluded by higher priority listing activities.

listed species—fish, wildlife, and plant species, including subspecies and distinct vertebrate populations, that are determined under the Endangered Species Act, to be an endangered or threatened species.

endangered species—any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

threatened species—one that is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

imperiled species—as used in this booklet, includes listed, candidate, and at-risk species.

Other useful terms:

certificate of inclusion—document used with a programmatic or "umbrella" Safe Harbor Agreement, Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances, or Habitat Conservation Plan certifying that property enrolled by an individual landowner is included within the scope of a programmatic enhancement of survival permit that authorizes incidental take of a species.

Endangered Species Act 1973, as amended (ESA)—Federal law that provides a program to conserve threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems on which they depend.

non-Federal property owner—a person, business, State or county agency, Tribe, organization, or other entity with a fee simple, leasehold, or other property interest, sufficient to carry out the proposed management actions, subject to applicable State law, on lands not owned by the Federal Government.

programmatic agreement—a single "umbrella" agreement, often encompassing a region or State that can involve multiple property owners by means of certificates of inclusion. The permit holder, usually a State agency or conservation group, enrolls other landowners.

take—as defined under the ESA means "…. to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct" with respect to Federally listed species.

incidental take—"take" of any Federally listed species incidental to, but not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities; it may be authorized by permit.

Resources and Contacts

For information about cooperative conservation opportunities, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office for your State.

Pacific Region
(Region 1)
Endangered Species Program Office
1-503-231-6118
http://pacific.fws.gov/
Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Pacific Trust Territories

California/Nevada Operations
Endangered Species Program Office
1-916-414-6464
http://pacific.fws.gov/
California, Nevada

Southwest Region
(Region 2)
Endangered Species Program Office
1-505-248-6654
http://southwest.fws.gov/
Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Great Lakes, Big Rivers Region
(Region 3)
Endangered Species Program Office
1-612-713-5343
http://midwest.fws.gov/
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin

Southeast Region
(Region 4)
Endangered Species Program Office
1-404-679-7313
http://southeast.fws.gov/
Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

Northeast Region
(Region 5)
Endangered Species Program Office
1-413-253-8627
http://northeast.fws.gov/
Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia

Mountain-Prairie Region
(Region 6)
Endangered Species Program Office
1-303-236-4258
http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/
Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Alaska
(Region 7)
Endangered Species Program Office
1-907-786-3925
http://alaska.fws.gov/
Alaska

Headquarters
Washington, DC
Endangered Species Program Office
1-703-358-2171
http://endangered.fws.gov/

National Association of Conservation Districts
conserving natural resources for our future

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U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE · DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible under the Endangered Species Act for conserving our nation's imperiled species and their habitats, working in cooperation with other public and private partners.

August 2005