

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Program Overview

The President's Management Agenda calls for a government that is citizen-centered, and results-oriented; one that promotes efficiency and innovation, removes barriers to change, and embraces citizens as full partners. This vision is captured in Secretary Norton's four C's — Cooperation, Consultation and Communication, all in the service of Conservation. Across the nation, the Service responds by working with citizens and communities to protect and restore important fish and wildlife habitats.

Use of Cost and Performance Information

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program achieves mission results via performance-based management on several fronts, in conformance with the Departmental Strategic Plan:

- The Partners Program is currently holding stakeholder meetings in preparation of developing a **strategic plan** that will identify program priorities and goals.
- While the Partners Program received a positive rating of "Adequate" through the Administration's **Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)**, we are working to improve the program by implementing PART recommendations to establish regularly scheduled objective, and independent evaluations of the program.
- The Partners Program is participating in the Administration's efforts to develop **common measures** of performance for wetlands to ensure consistence in establishing performance goals and reporting accomplishments.
- In anticipation of **activity-based costing** and in an effort to modernize technologies, the Partners Program has devoted more resources to streamlining and improving our web-based accomplishment reporting system (Habitat Information Tracking System).
- Activity Based Costing will be implemented throughout the Service beginning in FY2004. This information will help managers make more efficient use of appropriated funds in accomplishing critical resource outcomes.

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is a model federal program that embodies the Administration's vision of government that is citizen-centered, results-oriented, and market-based. Because of this, the Partners Program is included in the Department's Cooperative Conservation Initiative.

Today over 70 percent of the fish and wildlife habitat remaining in the nation is on private lands. Consequently, it is imperative that agencies charged with protection and management of these resources work collaboratively with the stewards of this land to conserve our nation's watersheds and landscapes.

The program has successfully established strong and productive relationships with communities and citizens because it is a voluntary habitat restoration program that provides financial assistance and restoration expertise to private landowners, tribes and other conservation partners who choose to improve the condition of fish and wildlife habitat on their land.

Through voluntary partnerships, this program is helping to improve and protect the health and integrity of the watersheds in

which people live, work, and play. Through voluntary habitat restoration projects, habitat restoration technical assistance, a one-on-one approach to customer satisfaction, and increased efforts to control invasive species, this Program supports the draft DOI End Outcome Goals to improve the health of watersheds, landscapes and marine resources and to sustain biological communities.

Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) Review

In 2002, the Administration used the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) to identify strengths and weaknesses in the Partners Program and to make recommendations to improve the program. The process generated extensive information on program effectiveness and accountability including the need for strategic planning.

In FY 2004, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program began developing a strategic plan, with the input of partners and stakeholders, in response to the recommendations from the PART review, and in an effort to enhance program performance. The plan will help (1) redefine program priorities, (2) improve communication with partners and stakeholders, (3) identify short-term and long-term goals and objectives, and (4) set into motion mechanisms for independent evaluations of the program.

People and Partnerships

Private land stewardship is one of the most powerful conservation tools in America today. The Service has a well-organized infrastructure and a staff strategically operating in all 50 States, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands to support landowner's conservation efforts – on their own lands. For over 15 years, Partners Program personnel have developed lasting and productive partnerships with landowners and communities.

To date, the Partners Program has worked with over 33,100 landowners to voluntarily restore wetlands, streams, grasslands, woodlands and other important habitats that support fish and wildlife. In FY 2005, the Partners Program plans to work with 5,380 private landowners to:

- Restore 65,919 acres of vital wetlands habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and amphibians.
- Restore 315,653 acres of native grasslands and woodlands for declining grassland nesting birds and cavity dwellers such as woodpeckers.
- Restore 1,197 miles of stream and riparian (stream-side) habitat for native fish, songbirds, and mammals.
- Remove from stream channels 40 decrepit culverts and obsolete road crossings to allow native fish access to upstream habitats.
- Approximately 61,186 acres of private land will be managed by fire, chemical treatment, bio-controls, mechanical removal, and other means to eradicate or prevent the spread of invasive species.

The program uses collaborative and innovative partnerships to effectively leverage resources (financial and other) at an average ratio of 2:1 (non-Service to Service dollars) to increase the effectiveness and scope of its activities. All of these restoration activities will be conducted one-on-one with the landowners towards the goal of incorporating habitat restoration into working farms and ranches.

In FY2005, the Partners Program will continue to focus on building and expanding partnerships to restore and protect important fish and wildlife habitat on private lands. As examples:

- The Service will continue to work with the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District in Alaska to replace undersized culverts with bridges thus improving passage for Chinook salmon, Arctic grayling, longnose suckers (fish), humpback whitefish and round whitefish. Quality and quantity of favorable fish spawning and rearing habitat has declined throughout the 10-mile long slough due to blocked passage, sedimentation of gravel riffles/pools, and pollution. Many of the culverts were improperly positioned and sized when placed after a major flood (1967). Because culverts are perched and tilted, they freeze solid in winter (causing flooding) and restrict fish passage in summer.
- In New York, the Service will continue its wetland restoration efforts in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's St. Lawrence Valley Focus Area. The projects supported in this area are often in close proximity to others forming a diverse complex of restored wetlands and uplands. Multiple partners are involved in these projects including private landowners, Ducks Unlimited, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. These projects provide waterfowl and other migratory birds with migration staging, resting, nesting, foraging and brood habitat, as well as habitat for reptiles, amphibians, and other wildlife. These projects also contribute to meeting the priorities established in the Partners in Flight (PIF) Bird Conservation Plans (BCPs) for the Northern New England physiographic area.

Customer satisfaction is a vital element of the DOI strategic plan. As part of the Service's continued emphasis on customer satisfaction, the Partners Program has placed a priority on assessing how cooperating landowners value the quality of the technical and financial assistance they have received. In FY 2005, the program will begin implementing recommendations for program improvement received from partners and other stakeholders.

Restoration of Native Habitats

The Partners Program employs restoration strategies and practices that will return project sites, to the extent practicable, to the ecological condition that likely existed prior to loss or degradation. Examples include removal of tile drains or plugging drainage ditches in former or degraded wetlands; returning meanders and sustainable profiles to straightened streams; burning grass communities heavily invaded by exotic species to re-establish native grass/plant communities; planting native plant communities that likely existed previously on the site. This strategy which is employed nationwide, recognizes that restoring habitat that previously existed on a site often has a greater likelihood of success, promotes both native plant and animal species, is the cost effective, and provides many other positive economic and ecological benefits for Americans, such as:

- Added value for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.
- Improved water quality and reduced water treatment costs.
- Reduced erosion and sedimentation impacts and clean-up costs.
- Sustained income for commercial fisheries, ranches and eco-tourism.

In 2005, the Service will work with 10-15 private landowners and a variety of other partners in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to voluntarily restore approximately 250 acres of tropical forest and wildlife-friendly shade coffee on private lands. These restoration and management activities will provide high quality habitat for Neotropical migratory birds (e.g., American red star, Northern parula) as well as many other endemic wildlife species (e.g., Puerto Rican boa and the Puerto Rican plain pigeon, a federally-listed endangered species). The project will also result in soil and water quality improvements to targeted watersheds by improving soil conservation and forest management. In addition to working with the landowner on this project, the Partners Program is also working with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agricultural Extension Service, USDA-Forest Service, local organizations and private companies.

High Quality Technical Assistance

The Service also provides specialized restoration assistance to individuals and other federal agencies. For example, in association with the U.S. Department of Agriculture we provide technical assistance to landowners who participate in USDA conservation programs such as the Wetlands Reserve Program, Farm Service Agency debt cancellation conservation contracts, Conservation Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program, and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. Specifically, we provide fish and wildlife technical and biological expertise in the design and implementation of restoration projects.

In FY 2005, the Service anticipates it will respond to more than 8,940 requests for technical assistance from partners such as these. This is an anticipated increase of 20 percent compared to FY 2004.

Providing the public with information about program activities is an important way that we promote partnerships. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program website (<http://partners.fws.gov>) contains information about program activities, accomplishments, partners, and contacts. The Service will continue to improve information available to the public about the program, and opportunities to participate as part of its overall effort to enhance program effectiveness. For example:

- In FY 2005, the Service will continue to work with the New England Forestry Foundation to develop a database that is accessible through the Internet that will describe private lands conservation programs, including the Service's Partners Program, the Coastal Program, and any other programs or initiatives that could assist private landowners to voluntarily conserve and manage their lands. This internet site will provide a nationwide voluntary information and communication corridor featuring a suite of conservation tools that benefit private landowners and resource conservation agencies and organizations. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program website will be linked to this web site.

2003 Program Performance Accomplishments

In 2003 the Partners Program continued to focus its efforts on activities that support the Resource Protection goal within the Department's strategic plan. Some examples of these activities include:

- In the northwest corner of Woodford County, Illinois, a local hunt club and Illinois River Refuges PFW staff partnered to enhance water control and moist soil vegetation on 940 acres of degraded backwater wetland and sloughs. This project will provide natural vegetation and reliable habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and other wetland wildlife as well as provide resting area and natural foods for migratory birds in this reach of the Illinois River. The project contributes to the goals of the Illinois River Focus Area of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and compliments several ongoing initiatives in the Illinois River Watershed, including the Illinois River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, the Illinois River Partnership, and the Illinois River Ecosystem Restoration. This array of programs is supported by a broad coalition of non-government conservation, business, agriculture, and community groups for the recreational, economic and water quality benefits realized by watershed residents.
- The Partners program in the Southwest Region developed woodland projects totaling 1,495 acres. These projects primarily involved planting native longleaf pine to portions of its historic range in east Texas. This process involved extensive site preparation, to include removal of all woody and herbaceous plants that will compete with new longleaf pine seedlings. Over the past several decades, the slower growing longleaf pine was replaced with more merchantable, rapid-growing softwood and pulpwood species. The SE longleaf pine restoration efforts will also benefit several declining species, including the red cockaded woodpecker and the Louisiana pine snake.
- In Maryland, the Partners Program restored a 204-acre complex of Delmarva bay wetlands, forested wetlands, and forested upland habitat in Caroline County, Maryland from its previous use as 176 acres of agricultural land and 28 acres of drained forested wetlands. The restoration site provides habitat for both upland and wetland dependent migratory birds; rare and threatened plants including Harper's fimbriatilis and Torrey's dropseed; rare and threatened amphibian species such as the including carpenter frog and Eastern tiger salamander; restore base flow to the adjacent stream by improving groundwater recharge, and eliminate agricultural pollution that previously drained from the farm fields into the headwaters of the Choptank River (a major tributary to the Chesapeake Bay).

| Resource Protection: | FY 2003 | FY 2004 | FY 2004 |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Improve Health of Watersheds, Landscapes, and Marine Resources | Actual | Planned | Planned v. 2003 Actual |
| Acres of wetland habitat restored | 43,347 ac | 51,728 ac | 8,381 ac |
| Acres of upland habitat restored | 184,063 ac | 249,858 ac | 65,795 ac |
| Miles of riparian and/or stream habitat restored | 821 mi | 1,009 mi | 188 mi |
| Sustain biological communities. | | | |
| Acres treated to control invasive species | 88,435 ac | 37,686 ac | -50,749 ac |
| Other performance measures: | | | |
| Number of fish passage barriers removed | 35 | 36 | 1 |
| Number of responses to requests for technical assistance | 6,720 | 7,450 | 730 |
| Number of landowner agreements | 4,232 | 4,080 | -152 |

2004 Planned Program Performance

In 2004 the Partners Program will continue to encourage and promote public participation in voluntary, on-the-ground conservation efforts through development and completion of habitat restoration projects for federal trust species, on private lands on a variety of landscapes across the country.

This restoration work is typified by activities such as those that will occur in northeast Arkansas where both sides of the St. Francis River floodplain are restricted by levees. The Mississippi Alluvial Valley Migratory Bird Initiative has identified the St. Francis Floodway as a priority reforestation site. Three bottomland hardwood projects were completed in FY 2003 and additional projects are anticipated in FY 2004. Hundreds of acres will be planted with thousands of bottomland hardwood seedlings. This reforestation will restore wildlife and riparian habitat, widen a travel corridor along Little River, enhance water quality within the Little River Floodway, and eventually connect the Sunken Lands and Big Lake Migratory Bird Conservation areas. Reforestation efforts will benefit numerous wildlife species, including waterfowl, deer turkey, reptiles, and amphibians. These projects will continue to be joint efforts between the landowner, Partners Program, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Service will also work through voluntary stewardship partnerships to treat over 37,686 acres of private lands to control invasive species. In FY 2003, the Partners Program was fortunate to partner with a few owners of large landholdings which enabled the program to exceed anticipated targets for control of invasive species. The FY 2004 planned accomplishments are more in line with average program accomplishments. For example, in Oklahoma, the Service will work with private landowners, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Wildlife Turkey Federation to restore 14 miles of riparian habitat along the Beaver River. This includes removing saltcedar, an invasive exotic shrub, and replanting with native species.

By working cooperatively with our partners, the Partners Program will enhance fish and wildlife habitats, as well as provide significant additional opportunities for hunting, fishing, and observing and enjoying wildlife.

In response to PART recommendations the Partners Program has begun a collaborative process with other Service programs to improve strategic planning, priority setting and long-term goal establishment. Initial steps in this process have included discussions with other Service programs on identifying and integrating cross-program goals on a landscape level, collaboration with stakeholders, measuring success (e.g., results and management), and communicating accomplishments and costs. As a new strategic plan is

developed program priorities and goals will be further defined and characterized. These changes in goals may not be simply in numbers of acres or miles restored, but rather in terms of conditions of habitats in priority watersheds or for priority species. Annual goals and priorities can then be apportioned to Regions, and field offices as appropriate; keeping in mind that this is a voluntary program and the Service cannot control but can influence the level of interest or the number of participants on an annual basis. Performance in meeting these goals will continue to be tracked at both the National and Regional levels through the Service’s on-line habitat tracking database. Also, in 2004 the Service will continue to better determine the costs associated with the Program’s annual and long-term goals, and will begin efforts to implement Activity Based Costing to help to assign administrative and support costs to specific performance measures.

Justification of Program Changes

| Subactivity | | 2005 Budget Request | Program Changes (+/-) |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Partners for Fish and Wildlife | \$(000) FTE | 29,130 305 | -7,477,000 0 |

The FY 2005 budget request for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is \$50,000,000 and 253 FTEs, a net program increase of \$7,477,000 and +8 FTE from the 2004 enacted level.

General Program Increase (+ \$5,023,000 and 6 FTEs) - The Service will use the additional funding to the already successful practices of (1) working collaboratively to incorporate fish and wildlife habitat restoration into farm and ranch operations, (2) leveraging program dollars with those of the community and other partners, (3) providing high quality and timely technical assistance, and (4) developing trust and long-term relationships with the stewards of the land. Projects must be directed at priorities that will be identified in the National Strategic Plan being developed for the Partners Program and must produce results that can be reported under one or more performance measures in that plan and the DOI Strategic Plan.

The program’s National Strategic Plan and the following categories of projects will be emphasized in FY 2005:

Community and Watershed Partnerships: Environmental issues and economic issues are inextricably connected and PWF will pursue national fish and wildlife objectives in ways that take into account a community’s environmental and economic goals.

Technical Assistance - Additional habitat restoration technical assistance to private landowners and to federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies that are administering habitat restoration programs will be provided. This increase, in particular, will enable the Service to enter into additional cooperative agreements with USDA to achieve mutual habitat restoration goals while maintaining the technical assistance available to non-USDA program participants. This technical assistance will be critical to developing habitat restoration plans that maximize wildlife benefits as well as soil and water benefits.

Stream Restoration – The funding increase will allow the Partners Program to maintain high levels of stream restoration expertise and to provide private landowners with enhanced technical support and quality assurance. Stream restoration involves considerable on-site assessment of the damaged stream and comprehensive in-office calculation and design work to re-create the 3-dimensional stream shape, depths, and curves that will comply with the laws of physics and hydraulics and provide fish and wildlife habitat in an environment of high flows and low flows.

These corridors provide food, water, and shelter for waterfowl, shorebirds, neo-tropical migratory birds, mammals, as well as many other species of wildlife. Native fishes, such as darters, paddlefish, sturgeons, and salmon, depend on high quality flowing waters. Restored streamside areas reduce the amount of sediment and chemicals that enter our streams. Native grass buffers only 30-feet wide have been shown to retain 80 percent of the sediment and reduce nitrogen by as much as 90 percent in surface runoff across an agricultural field. The water quality improvements that result from stream and streamside restoration are substantial.

Performance Results

Increasing the availability of technical assistance and cost-sharing for voluntary habitat restoration will provide private landowners and other members of the community with additional land use options to resolve natural resource conflicts while improving fish and wildlife resources and meeting national and regional planning targets. The \$5,023,000 requested is a 20% increase over FY04 funding for voluntary habitat restoration. Specifically, this increase will enable the Partners Program to restore 14,191 more acres of wetlands for shorebirds, waterfowl and other migratory birds, 65,795 more acres of grassland, shrubland, and forest for songbirds and small mammals, and 188 more miles of stream and stream-side habitat for migratory species and native fish. This represents a 26.4% increase in habitat restored from FY 2004 to FY 2005.

Examples of projects that may be funded in FY 2005:

- **Current River Streambank Restoration, Arkansas:** The Partners Program will work with private landowners, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and Arkansas Stream Team members improve streambank conditions, reduce the sediment discharge into the river, and restore riparian habitat. The project will involve stream channel re-design and re-planting with native species. The project will benefit native fish species.
- *Uturado shade coffee restoration project, Puerto Rico:* Puerto Rico is the only area within the U.S. where coffee is grown under the shading canopy of tropical forests. This practice provides excellent habitat for many resident and migratory birds and other fish and wildlife. The shading canopy of many coffee plantations has been cut to make way for "sun" coffee plantations. This practice destroys the habitat for most of the native and migratory bird species, reduces biodiversity, promotes soil erosion, and increases pollution due to the heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

The Partners Program is working with many private landowners, the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, U.S. Forest Service, Envirosurvey Inc., Puerto Rico Department of Education, Agriculture Department of Puerto Rico, the Café del Alba Coffee Company, and many other stakeholders, to restore important Caribbean tropical forest habitat. Through this cooperative project, we expect to work with 20 private landowners in FY 2005 to restore about 200 acres of the shading canopy on coffee plantations in the Central Mountains of Puerto Rico. By restoring the shading canopy of these agro-ecosystems we enhance federal trust species habitat on private lands and provide a smooth transition between urban and natural protected areas.

- *Wetland Conservation with emphasis on Native American lands, Maine:* To help offset the annual loss of hundreds of acres of wetland in Maine the Partners Program is going to work with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries, and Wildlife, private landowners, and the Penobscot Indian Nation and the Passamaquoddy Tribe to conserve and restore wetlands on private and tribal lands.

- *Kenai Peninsula Riparian Restoration, Alaska*: The Partners Program will work with the State of Alaska to restore important riparian habitat along the Kenai peninsula, an important habitat component for anadromous fish and also for the Kenai Brown Bear, a declining species of concern.
- *Hellroaring Creek Fish Passage Restoration in Bonner County, Idaho*: The Partners Program will partner with private landowners, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Avista (a conservation organization), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to improve conditions for the threatened bull trout in the Hellroaring Creek watershed. The project will consist of removing a 6-foot high weir (dam) and restoring the stream channel to a more natural condition. Removal of the weir and the creek restoration will provide bull trout with additional spawning and rearing habitat. This project has wide community support from groups such as the Pack River Watershed Council, which is made up of local landowners, and by the Pack River Technical Advisory Committee whose members include local tribes, the state, federal agencies, and local non-profit groups working in the watershed.

FTE Change

An additional 6 FTE will be required to provide the necessary technical assistance and coordinate completion of the projects funded with these additional funds. The Service will use contractors to construct or implement projects when appropriate and cost effective. Field staff will conduct site visits on private lands, develop options for invasive species control, design habitat restoration projects, develop partnerships, set priorities, provide cost-sharing, and oversee the construction and completion of the restoration projects.

Invasive Species Control (+\$1,083,000)

This increase includes an \$83,000 general increase in invasive species program funding, which will be used to fund invasive species control efforts (Executive Order 13112, and the Department's cross-program effort to combat the spread of invasive species), and an additional \$1 million targeted for tamarisk control in the Southwest. Tamarisk is an invasive tree that has infested 1.6 million acres of western stream banks, springs and wetlands in California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas. It has displaced native trees and is damaging wildlife habitat, and is complicating water management in the Southwest. The \$1 million increase will be used to combat tamarisk and other associated invasive species in support of the overarching principles and priorities established at the March 31 to April 2, 2004, conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Performance Results

In FY2004, the Partners Program will be working with private landowners to control invasive species on approximately 53,686 acres (i.e., 37,686 acres across the country controlling invasive plants and 16,000 acres treated for nutria control). This work will be continued in FY 2005.

In FY 2005, the additional funds will enable the Partners Program to work with private landowners to treat an additional 7,500 acres of wetland, grassland, riparian, or other important habitat and to continue to control nutria in Maryland and Louisiana.

Examples of invasive species control projects:

Prairie Restoration at Glacial Heritage Preserve, Washington: The South Puget Sound Prairie Working Group, University of Washington, Evergreen State College, The Nature Conservancy of Washington, Thurston County Parks and Recreation, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources will combine resources with the Partners Program to restore this grassland and oak woodland. The major restoration focus will be control of Scot's broom, an invasive plant that invades native prairies and alters

the ecosystem so that it no longer supports prairie habitat and associated species. Control methods will include a combination of mechanical and chemical control, followed by direct seeding of native grasses and planting of native grasses and forbs.

This invasive species control project will further restore this regionally rare habitat and will contribute to the recovery of the federally listed golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*) and improve conditions for several other candidate species and species of concern.

Limahuli Valley Restoration Project, Hanalei District, Island of Kauai: Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program will partner with private landowners, the Hawaii Community Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Seacology, and scores of volunteers to remove invasive plants and feral pigs from areas inhabited by 14 rare plant species. The project is located in lowland mesic (dry) and lowland wet forest. Activities will include the hand removal of nonnative plant species, construction of four 10-acre pig proof enclosures, removal of the pigs, and propagation of rare plant species in greenhouses for transplanting into the pig-free areas.

Prairie Habitat Restoration in the Loess Hills, Iowa: The Partners Program will join with several landowners, the Loess Hills Alliance, Golden Hills RC&D, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to restore prairie habitat in seven counties in western Iowa. The Iowa Loess Hills are nationally recognized as one of the world's rarest ecosystems. Deep loess soil deposits, which were created by glaciers, wind, and water, are only found in Iowa and China. This unique geological landscape has developed rare plant and animal communities. The seven counties that make up the Loess Hills is habitat for cactus, yucca, plains pocket mouse, several rare skippers (butterflies) and the sharp-tailed grouse.

Next to development, the greatest threat to the Loess Hills is encroachment from woody plants due to the removal of fire. An estimated 2% of the grassland community is lost each year to woody plant invasion, contributing greatly to the decline in grassland species. Restoration of the habitat will include mechanical removal, prescribed burning, and reseeding of native grasses after burning. Projects will be monitored before and after burning to assess results and establish future management strategies. An estimated 1000 acres of prairie will be restored.

FTE Change

An additional 1 FTEs will be required to provide the necessary technical assistance and coordinate completion of the projects funded with the additional funds. The Service will use contractors to construct or implement projects when appropriate and cost effective. Field staff will conduct site visits on private lands, develop options for invasive species control, design habitat restoration projects, develop partnerships, set priorities, provide cost-sharing, and oversee the construction and completion of the restoration projects.

Upper Klamath Basin Restoration, California and Oregon (+ \$6,225,000 and 4 FTEs) -

The Upper Klamath River Basin Restoration Initiative is a cooperative effort among federal, state and local agencies, tribal governments, public organizations, and individuals to restore the Klamath Basin ecosystem and its economic vitality.

Each year since 1996, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has provided approximately \$1,225,000 to the Klamath Basin for watershed restoration activities. These activities in the upper Klamath Basin have emphasized on-the-ground restoration, assessment / monitoring and outreach / public education projects leading to improved water quality and better timed releases of water for agricultural and other uses. Specific on-the-ground activities include erecting fences to control cattle grazing, excavating swales to reconnect oxbows to the river, and planting native trees and shrubs for shade and stream bank

stabilization. These projects directly restore habitats for the federally endangered Lost River and shortnose suckers, and the sensitive redband trout.

In FY 2004, funding from the Partners Program is being used to enter into voluntary agreements with private landowners and other partners to restore approximately 297 acres of wetlands and 400 acres of associated degraded upland habitat. Stream restoration is taking place on approximately 14 miles of river and creeks.

According to the federally sponsored report “Endangered and Threatened Fishes in the Klamath River Basin: Causes of Decline and Strategies for Recovery” prepared by the National Research Council (which is the principal operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering), the federal government should be putting more resources into removing fish migration obstacles, improving habitat, and reducing summer water temperatures in tributaries (e.g., restoring shady streamside habitat).

All of these voluntary habitat restoration activities will be consistent with the Partners Program’s National Strategic Plan and contribute to specific performance measures in that plan and the Department’s Strategic plan. The additional funding will enhance the Service’s ability to restore high priority habitats while working with stakeholders to resolve natural resource issues and to improve fish and wildlife resources and meet national and regional performance targets as laid out in the program’s national strategic plan.

Performance Results

The increase of \$6,225,000 and 4 FTEs will be used specifically to restore fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.

Examples of these projects to be completed include:

Wetland restoration along Ball Bay on Upper Klamath Lake for shortnose and Lost River suckers. Along Upper Klamath Lake, the Service will partner with the Klamath Basin Ecosystem Foundation to restore 350 acres of lakeshore wetlands for Lost River and shortnose suckers and other wetland species. Wetlands in Ball Bay were drained for pastureland over 100 years ago and, upon restoration, will be reconnected to a stream to provide fish passage to spawning habitat.

Wetlands and associated spring restoration for Lost River and shortnose suckers in Sprague River watershed. In the Sprague River watershed, Oregon, the Service will partner with landowners and Oregon Trout to restore wetlands and associated springs for Lost River and shortnose suckers, and redband trout. Springs are critical spawning habitat for the two endangered suckers and are crucial in providing sources of good water quality for late season river flows.

Cherry Creek stream channel restoration for bull trout, redband trout, yellow rails, and the Oregon spotted frog. In the Cherry Creek watershed on the west side of Upper Klamath Lake, the Service will partner with the local watershed council and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to restore stream channel and riparian habitat for bull trout, redband trout, Oregon spotted frogs and yellow rails. Habitat connectivity has been lost among the spring-fed streams west of Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon. Restoring the connectivity among the local streams will greatly assist seasonal movement of salmonids among watersheds.

In FY 2005, the additional funds will enable the Partners Program to restore an additional 1,563 acres of wetlands and 2,040 acres of upland. Projects will include excavating filled-in oxbows, reconnecting former wetlands to lakes and rivers, improving water control, reconnecting springs to river channels, and

re-vegetating with native plants. Projects with the greatest potential for water quality improvement will have the highest priority.

In addition, the increase in funds will be used to restore an additional 51 miles of stream and shorelines miles through voluntary partnerships. Riparian and stream improvements may include re-contouring the channel to a natural, and stable, design; installing fences for livestock management; providing offsite water sources; and planting native vegetation. Restoration of riparian and wetland habitats will also greatly assist in improving base stream flow later in the growing season and therefore will be addressing water issues.

FTE Change

An additional 4 FTEs will be required to provide the necessary technical assistance and coordinate completion of projects funded with this request. The Service will use contractors to construct and implement projects when appropriate and cost effective. Field staff will conduct site visits on private lands, provide technical assistance to private landowners and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, design restoration projects, develop partnerships, and oversee the construction and completion of restoration projects.

High Plains Partnership (+ \$5,000,000)

Declining populations of several wide-ranging high plains species, such as the lesser prairie chicken, black-tailed prairie dog, swift fox, and mountain plover, signal the increasing potential for additional species listing under the Endangered Species Act and potentially increased regulatory conflicts if the declines are not reversed. The High Plains Partnership (HPP) is a public-private collaboration initiated to proactively conserve declining species and their habitats and preclude the need for further species listings. More than 90 percent of the 11 states in the High Plains region of the Great Plains and the Southwest (i.e., AZ, CO, KS, MT, ND, NE, NM, OK, SD, TX, and WY) are privately owned. It is therefore essential that partnerships be developed to meet the shared goals of conserving declining and at-risk species in a non-regulatory manner, and preserving and enhancing the economic viability of these private lands. Specifically, \$300,000 of this increase will be directed toward projects that support and restore sage grouse habitat.

This HPP collaboration is the outcome of several pilot projects the Service has implemented since 1998 in the High Plains region through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Landowner Incentive Program, and Private Stewardship Grants Program. To date these projects have:

- enrolled over 90,000 acres in five states in agreements to benefit declining and at-risk species and their habitats,
- developed “Ranch Conversations” in five states to interact with landowners and solicit their conservation recommendations,
- increased the economic potential for ranchers to conserve “at-risk” species through cost-shared grazing and habitat improvement practices, and
- established a waiting list of over 150 landowners who wish to develop habitat improvement projects for species at-risk, and
- modified ranking criteria for several state and federal conservation programs to prioritize HPP projects.

Funding of this initiative will allow the Service to pursue the HPP in a true cooperative effort with the state fish and wildlife agencies in the 11 high plains states, agencies within the Department of Agriculture, private conservation organizations (including the Wildlife Management Institute, National Wildlife Federation, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, The Nature Conservancy, and the Predator

Conservation Alliance), and most importantly the private landowners. This increase will focus on resolving resource-use conflicts on a landscape level, and will be consistent with the Partners Program's National Strategic Plan and contribute to specific performance targets in that plan. This program also embodies the Secretary's vision of a Cooperative Conservation Initiative, implementing the goal of conservation through cooperation, consultation, and communication. This initiative will use cost-shared, results-oriented conservation projects using innovative means to achieve restoration of natural resources and expand habitat for wildlife.

Performance Results

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program has demonstrated the cost-effectiveness and overwhelming interest in voluntary habitat restoration on private lands; and the Endangered Species program has shown that the use of Candidate Conservation Agreements can successfully remove threats and avoid listing additional species.

The Service will use the additional funds in cooperation with landowners and other partners to leverage and focus conservation programs towards achieving the long-term goal of restoring, enhancing and protecting 2 million acres over the next 10 years. The Program's National Strategic Plan will guide activities undertaken for these purposes. The additional funds will enable the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, working in concert with the Endangered Species Program, to specifically target habitat restoration and protection projects that support the goals of the High Plains Partnership. Approximately \$3,000,000 of the increase will be used by the Partners Program to restore approximately 34,000 additional acres of uplands, 1,000 acres of wetland and 1,000 acres of riparian habitat within the High Plains region. Approximately \$2,000,000 of the increase will enable the Endangered Species Program to achieve habitat protection on private lands through voluntary cooperative conservation agreements such as Candidate Conservation Agreements. Service biologists, working with other agencies and private organizations, will enroll approximately 50,000 acres into conservation agreements in FY 2005. These agreements, along with the technical assistance and benefits of other state and federal programs, will be used to meet the public/private partnership's shared goals of conserving declining and at-risk species in a non-regulatory manner, while preserving and enhancing the economic viability of private lands.

Examples of projects that will be pursued include:

- enhancing lesser prairie chicken habitat on private ranches in Baca County, Colorado. This project will enhance lesser prairie chicken habitat on at least 23,000 acres under both private and public ownership and will retain viable ranching operations. The Partners program will work with private landowners on activities such as cross-fencing, livestock watering facility development, and rest-rotational grazing regimes.
- expanding work with private landowners and other partners in the Upper Bad River basin in South Dakota, to implement over 15 conservation practices that are helping ranch families conserve and enhance large acres of grassland. This project will improve habitat conditions for the lesser prairie chicken, black tailed prairie dog, and other declining species. Rancher interest in the South Dakota project continues to grow and currently exceeds funding levels.
- completing detailed inventories of range and habitat conditions on ranches in Oklahoma, Texas and eastern New Mexico, and provide recommendations for followed by prescriptions for improving habitats for species at-risk and implementing practices such as cross fencing, livestock water facility development, and shrub management, coupled with rest-rotational grazing regimes, that are tailored to the needs of both the landowner and the target species/habitats. These projects

will provide cost-sharing for infrastructure improvements which will enhance the long-term economic productivity of the land and provide improved habitat for declining species.

FTE Change

An additional 3 FTE's will be required to provide the necessary technical assistance and coordinate completion of projects funded with this request. These FTE's will be divided between the 2 Service Regions involved in this initiative, and will augment the efforts of other agencies, states, and non-government personnel working closely with private landowners to conserve mixed grass prairie habitat for the benefit of migratory birds and other federal trust species. The Service will use contractors to construct and implement projects when appropriate and cost effective. Field staff will conduct site visits on private lands, provide technical assistance to private landowners and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, design restoration projects, develop partnerships, and oversee the construction and completion of restoration projects.

Jobs in the Woods (- \$1,345,000)

The Jobs-in-the-Woods (JITW) program was established under the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative, which was designed to help local communities affected by a downturn in natural resource industries within the Northwest Forest Plan area. Since 1996 over \$20 million has been appropriated for the Service's JITW program to (1) provide watershed restoration opportunities on non-Federal lands, and (2) provide employment opportunities in natural resource-dependent communities in western Washington, Oregon, and northern California. Today there is a reduced need for workforce retraining in the timber industry and it is appropriate to discontinue this program and to concentrate efforts on higher priority resource issues.

The proposed elimination of this program will initially reduce the Service and Department's contributions towards the DOI End Outcome Goal of improving the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources in this geographic area. However, the Service anticipates that additional funding in the Partners Program as well as efforts to secure alternative funding from other voluntary habitat based programs will offset these changes and the net effect in Service accomplishments over the long term will be enhanced.

Washington Salmon Enhancement (- \$1,383,000)

In FY 2004 the Service continued to provide the State of Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) with funds to be used by 14 Washington State Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups in support of their volunteer habitat restoration and fish passage improvement efforts for salmon recovery. Activities supported by these funds include salmon habitat restoration, propagation activities, and applied research projects. Funding for this program is eliminated to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. This program is not under the direction of the Fish and Wildlife Service, is not coordinated with the recovery efforts of either the Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and does not contribute to the DOI Strategic plan. The Service is working toward addressing priority needs of Pacific salmon through an inter-agency initiative in which the Partners Program is involved.

Vermont Natural Heritage Bald Eagles (- \$99,000)

Funding for this program is eliminated to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. The Vermont Natural Heritage Bald Eagle Recovery Program is an eagle reintroduction program and is not aligned with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program's habitat restoration mission. This program can seek funding for bald eagle reintroduction through numerous other sources such as the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants and Private Stewardship Grants programs. Elimination of this program will have no effect on the Service's ability to contribute to the goals of the DOI strategic plan and the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program.

Willapa Bay NWR Spartina Control (- \$691,000)

Funding for this program is eliminated to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. In FY 2004, Congress provided \$691,000 to the Partners Program to help control smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) in Willapa Bay, Pacific County, Washington. The size and scope of the Willapa Bay problem makes it impossible for private landowners to eradicate *Spartina* there without the use of airboats, heavy machinery and a large amount of manpower. It is unlikely that private landowners will play a major role in the reduction or control of *Spartina* at this site and consequently the role for the Partners Program is also limited. This reduction will have no effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic plan or the Partners Program national strategic plan in FY 2005.

State of Hawaii Invasive Species Control (- \$691,000)

Funding for this program is eliminated to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. Alternative funding sources to continue this program are currently available to the State of Hawaii, private landowners, and other organizations, through the Landowner Incentive Grants and State Wildlife Grants programs, as well as the funds currently available and requested for the Partners Program. Elimination of this funding will have no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan and the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program. Any decrease in acreage resulting from the elimination of this funding in FY 2005 will be offset through additional funding in the Partners program as well as other voluntary habitat based programs, and the net affect in Service accomplishments will be enhanced.

Hawaii ESA Community Conservation (- \$741,000)

In Fiscal Years 2002-2003, Congress provided the Fish and Wildlife Service with funding to implement projects that would reduce the level of conflict between game mammal management and endangered species conservation. Funding for this program is eliminated to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. Endangered species planning and management issues can be addressed through the Private Stewardship Grant program and other funding mechanisms. Elimination of this funding will provide the Service with flexibility to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan and the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program. In the future, funding for individual projects that support this strategy may be obtained through the Service and other Federal Agency grants, providing the projects address identified agency priorities.

Nevada Biodiversity (- \$1,235,000)

Funding for this program is eliminated to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. The Nevada Biodiversity Initiative (NBI) is a research-oriented program intended to provide state and federal land management agencies with a planning tool for resource evaluation and impacts. This program is not related to the voluntary habitat restoration efforts of the Partners Program or the Service. Alternative funding is available to the other state and federal agencies involved in this initiative through numerous other sources such as State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, Private Stewardship Grants and the Landowner Incentive Grants programs, and research funds through other agencies. This research program does not contribute to the goals of the DOI strategic plan and elimination of this program will have no effect on the Service's ability to achieve its strategic goals within the DOI plan and the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program.

Montana Cold Water Fish (- \$494,000)

The Service is not requesting funding for this fish research program in FY 2005 in order to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. There is no linkage between this program and the voluntary habitat restoration efforts on private lands promoted by the Partners Program. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's

contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan or the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program. Other sources of assistance for fish research are available including the Service's Sport Fish Restoration Grants, and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.

PA Taconic Watershed (- \$741,000)

In FY 2004 Congress provided the Fish and Wildlife Service funding to implement restoration activities in the watershed of Tunkhannock and Bowman's Creeks, in Pennsylvania. Funding for this program is eliminated to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. The Service will continue to pursue high priority restoration projects within the watershed with existing funds. Additional funds may also be available through other sources such as the Private Stewardship Grant and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants programs.

The proposed elimination of this program will initially reduce the Service's contributions toward the end Outcome Goals of the Department's strategic plan. However, the Service anticipates that additional funding in the Partners program as well as other voluntary habitat based programs will offset these changes and the net effect in Service accomplishments will be enhanced.

Walla Walla Basin HCP (- \$988,000)

Funding for this program is eliminated to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. The Walla Walla HCP is a basin wide conservation plan which is being developed as part of a settlement agreement between the Service and the irrigation districts of the Walla Walla River valley over the probable "take" of listed bull trout by the districts. Alternative funding sources for these activities may be available through other sources such as the endangered species program's Section 6 grants and the Private Stewardship Grant and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants programs. Elimination of this funding will provide the Partners Program with flexibility to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan or the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program.

Ferret Reintroduction on Rosebud Sioux Tribal Land (- \$494,000)

Funding for this program is eliminated in FY 2005 to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. The Ferret Reintroduction on Rosebud Sioux Tribal Land Program is an endangered species reintroduction program not aligned with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program's habitat restoration mission. Alternative funding sources may be available to the State and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe ferret reintroduction through numerous other sources such as State and Tribal Wildlife Grants and Stewardship Incentive Grants programs. Elimination of this program will have no effect on the Partners Program's ability to achieve its DOI Strategic Plan goals or the goals of the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program, as it does not currently contribute to program mission accomplishments.

Wildlife Enhancement Starkville, MS (- \$840,000)

In FY 2004 Congress provided the Service funding for wildlife enhancement in Starkville, Mississippi. Funding for this program is eliminated in FY 2005 to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. Funding for these activities will continue to be available through other sources such as the Private Stewardship Grant and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants programs. This program is not under the direction of the Fish and Wildlife Service and its proposed elimination will have no effect on the Partners Program's ability to achieve its DOI Strategic Plan goals or the goals of the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program.

Technical Assistance NJ Meadowlands (- \$49,000)

Funding for this program is eliminated in FY 2005 to offset funding increases elsewhere in the President's budget request that are necessary to address higher priority needs. In FY 2003, the Service

and the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife developed a Vision Plan for the Meadowlands. This plan outlines goals and tasks to be accomplished for wildlife at the Meadowlands. The State and other organizations can now pursue funding to implement these tasks. Funding sources may include other federal or Service programs such as the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants or Private Stewardship Grant Programs. Eliminating the funding for the New Jersey Meadowlands project will have no effect on the Service's ability to contribute to the outcome goals of the DOI Strategic Plan or the National Strategic Plan for the Partners Program.

Program Performance Summary: Habitat Conservation/Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

| | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Resource Protection - DOI End Outcome Goal: Improve health of watersheds, landscapes and marine resources that are DOI managed or influenced in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allocation and use of water. | | | | | | |
| End Outcome Measure: Land Health: <i>Wetland, Riparian and Upland Areas</i> : Percent of acres or stream / shoreline miles achieving desired conditions where condition is known and as specified in management plans consistent with applicable substantive and procedural requirements of State and Federal water law. (Percent for Wetlands, Riparian, and Upland areas) | | | | | | |
| | FY 2002 Actual | FY 2003 Actual | FY 2004 Plan | 2005 Plan | Change in Performance: 2004 to Planned 2005 | Long-term Target (2008) |
| Wetland acres (SP) | 3.8 % | 4.0 % | 4.2 % | 4.6 % | 0.4 % | 4.6 % |
| Numerator/ Denominator | 456K / 12,000K | 480K / 12,000K | 504K / 12,000K | 552K / 12,000K | 48,000 | 552K / 12,000K |
| Upland acres (SP) | 0.4 % | 0.46 % | 0.54 % | 0.62 % | 0.08 % | 0.62 % |
| Numerator/ Denominator | 1,200K / 300,000K | 1,380K / 300,000K | 1,620K / 300,000K | 1,860 / 300,000K | 240,000 | 1,860 / 300,000K |
| Stream/shoreline miles (SP) | 0.070 % | 0.079% | 0.09 % | 0.11% | 0.014 % | 0.11% |
| Numerator/ Denominator | 4.9K / 7,000K | 5.5K / 7,000K | 6.3K / 7,000K | 7.7K / 7,000K | 980 | 7.7K / 7,000K |
| Performance Measures: Voluntary Stewardship Partnerships: Habitat Restoration: Number of acres or stream / shoreline miles achieving watershed and landscape goals through voluntary partnerships. | | | | | | |
| Wetland acres (SP) <i>Partners Fish & Wildlife</i> Upper Klamath <i>High Plains Partnership</i> | 57,522 175 NA | 37,537 460 NA | 51,728 297 NA | 65,919 1,860 1,000 | + 14,191 + 1,563 + 1,000 | 65,919 1,860 1,000 |
| Upland acres (SP) <i>Partners Fish & Wildlife</i> Upper Klamath <i>High Plains Partnership</i> | 158,176 404 NA | 184,063 550 NA | 249,858 400 NA | 315,653 2,440 34,000 | + 65,795 + 2,040 + 34,000 | 315,653 2,440 34,000 |
| Stream miles (SP) <i>Partners Fish & Wildlife</i> Upper Klamath <i>High Plains Partnership</i> | 526 7 NA | 821 12 NA | 1,009 14 0 | 1,197 65 0 | + 188 + 51 0 | 1,197 65 0 |
| Number of fish passage barriers removed. (NK) <i>Partners Fish & Wildlife</i> Upper Klamath <i>High Plains Partnership</i> | 21 14 NA | 35 0 NA | 36 0 NA | 40 0 NA | + 4 0 NA | 40 0 NA |
| Number of responses to technical assistance. (NK) <i>Partners Fish & Wildlife</i> Upper Klamath <i>High Plains Partnership</i> | 3,813 49 NA | 6,720 24 NA | 7,450 24 NA | 8,940 120 NA | +1,490 + 96 NA | 8,940 120 NA |
| Number of landowner agreements. (NK) <i>Partners Fish & Wildlife</i> Upper Klamath <i>High Plains Partnership</i> | 1,725 44 NA | 4,232 10 NA | 4,080 10 NA | 5,380 50 NA | + 1,300 + 40 NA | 5,380 50 NA |
| End Outcome Goal: Sustain biological communities on DOI managed and influenced lands and waters in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allocation and use of water. | | | | | | |
| Performance Measures: Voluntary Stewardship Partnerships: Number of acres and stream / shoreline miles achieving habitat / biological community goals through voluntary agreements. | | | | | | |
| Acres treated for invasive species. (NK) Partners Fish & Wildlife | 34,066 | 88,435 | 53,686 | 61,186 | + 7,500 | 61,186 |