

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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News Release



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More Than \$8 Million in Coastal Wetland Grants Going to Oregon and Washington

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is awarding more than \$20 million in Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants to 12 states, Interior Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett announced today. Of that amount, the states of Oregon and Washington will receive a total of \$8.7 million in grants.

The Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants will provide federal funding for two projects in Oregon and eight in Washington and will be supplemented with \$6 million from state and private partners. The grants will be used to acquire, restore, or enhance more than 1,444 acres of coastal wetlands for long-term conservation benefits to wildlife and habitat. Partners in this year's projects include state and local governments, local land trusts, private land owners, and many others.

"Coastal wetlands not only provide valuable habitat for many fish and wildlife species but they also help keep our oceans cleaner and serve as buffers to protect coastal communities from storms and flooding" said Robyn Thorson, Director of the Service's Pacific Region, which includes Washington and Oregon. "This Region's Coastal Program is a great example of a voluntary approach to habitat conservation. By providing technical and financial assistance to our partners, we can enlist their help in conserving coastal areas threatened by development and predicted sea-level rise resulting from climate change."

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants are awarded to states through a competitive process. The program is funded under provision of the 1990 Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, with money generated from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels.

The following are descriptions of the nine projects which received grants this year in Oregon and Washington.

Oregon

Bott's Marsh Nehalem Estuarine – The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) working with the Trust for Public Land proposes to acquire 36.76 acres of estuarine intertidal marsh and tidal channels in the Nehalem Estuary in Tillamook County. Acquisition of the Bott's Marsh is the key to a larger effort to conserve the Nehalem Estuary led by local land trusts and OWEB. Bott's Marsh is at risk of being developed and the wetland heavily impacted or eliminated by marina development.

Grant request: \$950,000
Partner share: \$402,000
Total cost: \$1,352,000

North Nehalem Bay Wetlands Conservation – The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board in partnership with the Lower Nehalem Community Trust proposes to acquire 16 acres at the edge of Nehalem Bay in Tillamook County on the northern coast of Oregon. Of the 16 acres, 12.5 acres are declining freshwater forested and estuarine intertidal wetlands and 3.5 acres are adjacent uplands. Acquisition of the proposed sites is an important step in protecting Nehalem Bay wetlands from the impacts of residential development, and it will establish connectivity among State and private conservation sites that border the northern half of Nehalem Bay.

Grant request: \$629,665
Partner share: \$583,078
Total cost: \$1,212,743

Washington

Dutcher Cove-Sewell Property Acquisition – The Washington Department of Ecology, the Key Metropolitan Park District, and the Trust for Public Land are working together to conserve tidelands in Dutcher Cove on the Key Peninsula in South Puget Sound. The Department of Ecology proposes to acquire 25.5 acres, including 19 acres of declining coastal wetlands. Dutcher Cove is a highly productive habitat that benefits several threatened species, including five salmonids. The tidal flats also provide excellent habitat for recreationally and commercially valuable shellfish and forage fish that support migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

Grant request: \$500,000
Partner share: \$555,500
Total cost: \$1,055,000

Harstene Island – Scott Property Acquisition – The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission in partnership with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) proposes to acquire 39.3 acres on the eastern shore of Harstene Island in southern Puget Sound. This project is part of a larger collaboration with TPL to protect approximately 112 acres of tidelands, wetlands, and associated uplands. This tract contains three small fresh water streams and their associated palustrine wetlands and uplands, as well as feeder bluffs, pocket estuaries, rocky intertidal beach, and sandy intertidal beach. This property has been a priority acquisition for the Washington State Parks in the last 10 years.

Grant request: \$1,000,000

Partner share: \$1,010,000
Total cost: \$2,010,000

Hoquiam Surge Plain Coastal Grant Phase I –The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife in partnership with the Chehalis River Basin Land Trust, Cascade Land Conservancy, and Grays Harbor Audubon propose to acquire 714 acres of high quality coastal surge plain and adjacent spruce forest within the Grays Harbor ecosystem, located on the Olympic Peninsula. This acquisition is part of an effort to protect 1,138 acres of privately held land that is under threat of development. The Hoquiam surge plain’s extensive network of tidally influenced channels, sloughs and wetlands provide critical rearing and foraging habitat for juvenile Chinook, Chum, Coho, salmon and steelhead

Grant request: \$1,000,000
Partner share: \$470,000
Total cost: \$1,470,000

Kiket Island Shoreline Acquisition Phase I – Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is working with the Trust for Public Land and other not-for-profit and governmental organizations to acquire Kiket Island in North Skagit Bay in Skagit County. Phase I will permanently protect approximately 50.5 acres of high quality estuarine intertidal wetlands, marine nearshore, and associated uplands for expansion of the Deception Pass State Park. The project area includes valuable fish forage and spawning habitat, native fringe eelgrass beds that provide habitat to juvenile salmonids, and valuable sediment feeder bluffs that provide substrate for marsh development and intertidal spawning areas.

Grant request: \$1,000,000
Partner share: \$1,039,400
Total cost: \$2,039,400

Lily Point Acquisition Phase II – The Washington State Department of Ecology, partnering with The Nature Conservancy and Whatcom County, proposes to acquire a 146-acre tract with 4,200 feet of natural shoreline and 94 acres of nationally declining estuary intertidal wetlands. The project area is located on the southeast corner of Point Roberts in Puget Sound, bordered by Canada to the north, Boundary Bay to the east and the Strait of Georgia to the south. The proposed acquisition will be combined with an adjacent 130-acre tract to create a new County park. It also contains exceptional sediment feeder bluffs that provide forage fish spawning substrate and sediment to nourish declining estuarine wetland habitat along the western side of Boundary Bay.

Grant request: \$1,000,000
Partner share: \$454,550
Total cost: \$1,454,550

Lower Eld Inlet Acquisition Phase II – The Washington State Department of Ecology proposes to acquire 55 acres at the southernmost terminus of Puget Sound, including 51.5 acres of wetlands, 1.25 miles of coastal shoreline, and estuarine habitat, tidal sloughs, freshwater springs, and forested uplands. The site, 66 percent of which is nationally declining coastal wetland types, provides excellent habitat for five salmonid species

including Eld Inlet fall chum, Puget Sound coho, Federally threatened Puget Sound fall Chinook and winter steelhead, and anadromous coastal cutthroat trout. This project will add to nearly 600 acres that have already been conserved in the Eld Inlet watershed.

Grant request: \$650,000
Partner share: \$417,780
Total cost: \$1,067,780

Lynch Cove Acquisition – Washington State Department of Fish and Game proposes to acquire 236 acres of estuarine intertidal wetland habitat in Puget Sound near the town of Belfair for protection of habitat for coastal and fish and wildlife resources, including five species of salmonids. In addition, 45 acres of farmed-diked pasturelands will be restored to estuary function. The salt marsh provides valuable habitat for migratory birds and other wetland-dependent fish and wildlife species. This is also one of the most important winter waterfowl areas in Hood Canal and South Puget Sound. This project will add to 540 acres in the estuary that have been conserved through previous grants and by the Great Peninsula and Cascade Land Conservancies.

Grant request: \$1,000,000
Partner share: \$480,000
Total cost: \$1,480,000

Twin Rivers Estuary Acquisition – The Washington Department of Ecology in partnership with the Squaxin Island Tribe proposes to acquire 125 acres of highly quality estuarine and freshwater habitat complex. The project area is located at the upper end of Oakland Bay in southern Puget Sound and is bounded by two productive salmon streams. The site includes approximately 3,200 feet of marine/estuarine shoreline and 66 acres of nationally declining estuarine intertidal wetlands between the mouths of the two streams. This property provides important habitat for five salmonid species, forage fish species, numerous migratory and resident shorebirds, waterfowl, shellfish, and other wildlife.

Grant request: \$1,000,000
Partner share: \$598,190
Total cost: \$1,598,190

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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