

**FY 2025 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service LWCF Land Acquisition Requested Line-Item Project List**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>State(s)</b>	<b>Funding<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Acres</b>
1	Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area (proposed)	FL	\$2,000,000	200
2	Cache River NWR	AR	\$500,000	120
3	Dakota Grassland CA	Multi - ND/SD	\$8,000,000	8,890
4	Everglades Headwaters NWR/CA	FL	\$8,000,000	600
5	Dakota Tallgrass Prairie WMA	Multi - ND/SD	\$6,000,000	4,000
6	Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR	Multi - IA/MN	\$750,000	300
7	Rachel Carson NWR	ME	\$1,500,000	146
8	Grasslands WMA	CA	\$1,000,000	250
9	Silvio O. Conte NFWR	Multi - CT/MA/ NH/VT	\$2,000,000	549
10	Willamette Valley CA	OR	\$1,800,000	475
11	Blackwater NWR	MD	\$750,000	160
12	Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR	CA	\$4,500,000	79
13	Patoka River NWR	IN	\$1,000,000	200
14	Rappahannock River Valley NWR	VA	\$1,000,000	700
15	Big Muddy NFWR	MO	\$500,000	350
16	Great Thicket NWR	Multi - CT/MA/ ME/NH/NY/RI	\$1,500,000	225
17	Stone Lakes NWR	CA	\$1,000,000	59
18	Petit Manan NWR	ME	\$1,000,000	85
19	Cypress Creek NWR	IL	\$500,000	300
20	Tulare Basin WMA	CA	\$1,000,000	600
21	Middle Mississippi River NWR	Multi - IL/MO	\$500,000	350
22	Bear River Watershed CA	Multi - ID/MT/UT	\$2,750,000	4,200
23	St. Marks NWR	FL	\$1,500,000	300
24	Clarks River NWR	KY	\$1,000,000	500
25	Waccamaw NWR	SC	\$1,000,000	350
26	Minidoka NWR	ID	\$3,000,000	540
27	Okefenokee NWR	Multi - FL/GA	\$5,000,000	1,667
28	Hackmatack NWR	Multi - IL/WI	\$3,290,000	175
29	Mountain Bogs NWR	NC	\$1,000,000	149
30	Rocky Mountain Front CA	MT	\$1,500,000	1,500
	<b>FY 2025 Requested Line-Item Project Total</b>		<b>\$64,840,000</b>	<b>28,019</b>

<sup>1</sup>Bureau line item funding amounts are Net Budget Authority, the amount available to execute after sequester and pop-up adjustments. All mandatory LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of -5.7% across all programs.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area (proposed)

**Priority:** 1

**State(s):** FL

**Congressional District(s):** FL-11, FL-16, FL-17, FL-18, FL-26

**Location:**

Southwest Florida including Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk, and Sarasota Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	0	\$0
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	799,800	\$7,998,000,000

**Project Description:**

FWS is proposing to establish the Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area, which would conserve a wildlife corridor connecting existing protected lands from Big Cypress National Preserve and Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge north to the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. The proposed Conservation Area is a collaborative effort to conserve wildlife habitat in Southwest Florida, which could benefit many species of native plants, migratory birds, and wildlife, including 74 federally threatened and endangered species such as the Florida panther and Everglade snail kite. The proposed Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area would protect species and improve their resiliency in the face of climate change and extreme development pressures. Protection and management actions would also support Florida’s family farms and ranches, improve water quality, quantity, and water storage within the Greater Everglades and watersheds entering Charlotte Harbor. The proposal identifies a 4-million-acre Conservation Area in which the Service would pursue conservation easements or fee-title acquisitions from willing sellers only. Conservation easements would provide landowners the opportunity to maintain working lands in their current configuration with no further subdivision or development. Fee-title acquisitions on up to 400,000 acres would provide wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation, and opportunities for cultural, traditional, and medicinal uses would be available.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will work with partners and willing sellers to acquire approximately 200 acres in conservation easements and fee title for the proposed Southwest Florida Wildlife Conservation Area. Acquisition will focus on connecting existing protected lands for the benefit of many species of native plants and wildlife.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Sportsman's Trust, Florida Cattlemen's Association, Florida Conservation Group, National Wildlife Refuge Association, Trust for

Public Lands, Ducks Unlimited, USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation, Wildpath, Live Wildly, Defenders of Wildlife, Audubon of Florida, and Audubon of Western Everglades.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$12,000	\$10,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs are for monitoring easements and initial habitat restoration. Annual costs include easement monitoring, maintenance, law enforcement, and habitat management.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 2

**State(s):** AR

**Congressional District(s):** AR-01

**Location:**

Adjacent to the White and Cache Rivers and Bayou DeView in Monroe, Prairie, Woodruff, Jackson, Cross, and Poinsett Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
Acquired to Date	73,978	\$75,806,191
Remaining to be Acquired	212,172	\$529,627,154

**Project Description:**

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1986 to protect significant wetland habitats and provide critical feeding and resting areas for migrating and wintering waterfowl. As one of the few remaining areas in the Lower Mississippi River Valley not drastically altered by channelization and drainage, the Cache River basin contains a variety of wetland communities including some of the most intact and least disturbed bottomland hardwood forests in the Mississippi Valley region. The Cache River Basin is one of the most important wintering areas for mallard ducks in North America. The quality and diversity of habitats attract a wide variety of fish and wildlife, including federally listed and candidate species such as northern long-eared bat, eastern black rail, interior least tern, piping plover, and monarch butterfly. The wetlands have been designated by the Ramsar Convention as “Wetlands of International Importance.” The Refuge is a nationally renowned area for waterfowl hunting. The Refuge also provides other public wildlife-dependent recreation, such as fishing, boating, wildlife observation, photography, and hiking. The Refuge is located within a very rural, economically depressed area of Arkansas, where communities depend on the hunting and fishing opportunities provided by the Refuge.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire two tracts totaling 120 acres that will connect several tracts of existing Refuge lands. Acquisition will expand conservation of the floodplain of the White River and protect an important bottomland hardwoods ecosystem containing extant, seasonally flooded forest and permanent hardwood swamp. The tracts contain high value foraging, migrating, and wintering habitat resources for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds, and landbirds, as well as breeding habitat for wood duck and forest-interior birds. Conservation of the tracts will benefit a wide variety of fish and wildlife species, including federally listed endangered northern long-eared bat. Acquisition will expand public wildlife-dependent recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation.

**Cooperator(s):**

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, National Wild Turkey Federation, Arkansas Bow Hunters Association, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, The Conservation Fund, Arbor Day Foundation, and Audubon Arkansas.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$5,000	\$500

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

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

**Priority:** 3

**State(s):** ND, SD

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

**Location:**

South Dakota and North Dakota, lying east of the Missouri River.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>8,890</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>
Acquired to Date	107,307	\$54,863,217
Remaining to be Acquired	1,821,273	\$1,734,424,339

**Project Description:**

The Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) ecosystem consists of large, unique grassland and wetland complexes that provide critical habitat for migratory birds, shorebirds, grassland birds, and other wildlife. Known as America’s “duck factory,” the PPR supports more than 50 percent of the total breeding population of North America’s migratory waterfowl. The prime breeding habitat for millions of ducks, the PPR includes parts of Iowa, the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Montana, and can support upwards of 100 breeding duck pairs per square mile. The Dakota Grassland Conservation Area is part of a large-scale habitat conservation effort to protect this highly diverse and endangered ecosystem across the North and South Dakota portions of the PPR. FWS has made significant progress in protecting priority waterfowl habitat in the PPR, but further habitat fragmentation and degradation continues at an alarming rate. Approximately 81 percent of the remaining grassland and 65 percent of wetlands in the PPR have no form of permanent protection. The FWS’s conservation easement acquisition program offers landowners a non-regulatory, financial incentive to permanently protect wildlife habitat on private lands in the PPR.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire conservation easements on approximately 8,890 acres of grassland and wetland habitat in South Dakota and North Dakota. The funding leverages additional funding from Ducks Unlimited and other conservation partners. Acquisitions will benefit migratory birds, plants, and wildlife, including federally listed species such as piping plover, whooping crane, and Dakota skipper. Landscape-scale preservation of the rich mosaic of native grasslands and functional wetlands will bolster the ecosystem’s resiliency to climate change.

**Cooperator(s):**

North Dakota Game and Fish Department; North Dakota Natural Resources Trust; Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; The Nature Conservancy; and the South Dakota Grassland Coalition.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$0	\$0

**Describe O&M:**

FWS is already monitoring existing easements in the area; the additional costs would be minimal.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

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

**Priority:** 4

**State(s):** FL

**Congressional District(s):** FL-9, FL-18

**Location:**

Approximately 50 miles south of Orlando and 75 miles east of Tampa, in Okeechobee, Osceola, Highlands and Polk Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	12,580	\$35,398,885
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	138,896	\$405,789,521

**Project Description:**

Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area contains the headwaters of the greater Everglades ecosystem, protecting a combination of wetland and upland habitats supporting migratory birds, 143 Federal and State listed species, and regionally important wildlife and plant communities within the Kissimmee River Basin. Habitats include a mosaic of seasonally wet grasslands, longleaf pine savannas, sandhill and scrub, and also forested wetlands that support numerous imperiled plants and animals and connect landscapes for a wide array of species including Florida panther, Florida black bear, Audubon’s crested caracara, and Florida grasshopper sparrow. Easements acquired within the Conservation Area protect Florida's cattle ranching heritage, and fee acquisitions provide public outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hiking, hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire approximately 600 acres in fee title and conservation easements. Refuge acquisitions are strongly supported by a variety of partners and stakeholders. Funding will be leveraged by the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program. Acquisitions will help the Everglades ecosystem become a more connected and functional conservation landscape that will provide effective habitat connections between existing conservation areas and allow habitats and species to shift in response to urban development pressures and climate change. Conservation easements help preserve one of Florida’s last working rural landscapes, benefiting the local economy. Acquisitions also contribute to safeguarding water supply for millions of Floridians and marine life by protecting groundwater recharge areas and holding and treating surface water runoff, which significantly contributes to efforts to protect and restore watersheds by reducing fresh and saltwater algae blooms. Fee acquisitions provide public outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hiking, hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation.



**Cooperator(s):**

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Sportsman's Trust, Florida Cattlemen's Association, Open Space Institute, Ducks Unlimited, USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, and Okeechobee, Osceola, Highlands, and Polk Counties. The FWS is a partner of the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape, which includes the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Avon Park Air Force Range.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$12,000	\$10,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial habitat restoration and boundary sign posting. Annual costs include easement monitoring, habitat management, and maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area

**Priority:** 5

**State(s):** ND, SD

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

**Location:**

South Dakota east of the James River Valley and three counties in the southeast corner of North Dakota.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>
Acquired to Date	78,220	\$21,331,026
Remaining to be Acquired	102,780	\$78,125,775

**Project Description:**

Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area was established in 2000 to preserve quality tallgrass prairie habitat in southeastern North Dakota and eastern South Dakota to help maintain biodiversity and slow habitat fragmentation. FWS's long-term goal for the Refuge is to protect 185,000 acres of the remaining tallgrass prairie in the eastern Dakotas using conservation easements. Tallgrass prairies support a rich variety of plant, animal, and insect species, including more than 147 species of breeding birds, ranging from neotropical migrants to waterfowl. In some areas, breeding waterfowl densities exceed 100 pairs per square mile. The habitat supports several federally listed species, including the Dakota skipper, Poweshiek skipperling, and monarch butterfly. The tallgrass prairie ecosystem also supports grassland bird species, including Baird’s sparrow, loggerhead shrike, and ferruginous hawk. Conservation easements preserve ecological functions by providing floodwater retention, groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, improved water quality, and reduced soil erosion. Easements that protect tallgrass prairie reduce disturbance of Native American sites such as burial mounds, stone cairns, teepee rings, and other cultural items.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire wetland and grassland easements on approximately 4,000 acres of tallgrass prairie. Acquisition of these easements protects important habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife, while maintaining ranching and other traditional working operations.

**Cooperator(s):**

North Dakota Game and Fish; Pheasants Forever; Audubon; Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; The Nature Conservancy; and the South Dakota Grassland Coalition.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$0	\$0

**Describe O&M:**

FWS is already monitoring existing easements in the area; the additional costs would be minimal.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 6

**State(s):** IA, MN

**Congressional District(s):** IA-1, IA-2, IA-3, IA-4; MN-1, MN-2, MN-7, MN-8

**Location:**

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

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	14,441	\$10,077,441
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	62,259	\$97,811,525

**Project Description:**

Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2000 to address the loss of America’s grasslands and the decline of grassland wildlife. Scientists estimate the original tallgrass prairie in Minnesota and Iowa covered about 25 million acres. Now, there are only about 300,000 acres left in the two States. The Refuge was created to work with individuals, groups, and government agencies to permanently preserve and restore some of the northern tallgrass prairie. The Refuge’s long-term goal is to protect 77,000 acres. Federally listed threatened and endangered species on the Refuge include four plant and seven animal species, including western prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover, Topeka shiner, rusty patched bumble bee, and piping plover. Several globally rare species can also be found on the Refuge, including the last remaining U.S. populations of the Dakota skipper and regal fritillary butterflies, which are in steep decline. The Refuge consists of many permanent, temporary, and seasonal wetlands crucial to national waterfowl, waterbird, and shorebird populations. These same water resources provide groundwater recharge supply and mitigate the severity and risk of downstream flooding. The many units of the Refuge are accessible to numerous diverse communities for public recreation such as fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will purchase fee title or conservation easements to protect northern tallgrass prairie habitat. Conservation partners in Iowa and Minnesota will leverage acquisitions by providing matching funds, cost-share opportunities, or donating land. In Iowa, FWS works closely with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to purchase and manage tracts of land. In Minnesota, The Nature Conservancy actively provides funding to help restore recently purchased tracts. Some of these land donations are made possible by State of Minnesota grants and, per State law, are immediately open for public hunting and fishing. Acquisition will increase public wildlife observation, education, and photography opportunities.

**Cooperator(s):**

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, county conservation boards, and local Chambers of Commerce.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$2,000	\$2,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial restoration and boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management and easement monitoring.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 7

**State(s):** ME

**Congressional District(s):** ME-1

**Location:** York and Cumberland Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
Acquired to Date	5,776	\$27,769,190
Remaining to be Acquired	8,962	\$90,440,000

**Project Description:**

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1966 in cooperation with the State of Maine to protect valuable salt marshes and estuaries for migratory birds. Located along 50 miles of coastline in York and Cumberland Counties, the Refuge consists of eleven Divisions stretching from Kittery to Cape Elizabeth. The proximity of the Refuge to the coast and its location between the eastern deciduous forest and the boreal forest creates a biodiverse composition of plants and animals not found elsewhere in Maine. Major habitat types present on the Refuge include forested upland, barrier beach/dune, coastal meadows, tidal salt marsh, and the distinctive rocky coast. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities, including wildlife observation, fishing, hunting, photography, and kayaking for the growing, and increasingly diverse and more urban, population of southern Maine and its summer visitors.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS is in negotiations with landowners to acquire tracts that contain riparian and tidal habitats. These acquisitions will support salt marsh migration which is crucial to the long-term viability of this saltmarsh-focused Refuge. One parcel encompasses the west bank of the Little River in Kennebunkport, one of the least developed tidal river habitats in southern Maine. The parcel is adjacent to existing Refuge lands and an additional parcel being acquired at the Refuge. This acquisition would connect these parcels and improve public access for kayaking, fishing, and hunting on the river.

**Cooperator(s):**

Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (a partnership among national and local land trusts including the York, Kittery, and Great Works Regional Land Trusts).

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$15,000	\$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial restoration and boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management, maintenance, and law enforcement.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Grasslands Wildlife Management Area

**Priority:** 8

**State(s):** CA

**Congressional District(s):** CA-13

**Location:**

Merced County.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Acquired to Date	94,997	\$66,318,161
Remaining to be Acquired	38,083	\$152,330,200

**Project Description:**

The Grasslands Wildlife Management Area (WMA) was established in 1979 and is composed mostly of conservation easements. Perpetual conservation easements preserve wetland and grassland habitats while allowing wildlife-friendly agricultural operations. Fee title acquisition allows for habitat restoration as well as protection of water quality and quantity. The WMA supports diverse habitats, including seasonally flooded marshlands, semi-permanent marshes, riparian habitats, wet meadows, vernal pools, native uplands, pastures, and native grasslands. These wetlands constitute 30% of the remaining wetlands in California's Central Valley and are extremely important to Pacific Flyway waterfowl populations. In addition to waterfowl, these habitats support shorebirds, wading birds, songbirds, raptors, and other wildlife species.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire 250 acres. Acquisition will allow for improved management of adjacent FWS lands and will contribute to the long-term viability of the grassland and wetland ecosystems, providing a haven for migratory birds and other wildlife species.

**Cooperator(s):**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife, River Partners, Ducks Unlimited, California Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, and Western Rivers Conservancy.

**Operations & Maintenance**

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

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance and habitat management.



**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

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

**Priority:** 9

**State(s):** CT, MA, NH, VT

**Congressional District(s):** CT-1, CT-2, CT-3, CT-5; MA-1, MA-2, MA-3; NH-1, NH-2; VT-AL

**Location:**

Several focus areas within the Connecticut River Watershed.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	42,699	\$45,916,514
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	54,582	\$81,083,486

**Project Description:**

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was authorized in 1991 as a landscape-scale, watershed-based, climate resilient, and partnership empowered land conservation collaboration to protect the Connecticut River Watershed. Land protection promotes ecological integrity and species diversity and reinforces ecosystem structure and function. The Refuge purpose is to conserve, protect, and enhance the Connecticut River Valley populations of Atlantic salmon, American shad, river herring, short-nosed sturgeon, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, osprey, black ducks, and other native species of plants, fish, and wildlife. Refuge Divisions span the rural-suburban-urban gradient creating opportunities to connect with underserved communities and economically depressed areas. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities, including wildlife observation, photography, fishing, and environmental education.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire fee title lands or conservation easements on approximately 549 acres. FWS prioritizes tracts that abut existing Refuge lands and other conservation lands, thereby enhancing connectivity for wildlife corridors and public recreation. By conserving floodplains and farms along the mainstem of the Connecticut River, forests in the River's headwaters, and wetlands in between, acquisitions reduce the vulnerability of cities and towns to flooding, and support groundwater recharge in the face of severe drought. Acquisition will expand public recreational opportunities, including wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education.

**Cooperator(s):**

States of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, as well as local communities. The Friends of Conte, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Kestrel Land Trust, Middlesex Land Trust, WildLandscapes International and Connecticut Audubon Society. The four-state congressional delegation provides letters of support annually.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$9,000	\$6,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance and habitat management.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Willamette Valley Conservation Area

**Priority:** 10

**State(s):** OR

**Congressional District(s):** OR-01, OR-3, OR-4, OR-05

**Location:**

Willamette Valley including Benton, Lane, Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>\$1,800,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	0	\$0
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	22,175	\$152,700,000

**Project Description:**

FWS is proposing to establish the Willamette Valley Conservation Area for the preservation and restoration of oak and prairie ecosystems. FWS is a partner in the Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative (Cooperative), which consists of more than three dozen non-governmental organization, Tribal, private business, university, local, State, and Federal partners. Oak and prairie habitats are home to a diverse array of wildlife and plant species. The Cooperative has designated 23 “strategy species” that are of high conservation value for the State and include several federally listed threatened and endangered species such as the Fender's blue butterfly and streaked horned lark. The Conservation Area will complement conservation and public recreation efforts at Ankeny, William Finley, and Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuges.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire a 475-acre conservation easement. The property runs from the valley floor to the top of a hill at 500 feet and contains diverse habitat. The current land use includes approximately 300 acres of mixed woodlands, 200 acres of seed production (orchard grass), a hay field, and pasture with limited grazing. The easement will protect oak and prairie habitat and help provide a wildlife corridor between Baskett Slough NWR to the north and other protected lands to the south. Restoration of native upland prairie will significantly benefit native species such as grassland birds, pollinators, and rare plants.

**Cooperator(s):**

Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative, which is composed of more than three dozen non-governmental organization, Tribal, private business, university, local, State, and Federal partners. Partners for this specific acquisition include USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service; Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board; Cascade Pacific Research, Conservation & Development Council; Oregon State University; the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$7,000	\$3,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial habitat restoration. Annual costs include easement monitoring.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 11

**State(s):** MD

**Congressional District(s):** MD-1

**Location:**

Dorchester County.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	33,614	\$33,010,111
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	27,746	\$21,739,889

**Project Description:**

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1933 as a waterfowl sanctuary for birds migrating along the Atlantic Flyway. The Refuge’s mosaic of tidal marshes and creeks, forested wetlands, and upland forests provide habitat for several high-priority species, including American black duck, prothonotary warbler, wood duck, mallard, brown-headed nuthatch, and wood thrush. The Refuge is home to the largest remaining natural population of the recently delisted Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel and is also home to the largest breeding population of American bald eagles north of Florida on the East Coast. The Refuge contains one third of Maryland’s tidal wetlands. These wetlands provide storm protection to lower Dorchester County, including the town of Cambridge. The Refuge was recognized as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention; was named a priority wetland in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; and is part of a National Audubon Society-designated Important Bird Area. The Refuge has been referred to as the “Everglades of the North,” and has been called one of the “Last Great Places” by The Nature Conservancy. The Refuge provides public recreation, including hunting, fishing, boating, and wildlife observation and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS is in discussions with several landowners about acquiring their properties for the Refuge. One property is a 66-acre tract that straddles the tidal swamps of the Nanticoke River and adjacent upland forests. Acquisition of this property will provide a corridor for migration of tidal wetlands into adjacent uplands in response to sea level rise. The property has high quality tidal freshwater swamps along the river and Owens Creek and is adjacent to existing Refuge lands and a Maryland wildlife management area. FWS and conservation partners will restore agricultural lands to shortleaf pine open woodlands for the benefit of migratory birds, the Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel and other wildlife.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service (Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park), and the Chesapeake Conservancy.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$2,000	\$2,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial restoration and boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management and maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 12

**State(s):** CA

**Congressional District(s):** CA-12, CA-14, CA-15, CA-16, CA-17

**Location:**

Alameda County.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>\$4,500,000</b>
Acquired to Date	29,528	\$43,716,134
Remaining to be Acquired	13,478	\$337,090,000

**Project Description:**

The Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge is in south San Francisco Bay, California. One of the largest urban refuges in the United States, it is an island of wildlife habitat in an extensive metropolitan area of seven million people. The Refuge consists primarily of tidal marsh, salt ponds, mud flats, and seasonal wetlands acting as a keystone to the preservation of the biological and physical integrity of San Francisco Bay. The Refuge provides habitat for nine species of federally listed threatened or endangered species and is home to 227 species of birds, including 8 percent of the world population of the western snowy plover. It protects 60 percent of the world's population of California clapper rail, as well as a substantial number of salt marsh harvest mouse, both found only in the remaining tidal marshes of San Francisco Bay. Wintering waterfowl make extensive use of the area, averaging 45,000-75,000 each winter. More than 500,000 shorebirds make use of the mud flats and salt ponds. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, including hiking and fishing.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire approximately 79 acres as part of the phased acquisition of a 430-acre tract. Acquisition will enable FWS and its partners to restore the land to tidal marsh for the benefit of the endangered Ridgeway's rail and salt marsh harvest mouse. Tidal marshes provide for sea level rise resiliency and marsh migration. The acquisition supports the goals of the San Francisco Estuary Partnership and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture. As part of the acquisition, our conservation partner is conducting listening sessions with the Confederated Villages of Lisjan/Ohlone and other local Tribes to document cultural resources and lore. Acquisition will expand public wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, such as hiking and fishing.

**Cooperator(s):**

Trust for Public Lands, California Coastal Commission, Wildlife Conservation Board, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture, and San Francisco Bay Estuary Partnership.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$20,000	\$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting and initial habitat restoration. Annual costs include habitat management.



**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 13

**State(s):** IN

**Congressional District(s):** IN - 8

**Location:**

Pike and Gibson Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	10,774	\$10,111,313
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	11,912	\$38,225,597

**Project Description:**

Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1994 to protect one of two remaining intact floodplain forest systems in Indiana and improve the water quality of the Patoka River. The Refuge protects wetlands, floodplain forest, and uplands along 30 miles of the Patoka River corridor for the benefit of migratory birds, fish, and wildlife, including federally listed endangered species such as Indiana bats and whooping cranes. The Refuge is located near the diverse communities of Evansville and Indianapolis, Indiana, and Louisville, Kentucky, and provides public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will complete the phased acquisition of a 1,650-acre tract. The tract consists of bottomland forests and wetlands that provide habitat for waterfowl, waterbirds, and landbirds, along with associated upland forests and grasslands that provide habitat for Indiana bats. The tract is adjacent to the Patoka River; restoration of farmed land to natural habitat will improve water quality. The tract is easily accessible from county roads and acquisition will enhance public access to existing Refuge lands as well as expand public recreational activities, such as wildlife observation, photography, hunting, and fishing.

**Cooperator(s):**

Ducks Unlimited, Friends of Patoka Refuge, Sycamore Land Trust, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, National Wild Turkey Federation, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Duke Energy, Evansville Chapter of the Audubon Society, and USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$5,000	\$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance, law enforcement, and habitat management.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 14

**State(s):** VA

**Congressional District(s):** VA-1, VA-7

**Location:**

The Rappahannock River watershed in Essex, King George, Caroline, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	10,048	\$23,775,570
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	9,252	\$27,638,030

**Project Description:**

Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1996. The Refuge protects wetlands and their associated uplands along the Rappahannock River and its major tributaries. The Refuge includes freshwater tidal marsh, forest swamp, upland deciduous forest, mixed pine forest, and grassland habitats. In 2007, areas of the Refuge were designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. Shorebirds, neotropical migrant songbirds, raptors, and marsh birds rely on the Rappahannock River’s corridors during the spring and fall migration periods. With help from partners and volunteers, Refuge staff are restoring native grasslands and riparian forests along the river and tributary streams to provide additional habitat for these species. Some of the species the Refuge focuses management actions on include bald eagles, forest dwelling species such as wood thrush and scarlet tanager, and grassland nesting birds such as grasshopper sparrow and northern bobwhite.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire conservation easements on 700 acres to protect waterfowl habitat along the Rappahannock River. The properties contain emergent wetland plants that provide wintering habitat for thousands of waterfowl, such as Canada geese, mallard, wood duck, and mergansers. This area also holds cultural significance for the Rappahannock Tribe, which owns land adjacent to the Refuge. The proposed acquisitions will support wildlife observation activities, especially for boaters and paddlers.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Rappahannock Tribe, Commonwealth of Virginia, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Chesapeake Conservancy, National Park Service, and The Conservation Fund.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$2,000	\$1,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up and annual costs include easement monitoring and enforcement.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 15

**State(s):** MO

**Congressional District(s):** MO-1, MO-2, MO-3, MO-4, MO-5, MO-6

**Location:**

In the floodplain of the Missouri River from Kansas City to St. Louis.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	18,388	\$9,322,203
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	41,359	\$22,366,500

**Project Description:**

The historic Missouri River, nicknamed "Big Muddy" because of its murky, sediment-filled waters, provides beneficial habitat for many wildlife species. The river's ability to carve through floodplains and create side channels, wetlands, and oxbow lakes has attracted and sustained wildlife since the retreat of glaciers from the region thousands of years ago. Drastic changes began to occur on the Missouri River soon after the journey of Lewis and Clark described its wildlife to the world in the early 1800s. Over the next century, hundreds of steamships sank in the river and efforts began to control it. By the 1980s, over 700 miles of river had been channelized, reducing risks but also crucial habitat. Because of this and further damage by major flooding, the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was established in September of 1994 for the development, advancement, management, conservation and protection of fish and wildlife resources. The Refuge stretches across the entire State of Missouri, connecting four of the top five most populated cities in the State and running parallel to Interstate 70, with 60 percent of the State's population living within 30 miles. The Refuge encompasses river features, such as islands, chutes, bends, and tributary confluences. Refuge purposes include reconnecting the Missouri River and its tributaries to their floodplains, restoring hydrology, returning native vegetation, reducing invasive species, and offering wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, and wildlife viewing and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire 350 acres. Acquisitions will improve public access to existing Refuge lands and provide habitat for migratory birds, fish, and wildlife. The acquisitions will enable the FWS to protect and restore bottomland forest and Missouri River floodplain for the benefit of numerous endangered and protected species, including pallid sturgeon, least tern, and a host of mussel species. Restored floodplains will mitigate flooding events for downstream communities. Restoration of lands is vital to the survival of native species and will involve partnerships with landowners to keep working lands intact. Acquisitions will expand public recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

**Cooperator(s):**

Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Mysun Charitable Foundation, Great Rivers Greenway, Conservation Federation of Missouri, Audubon Missouri, Ray and Jackson Counties, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$10,000	\$2,500

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management, law enforcement, and maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 16

**State(s):** CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI

**Congressional District(s):** CT-2, CT-5; MA-9; ME-1; NH-1, NH-2; NY-18; RI-2

**Location:**

Spans 10 Focus Areas in six northeastern states.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	401	\$1,682,564
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	14,374	\$97,317,436

**Project Description:**

Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2016 to manage and protect young forest and shrubland habitat for the New England cottontail rabbit, ruffed grouse, American woodcock, monarch butterfly, box turtle, and other species. The Refuge is part of a larger landscape effort with State wildlife agencies and other partners in Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island. FWS plans to conserve 15,000 acres in 10 focus areas. Habitat restoration also benefits federally listed endangered bog turtles and at-risk migratory birds including prairie warbler, blue-winged warbler, field sparrow, American woodcock, and brown thrasher. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreation, including wildlife observation, nature interpretation, hunting, and fishing.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS is in negotiations with several landowners to acquire property for the Refuge. One target property is a 1,086-acre farm located within the Northern Housatonic focus area. The property has a mix of pastures, woodlands, and wetlands and contains high-quality early successional habitat, rating it as a priority for New England cottontail conservation. The property is located within the Hudson River valley, providing significant potential for landscape-scale conservation. Acquisitions will expand public wildlife-dependent recreation, including wildlife observation, nature interpretation, hunting, and fishing.

**Cooperator(s):**

States of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York; USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service; The Nature Conservancy; Trust for Public Land; Avalonia Land Conservancy (CT); Dutchess Land Conservancy (NY); Housatonic Valley Association; Harlem Valley Conservation Alliance (NY); Open Space Institute of NY; Massachusetts Audubon Society; Connecticut Audubon Society; York Land Trust (ME); Kittery Land Trust (ME); Great Works Regional Land Trust (ME); Maine Coast Heritage Trust; Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire; Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership (NH).

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$7,000	\$7,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management.



**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 17

**State(s):** CA

**Congressional District(s):** CA-07

**Location:**

Sacramento County.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Acquired to Date	6,684	\$7,841,422
Remaining to be Acquired	11,053	\$128,111,017

**Project Description:**

Established in 1992, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is an urban Refuge located 10 miles from downtown Sacramento and within the Pacific Flyway. The Refuge consists of a variety of Central Valley habitats including grassland savannah, riparian forest, wetlands, and native freshwater lakes. The diverse habitats support over 200 species of birds and numerous other fish and wildlife species. The Refuge provides public recreational activities, including environmental education, docent-guided walks, canoeing, and waterfowl hunting.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire tracts to protect and maintain foraging areas for migrating and wintering birds, which would otherwise be converted to permanent crops that are not wildlife friendly. Acquisition and restoration will benefit migratory birds, such as sandhill cranes, and expand wildlife observation and other public recreational opportunities.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Conservation Fund, State of California, and Friends of Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$5,000	\$3,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance and habitat management.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 18

**State(s):** ME

**Congressional District(s):** ME-1, ME-2

**Location:**

Islands along the Maine Coast from off Portland to the Canadian border.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Acquired to Date	6,770	\$11,261,448
Remaining to be Acquired	3,651	\$6,073,183

**Project Description:**

Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1974 to benefit migratory birds. The Refuge protects many diverse habitats across units on the mainland and 64 islands that stretch along the entire coastline of Maine. The islands vary in size from 0.5 to 1,312 acres. Eight of the islands are predominantly forested with mature stands of balsam fir and red spruce. Eleven of these islands currently support active bald eagle nests. While the other 53 islands within the Refuge may provide some forested habitat, their primary resource value is to the open herbaceous habitat that provides valuable nesting habitat for a variety of seabirds, including Atlantic puffins, razorbills, Leach's storm-petrels, and common eiders. The Refuge also contains five lighthouses. Excursion boat trips past the lighthouses and seabird colonies are important to the local economy.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire important seabird nesting habitat. One property is an 8-acre tract that is the last of three inholdings on Metinic Island. The Refuge has a successful seabird restoration project on Metinic Island, which includes one of only four remaining Arctic tern colonies in Maine. Since 1998 the colony has grown from zero pairs to over 1,200 pairs. The tract also has nesting colonies of Leach's storm petrels and common eiders. Acquisition of this tract will expand habitat protection as well as protect existing Refuge lands.

**Cooperator(s):**

Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$5,000	\$3,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance and habitat management.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 19

**State(s):** IL

**Congressional District(s):** IL-12

**Location:**

Pulaski County.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
Acquired to Date	16,514	\$13,139,370
Remaining to be Acquired	19,871	\$24,713,750

**Project Description:**

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1990 and is within the Cache River watershed in southern Illinois. The Refuge consists of bottomland hardwood forest, cypress tupelo swamp, herbaceous wetlands, deep water habitats, and canebrakes. The wetlands on the Refuge were designated a RAMSAR Wetland of International Importance. The Refuge provides public recreational activities, including hiking, canoeing, hunting, wildlife viewing and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire tracts totaling 300 acres of historical bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands that are currently in agricultural production. FWS will restore the tracts to provide habitat for waterfowl, waterbirds, landbirds, and federally listed endangered Indiana bats. The tracts are accessible from public roadways and will increase public access to existing Refuge lands as well as expand public recreational activities, such as wildlife observation, photography, hunting, and fishing.

**Cooperator(s):**

Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, National Wild Turkey Federation, The Audubon Society, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$7,000	\$3,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial restoration and boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance, law enforcement, and habitat management.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Tulare Basin Wildlife Management Area

**Priority:** 20

**State(s):** CA

**Congressional District(s):** CA-22

**Location:**

In Kern County, in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	4,439	\$8,891,554
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	16,961	\$86,804,900

**Project Description:**

Tulare Basin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) was established in 2009 with plans for eventual protection of 22,000 acres in an area between Kern and Pixley National Wildlife Refuges. Ninety percent of the land in the WMA will be conserved through the purchase of conservation easements from willing landowners. The Kern/Tulare Basin provides vital wintering and staging areas for northern pintail and other Pacific Flyway waterfowl. Dry upland habitats that are protected in association with wetlands are important to many types of wildlife.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire tracts totaling 600 acres. Acquisitions benefit existing populations of State or federally listed endangered or threatened species such as San Joaquin kit fox, Tipton kangaroo rat, and blunt-nosed leopard lizard. Acquisitions will also expand public recreational opportunities such as wildlife observation and photography.

**Cooperator(s):**

Tulare Basin Wetlands Association, California Waterfowl Association, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance, and the many groups associated with the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners.

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$5,000	\$2,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance and habitat management.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 21

**State(s):** IL, MO

**Congressional District(s):** IL-12, IL-13, MO-1, MO-2, MO-3, MO-8

**Location:**

Along the Mississippi River, from St. Louis, Missouri to Cairo, Illinois.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	8,216	\$3,042,400
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	95,566	\$235,497,600

**Project Description:**

The Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge was established as an individual Refuge in 2000. Initial land acquisition was in response to the great flood of 1993. Refuge lands lie within the uncontrolled portion of the Middle Mississippi River, below the confluence with the Missouri, where river levels are not regulated by the lock and dam system. The Refuge is primarily floodplain hardwood forest, marsh/wetland, and open water. Refuge lands provide access to the floodplain for native fish during high water stages and create a corridor of floodplain forest habitat for migratory birds and resident wildlife. The Refuge was designated as an Important Bird Area in 2008. The Refuge provides public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, such as wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire a 350-acre tract in the Dogtooth Bend area of the Refuge. The acquisition will facilitate natural river floodplain restoration opportunities, which will support species of concern including pallid sturgeon, least tern, and many mussel species. Water levels fluctuate greatly in this open river section of the Mississippi, and frequent flooding occurs. Acquisition will enable FWS to restore the naturally functioning floodplain system, which increases water quality and water storage during flood events. Acquisition will also expand public recreational opportunities.

**Cooperator(s):**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, local municipal entities, and the States of Missouri and Illinois. The Refuge participates in the Middle Mississippi River Partnership, which is a collaboration of 22 partner organizations, including Federal and State agencies, universities, and not-for-profit organizations, working together since 2004, towards a common goal of restoring and enhancing the natural resources of the river corridor from St. Louis, Missouri, to Cairo, Illinois.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$8,000	\$2,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include initial restoration and boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management, law enforcement, and maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Bear River Watershed Conservation Area

**Priority:** 22

**State(s):** ID, UT, WY

**Congressional District(s):** ID-2; UT-1, UT-3; WY-AL

**Location:**

Northeastern corner of Utah, extending into southeastern Idaho and southwestern Wyoming. (Bannock, Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power Counties in Idaho; Box Elder, Cache, Rich, and Summit Counties in Utah; and Lincoln and Uinta Counties in Wyoming).

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>\$2,750,000</b>
Acquired to Date	8,272	\$8,532,140
Remaining to be Acquired	911,173	\$898,220,855

**Project Description:**

The Bear River Watershed Conservation Area was established in 2016. FWS works with private landowners to coordinate watershed-wide conservation efforts and maintain important wildlife habitat on farm and ranch lands. Wetlands and riparian areas in the watershed’s lower elevations provide some of the most important resting, staging, feeding, breeding, and nesting areas for migratory birds in the Pacific and Central Flyways. The watershed also provides critical wildlife habitat linkages and migratory corridors between the northern and southern Rockies and between Idaho and the Greater Yellowstone ecosystems for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, and moose. In addition to supporting big game species, existing national wildlife refuges and adjacent protected lands provide habitat for over 270 other species. Easement acquisitions improve connectivity among these protected lands. The watershed supports millions of birds, including 46 percent of the white-faced ibis, 24 percent of the marbled godwit, and 18 percent of the black-necked stilt populations in North America, and provides habitat for greater sage-grouse and Bonneville cutthroat trout.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire conservation easements on two properties totaling 4,200 acres in Idaho. The easements will preserve and protect in perpetuity the habitat quality, functions, and values of the lands, including existing agricultural practices, to maintain aquatic, wetland, riparian, and upland habitat; provide water, cover, food and space for native fish and wildlife; maintain wildlife habitat connectivity and migratory corridors; maintain healthy populations of native wildlife species; and protect and maintain water quality and quantity.

**Cooperator(s):**

Bear River Land Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust, Western Rivers Conservancy, and the Intermountain West Joint Venture.



**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$0	\$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Annual costs include easement monitoring and enforcement.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 23

**State(s):** FL

**Congressional District(s):** FL-2

**Location:**

In the Florida Panhandle in Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	87,738	\$24,457,032
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	23,544	\$59,287,415

**Project Description:**

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1931 to provide wintering habitat for migratory birds. It encompasses over 80,000 acres and includes about 43 miles along the Gulf Coast of northwest Florida. The Refuge contains upland pine forest, wetland, hardwood forest, pine plantation, shrub and brush land, and freshwater marsh habitat. The Refuge is within a designated Important Bird Area and a Land Management and Research Demonstration Site for Longleaf Pine Ecosystems. Wildlife includes numerous federally threatened, endangered, and at-risk species, including frosted flatwoods salamanders, red-cockaded woodpeckers, wood storks, eastern black rails, red knots, piping plovers, Florida manatees, gulf sturgeon, gopher tortoises, Florida pine snakes, spotted turtles, American oystercatchers, Wilson’s plovers, and least terns, as well as loggerhead, green, Kemp’s ridley, and leatherback sea turtles. The Refuge also has strong ties to a rich cultural past, and is home to the St. Marks Lighthouse, which was built in 1842 and is still in use today. Over 17,000 acres are protected under the Wilderness Act of 1964 including a designated Globally Important Bird Area. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities such as hiking, hunting, photography, and wildlife viewing.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire 300 acres to complete the phased acquisition of a 1,306-acre tract to conserve habitat for federally listed threatened and endangered species including the red-cockaded woodpecker, wood stork, and frosted flatwoods salamanders. The tract has a historical frosted flatwoods salamander pond and other ephemeral wetlands. The acquisition will mitigate the impacts of sea level rise on these species by enabling them to migrate inland. Acquisition will also benefit Florida black bear and migratory birds. Acquisition will provide public wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, including improving access to existing Refuge lands.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Sam Shine Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance, Ducks Unlimited, Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society, The Florida Natural Areas Inventory, St. Marks Refuge Association, Florida Trail Association, Apalachee Audubon Society, Florida Wildlife

Federation, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Forest Service, Tall Timbers Research Station, and the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$4,000	\$12,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management and restoration, maintenance, and law enforcement.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 24

**State(s):** KY

**Congressional District(s):** KY-1

**Location:**

McCracken, Graves, and Marshall Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Acquired to Date	9,428	\$11,300,623
Remaining to be Acquired	42,973	\$129,544,000

**Project Description:**

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1998 to protect, enhance, and manage a valuable bottomland wetland ecosystem along the East and West Forks of the Clarks River, for the benefit of waterfowl, neotropical migratory songbirds, forest wildlife, riverine species, and a wide array of other species associated with bottomland hardwood forest. The Refuge provides public recreational activities, such as horseback riding, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire several tracts totaling 500 acres. The tracts consist primarily of bottomland hardwood forest and agricultural lands. FWS will restore the agricultural lands to bottomland hardwood forest to benefit waterfowl, including wintering mallards, black ducks, ring-necked ducks, hooded mergansers, and common mergansers, as well as migratory songbirds and other wildlife. Acquisition will provide connectivity across Refuge lands and expand public recreational opportunities, including wildlife viewing and photography.

**Cooperator(s):**

Southern Conservation Corp., USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, USFS-Land Between the Lakes, The Nature Conservancy, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, and Friends of Clarks River NWR.

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$20,000	\$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial restoration, development of public access points, and boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management and maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 25

**State(s):** SC

**Congressional District(s):** SC-7

**Location:**

Adjacent to the Great Pee Dee and Waccamaw Rivers in Georgetown and Horry Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	37,579	\$25,805,505
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	19,903	\$86,026,387

**Project Description:**

Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1997 and consists of wetland habitats ranging from historic, broken, and actively managed tidal rice fields, to black water and alluvial flood plain forested wetlands of the Waccamaw and Great Pee Dee Rivers. These tidal freshwater wetland ecosystems are some of the most diverse freshwater wetland systems found in North America. They not only provide important habitat corridors for wildlife, but they also play a critical role in the filtration and storm water retention for the primary drinking water resource of the greater Grand Strand region. The Refuge provides public recreation activities, including fishing, birding, hiking, wildlife observation, photography, and hunting.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will begin phased acquisition of a 9,100-acre parcel on Sandy Island, which FWS has leased since 2012. Sandy Island is an interior barrier island bounded by the Waccamaw River on the east and the Great Pee Dee River on the west. Habitats include old-growth longleaf pine, pocosin wetlands, and tidal freshwater wetlands. The acquisition will secure habitat for federally listed threatened and endangered species, including the red-cockaded woodpecker, northern long-eared bat, and wood stork, as well as other rare and imperiled plants and animals. Resident and migratory species, including swallow-tailed kites and wood ducks, will benefit from the acquisition. These lands are also part of an essential corridor for black bears and provide coastal black bear habitat. FWS has a strong working relationship with the intact, thriving Gullah Geechee Community on Sandy Island and acquisition will help protect their cultural landscape.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Nature Conservancy, Open Space Institute, Gullah Geechee Community, and Black River Tribal Interest Working Group.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$5,000	\$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Startup costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management, maintenance, and law enforcement.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 26

**State(s):** ID

**Congressional District(s):** ID-2

**Location:**

Blaine County.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	24,618	\$0
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	823.70	\$4,576,106

**Project Description:**

Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1909 to preserve native birds and their breeding grounds. About half of the Refuge is open water and wetlands. The surrounding landscape is arid, and the wetlands are an oasis attracting numerous wildlife species. Colony nesting birds include Western and Clark's grebes, cormorants, great blue herons, and American white pelicans. The remaining Refuge has low, rolling uplands covered by sagebrush, grasses, and isolated juniper patches amongst scattered outcrops of basalt. This habitat supports St. Anthony Dunes tiger beetles, a candidate species for listing under the ESA. The North Alternate Branch of the Oregon Trail ran across the north side of the Refuge. Even though some stretches of the trail are now under water, visitors can still see ruts from the wagons in many places. The Refuge headquarters building, manager's residence, and stone walls are remaining historical relics of the Civilian Conservation Corp's Camp Minidoka that operated from 1935 through 1942. The Refuge provides public outdoor recreation including hiking, fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire two properties totaling 540 acres. The first acquisition is approximately 500 acres that border the Snake River. The property has historically been grazed, resulting in highly degraded riparian habitat. FWS will restore the habitat, benefiting many species including warblers, flycatchers, orioles, and raptors. Acquisition will also expand public recreational activities, such as fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing. The second acquisition will be either a conservation easement or fee purchase of 40 acres of wetland and river habitat. The banks along the waterbodies of this property are severely eroding from farming up to the edge of the water; restoration will benefit waterfowl including Canada geese, mallards, pintails, gadwall, and teal. If not acquired by FWS, this property will likely be developed for private residences, exacerbating trespass issues and further fragmenting habitat.

**Cooperator(s):**

State of Idaho

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$15,000	\$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting and habitat restoration. Annual costs include habitat management and restoration, maintenance, and law enforcement.



**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 27

**State(s):** FL, GA

**Congressional District(s):** FL-3; GA-1, GA-8

**Location:**

East of the Suwannee River in Charlton, Clinch, and Ware Counties in Georgia and Baker County in Florida.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>1,667</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>
Acquired to Date	406,936	\$5,625,271
Remaining to be Acquired	114,976	\$228,423,000

**Project Description:**

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife, and to conserve the unique qualities of the Okefenokee Swamp. The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has been nominated as a World Heritage Site and if inscribed would be the only World Heritage Site wholly managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Refuge is the headwaters of the Suwannee and St. Marys Rivers. Habitats provide for federally listed threatened and endangered species, such as red-cockaded woodpecker, wood storks, indigo snakes, and a wide variety of other wildlife species. More than 600 plant species have been identified on Refuge lands. In addition, the Refuge is a Wetland of International Importance (RAMSAR Convention – 1971) because it is one of the world’s largest intact freshwater ecosystems. The Refuge provides public recreational opportunities, including canoeing, hiking, fishing, hunting, and wildlife observation and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will begin phased acquisition of a 6,100-acre tract that is adjacent to the western border of the Refuge. Acquisition of this land ties in the western boundary of the Refuge with State Highway 177, which will be a natural firebreak for natural and prescribed fires and will provide better protection for private lands. FWS will restore slash pine plantations to longleaf pine, providing a more fire resilient buffer tree species. Acquisition will create a buffer around the swamp from future development, such as ranchette subdivisions and mineral mining, thereby protecting water quality. The tract will expand public recreational opportunities, including providing access to existing Refuge lands that are not currently open due to the juxtaposition of private land ownerships. In addition, the acquisition will expand protection for a proposed Traditional Cultural Property by the Muscogee Nation.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Okefenokee-Osceola Longleaf Initiative, the Muscogee Nation, and the Great Okefenokee Association of Lands Owners (GOAL), which is an organization of approximately 28 Federal and State land management agencies, along with large timber companies and numerous small landowners.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$7,000	\$20,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include boundary sign posting. Annual costs include maintenance and habitat management. Some costs for restoration and habitat enhancement projects are shared with conservation partners.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 28

**State(s):** IL, WI

**Congressional District(s):** IL-10, IL-11, IL-16; WI-1

**Location:**

Walworth County in Wisconsin and McHenry County in Illinois.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>\$3,290,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	538	\$2,867,720
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	10,893	\$56,863,280

**Project Description:**

Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2012 and is an urban refuge that is centrally located between the communities of Chicago and Rockford, Illinois, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is a conservation and outreach hub for the 12 million people that reside within these communities. The Refuge purposes include the protection, restoration, and management of remnant oak savannah, tallgrass prairie, riparian corridors, and wetlands. Of the ecosystems that once defined this area, less than 0.01 percent of the tallgrass prairie and 12 percent of remnant oak ecosystems remain. The Refuge complements State and local plans, including the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision; the Chicago Wilderness Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan; the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan; the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan; Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan; the Grassland Bird Conservation Design in the Chicago Region; the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Network; and the Nippersink Watershed Initiative. The Refuge provides habitat for breeding migratory birds such as Henslow’s sparrows, bobolink, and eastern meadowlark, and several federally listed endangered and threatened species, including prairie bush clover, eastern prairie fringed orchid, whooping crane, and rusty patched bumble bee. Public recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, hiking, birding, photography, environmental interpretation, and education.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will begin phased acquisition of a 950-acre tract. The tract contains a large, intact wetland, a spring-fed stream, and one of the largest remaining stands of white and burr oak savanna in the Midwest. The Service will restore agricultural areas to wetland and grassland habitat. Acquisition will expand public recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, birding, photography, environmental interpretation, and education, all in an urban area.

**Cooperator(s):**

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Openlands, The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Ducks Unlimited, McHenry County Conservation District, McHenry County Conservation Foundation, Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, Geneva

Lake Conservancy, Nippersink Watershed Association, Kettle Moraine Land Trust, Illinois Audubon Society, County Conservation Boards, and local Chambers of Commerce.

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$20,000	\$10,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial restoration, development of public access points, and boundary sign posting. Annual expenses include habitat management and maintenance.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 29

**State(s):** NC

**Congressional District(s):** NC-5, NC-11, TN-1

**Location:**

Located in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Clay, Graham, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, McDowell, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, and Wilkes Counties within western North Carolina, and Carter and Johnson Counties, Tennessee.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Acquired to Date	1,641	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	21,688	\$92,748,000

**Project Description:**

Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2015 to preserve Southern Appalachian bogs in North Carolina and Tennessee, where about 90 percent of the area's mountain bogs have been lost. Bogs are defined by their nutrient-poor, acidic, and saturated soil, and are usually found in depressions or low-lying areas filled by precipitation. Mosses and shrubs thrive while mature trees are rare. Bogs act as buffers in times of both drought and flood, replenishing springs during dry spells and catching overflow during heavy rain. They provide vital habitat for several federally threatened and endangered species, neotropical migratory birds, pollinators, and a variety of herpetofauna.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire several parcels totaling 149 acres at Skunk Cabbage Bog within the Cherry Conservation Partnership Area. The parcels contain forested uplands and open and forested wetlands (i.e., swamp forest-bog complex, Southern Appalachian bogs, open meadow bogs, and floodplain pools). Southern Appalachian Mountain bogs are some of the rarest wetland habitats in North America and are recognized hotspots for biodiversity and endemic species. In addition to bog turtles, the acquisitions support State listed species such as eastern hellbender (recently petitioned for Federal status), Kanawha darter, and 13 species of State listed plants including bog jack-in-the-pulpit and marsh marigold. Other federally listed and at-risk species that would benefit from acquisition are northern long-eared bat, gray bat, monarch butterfly, tricolored bat, and little brown bat. There is urgency to these acquisitions due to the explosion of development in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, with associated wetland ditching and draining.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Blue Ridge Conservancy, North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and 130 of Chatham, LLC (a private company heavily involved in land protection efforts).

**Operations & Maintenance**

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$5,000	\$10,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include initial habitat restoration and boundary sign posting. Annual costs include habitat management.

**Agency:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Project / Unit:** Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area

**Priority:** 30

**State(s):** MT

**Congressional District(s):** MT-1, MT-2

**Location:**

Western Montana.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2025</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
<b>815 Acquired to Date</b>	101,287	\$33,774,500
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	525,213	\$525,213,000

**Project Description:**

Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area is part of the Crown of the Continent—one of the largest intact ecosystems in the United States. The Conservation Area protects a wild landscape of sage steppe, mixed grass prairie, montane forest, lakes, and rivers, and supports habitat for priority wildlife species including grizzly bear, wolverine, Canada lynx, trumpeter swan, grassland nesting birds, bull trout, and migration corridors for large herds of ungulates.

**Purpose / Need:**

FWS will acquire conservation easements on approximately 1,500 acres of native grassland. A priority property for easement acquisition is a working ranch that includes several miles of Dearborn River frontage and is dotted with seasonal wetlands. The proposed acquisition is in the heart of the "Continental Divide to Rocky Mountain Front East" priority area identified in the State Action Plan to protect critical elk, deer, and pronghorn antelope wintering habitat and migration corridors. The property is also within a significant raptor flyway. Conservation easement acquisition will protect nesting habitat for grassland birds and waterfowl as well as critical habitat for the threatened grizzly bear. The proposed easement acquisition buffers public lands open to hunting and supports the rural ranching economy.

**Cooperator(s):**

The Conservation Fund; The Nature Conservancy; The Richard King Mellon Foundation; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Rocky Mountain Front Landowner Advisory Group; Mule Deer Foundation; and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$0	\$2,500

**Describe O&M:**

Annual costs are for easement monitoring and enforcement.