



**BUDGET** The United States  
Department of the Interior

**JUSTIFICATIONS**

and Performance Information  
Fiscal Year 2027

**FISH AND WILDLIFE  
SERVICE**

NOTICE: These budget justifications are prepared for the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees.



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## **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, FWS) is the primary agency in the Federal government dedicated to the management of fish and wildlife for the American public and the country's oldest Federal conservation agency, with roots extending back to 1871. Today the Service plays a crucial role in fostering a healthy environment and expanding access by offering opportunities for Americans to engage with the outdoors and cherish our shared natural heritage.

Through championing opportunities for hunting and fishing and enhancing trail systems, the Service underlines its commitment to responsible stewardship of Federal lands and waters. These efforts are designed to stimulate tourism, create jobs, and generate revenue, ensuring that present and future generations can enjoy and benefit from our natural and cultural treasures. This year the Service finalized 42 new hunting and sport fishing opportunities across more than 87,000 acres of Service public lands. The Service will continue to demonstrate its unwavering commitment to a vision where communities are connected to and invested in the natural world around them. The Service collaborates with various stakeholders to manage lands, waters, and public sites through effective protection, restoration, and conservation activities.

In its approach to foster healthy, balanced ecosystems, the Service works to eliminate invasive species, facilitate the delisting of endangered species that have recovered, and apply sound scientific methods to safeguard both species and their habitats. Additionally, the Service raises fish at hatcheries to recover threatened or endangered species, enhance recreational fisheries and meet community and Tribal needs for fisheries. The Service also protects and restores wetlands that benefit migratory birds and their habitat. The Service's Law Enforcement functions work to protect our natural resources while promoting safe and sustainable wildlife recreation on Service lands and disrupt organized crime networks that traffic native species.

The Service's approach emphasizes its role as a good neighbor, aligning closely with the Department of the Interior's strategic goals, objectives, and priorities. With its proven track record of collaboration and coordination, the Service is dedicated to achieving better outcomes for itself, States, partners, and the American public. The agency actively honors trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes. Furthermore, the Service works hand-in-hand with States, partners, and local governments to address shared challenges. By providing reliable data and valuable scientific insights, the Service equips its partners with the tools needed for effective planning and decision-making, solidifying its role as a reliable source of science and information for communities across the nation.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Service is to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

## **Organizational History**

The history of the Service begins with fish, wildlife, and the visionary leadership of Teddy Roosevelt. The journey began with the establishment of the U.S. Fish Commission on February 9, 1871, under the Department of Commerce, which was subsequently rebranded as the Bureau of Fisheries on July 1, 1903. In parallel, the Office of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy was created within the Department of Agriculture in 1885, later renamed the Bureau of Biological Survey in 1905. The Biological Survey's mission expanded to encompass the protection of all non-fish wildlife in the U.S., and in 1900, it pioneered Federal wildlife law enforcement with the enactment of the Lacey Act.

In a landmark moment for conservation, President Theodore Roosevelt signed an executive order in 1903 that designated the Pelican Island Bird Reservation as the first unit of what would become the modern National Wildlife Refuge System. In 1939, the Bureau of Biological Survey and the Bureau of Fisheries merged and moved to the Department of the Interior. This merger marked the formal inception of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For over 150 years, amidst reorganizations and name changes, the mission of the Service has remained steadfast, essential, and focused on conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the lasting benefit of the American people. The Service operates under a framework of Federal laws that establish its primary responsibilities to safeguard migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, marine mammals, and inter-jurisdictional fisheries.

## **Service Programs**

The Service, working with others, is responsible for a wide range of Federal programs relating to migratory birds, endangered species, interjurisdictional fish and marine mammals, and inland sport fisheries. It protects and manages fish and wildlife habitat necessary to sustain fish and wildlife such as migratory birds, other resident species and endangered species through the National Wildlife Refuge System and its implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). It operates a National Fish Hatchery System, assists States and Tribes in the enhancement and restoration of fish and wildlife, conducts law enforcement to safeguards the country's natural resources, implements domestic laws and international treaties related to wildlife smuggling and promoting sustainable trade, and fosters a stewardship ethic in the American public through high-quality outdoor experiences. These responsibilities are the foundation of the Service's mission to benefit the American people.

## 2027 President's Budget

### Fish and Wildlife Service

(Dollars in Thousands)

	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request		Change from 2026 Enacted	
Budget Authority	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE
Current	1,677,745	6,184	1,650,466	5,141	1,327,279	4,884	-323,187	-257
Permanent	1,913,015	342	1,857,374	300	1,935,657	298	+78,283	-2
<b>Subtotal, Budget Authority w/o Supplementals</b>	<b>3,590,760</b>	<b>8,179</b>	<b>3,507,840</b>	<b>6,779</b>	<b>3,262,936</b>	<b>6,295</b>	<b>-244,904</b>	<b>-484</b>
<i>American Relief Act (P.L. 118-158)</i>	500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58)</i>	97,545	79	97,545	-	-	-	-97,545	-
<i>Disaster Relief Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328)</i>	-	31	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169)</i>	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total, Budget Authority w/ Supplementals<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>4,188,305</b>	<b>8,364</b>	<b>3,605,385</b>	<b>6,779</b>	<b>3,262,936</b>	<b>6,295</b>	<b>-342,449</b>	<b>-484</b>

<sup>1</sup> Supplemental funding reflects amounts made available in the fiscal year, not estimated allocations or obligations.

### Budget Overview

In line with President Trump’s leadership, this budget request reflects a proactive approach to energy development on Federal lands and waters while ensuring the conservation of our natural environment. The 2027 budget presents new opportunities for a future driven by innovation and dedicated to optimizing sustainable use of our natural resources with an emphasis on fostering an economy that harnesses the potential of our natural resources. This budget supports key Presidential America First goals, such as expanding outdoor access, effectively managing our lands and waters, and an efficient workforce.

### Key Changes in Topline Funding and FTE Totals

This budget outlines a request for \$1.3 billion in total for the FWS in 2027. Additionally, the budget optimizes the workforce dedicated to frontline conservation efforts, which is crucial for achieving the Trump Administration’s America First objectives.

The budget includes a request for the resources and authority to transfer the National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) Office of Protected Resources and associated Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) implementation responsibilities into FWS, which will streamline permitting activities and ensure consistency in ESA and MMPA implementation. This consolidation will improve the efficiency of implementing the ESA by ensuring that only one agency

needs to review activities impacting endangered species. With this proposal, FWS will be responsible for listing, delisting, and consulting on activities impacting endangered species and would have sufficient funding to maintain marine mammal stock assessments. This merger streamlines ESA implementation and facilitates effective and efficient management of our land and water resources while allowing for the opportunity to decrease costs over time.

### **Relevance to Secretarial and Administration Priorities**

The budget aligns directly with Presidential and Secretarial priorities to enhance American's access to public lands and foster outdoor recreational activities. Each year, millions visit national wildlife refuges, contributing significantly to local economies and driving the booming outdoor recreation industry. Expanding these opportunities for all Americans remains a top priority for the Trump Administration.

Key highlights in the 2027 budget, outlined below and elaborated in later sections, emphasize the Service's commitment to America First:

- **Effective and Efficient Implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA):** A key to unleashing American energy dominance is effective and efficient implementation of the ESA. The budget proposes funding increases to reduce the time for environmental review under the ESA for energy projects.
- **Stewardship of the National Wildlife Refuge System (System, NWRS):** The 2027 Budget prioritizes funding for visitor services throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System to better support gateway communities, continue progress toward compliance with Secretary's Order 3435 Implementation of the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act and facilitate expanded access and recreational opportunities.
- **Infrastructure Investments:** The 2027 Budget provides \$13.7 million for construction to maintain FWS's infrastructure to improve visitor experience and support American jobs.

### **Effective and Efficient Implementation of the ESA**

The Ecological Services (ES) Program contributes to the Secretary's priority of Enjoying Our Natural Resources While Ensuring They Remain Sound and Sustainable. This program emphasizes collaboration with States, partners, and stakeholders to protect and enhance habitats and species, directly supporting the Administration's emphasis on better outcomes for the nation.

A crucial component of the Service's efforts is the Planning and Consultation subactivity. This funding aims to increase the Service's efforts to work with stakeholders in the planning stages of Federally-authorized, licensed, or funded development projects. This work supports the Administration's prioritization of energy, mineral, and timber development by engaging early with stakeholders for expediting environmental reviews. The budget includes an increase for Energy Consultations of +\$5.1 million above 2026 Enacted.

A major goal of the Administration is recovering species. The Recovery subactivity funds efforts to get species down- and delisted from the Endangered Species List. This work includes funding five-year

reviews and delisting and downlisting packages. The budget request includes a \$2.6 million increase for Recovery for this effort.

This budget request proposes to consolidate the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act work of both the Service's Ecological Services program and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service Office of Protected Resources into one program. The agencies are strong partners and will work together effectively to execute this merger.

In summary, the Service's budget requests for the Ecological Services Program reflect a strategic alignment with Secretarial and Administration priorities, focusing on implementing the ESA effectively and efficiently while ensuring sound resource management. These changes emphasize collaborative conservation, streamline regulatory processes, and ultimately assure the country's rich natural resources are available for today's Americans and for future generations.

### **Stewardship of the National Wildlife Refuge System**

The Service proudly operates the National Wildlife Refuge System, which is among the world's most significant land and water systems dedicated to the conservation of fish and wildlife. The proposed budget of \$417.0 million reflects a strong commitment to enhancing these vital ecosystems, which have provided essential habitat and unparalleled outdoor experiences for all Americans since 1903.

With a focus on expanding opportunities for American sportsmen and sportswomen, the budget includes \$67.5 million specifically for visitor services at wildlife refuges. The 2027 Budget prioritizes funding for visitor services throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System to better support gateway communities, ensure continued implementation of the Secretary's Order 3435 Implementation of the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act and facilitate high-quality recreational opportunities through increased access. This investment emphasizes the importance of outdoor recreation and the role of sportsmen and sportswomen as the backbone of the North American model of wildlife conservation, which is admired globally.

In a significant initiative, Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum announced the introduction of 42 new hunting opportunities across more than 87,000 acres within the Refuge System. This expansion not only triples the number of available hunting opportunities but reflects the Administration's commitment to supporting rural economies, driving tourism, and fostering community engagement.

To provide safety and security for the visiting public and FWS staff, the Budget supports Federal Wildlife Officers that are also routinely involved with local and other Federal law enforcement agencies in cooperative efforts to combat drug trafficking, address border security issues, and aid in other security challenges. The 2027 Budget increases funding for refuge law enforcement by \$3 million to support the retention of workforce gains, salary increases, and officer-related field support realized in prior years. FWS will continue to enforce wildlife laws, combat wildlife trafficking, and stop illicit trade in wildlife and wildlife products.

As we move forward, the continued investment in the National Wildlife Refuge System will help balance conservation with recreational access, ensuring that our natural resources are preserved for future generations.

## **Investing in Infrastructure**

The 2027 budget underscores a strong commitment to enhancing the infrastructure of the Service by allocating \$113.2 million for refuge maintenance and \$13.7 million for construction projects. With the Service managing over 570 National Wildlife Refuges and thousands of smaller wetlands across more than 150 million acres, these investments aim to address the significant deferred maintenance backlog.

The Service's maintenance challenges are multifaceted, including damage from natural disasters like floods and hurricanes, as well as the development and upkeep of infrastructure in environmentally sensitive areas. The road systems within the National Wildlife Refuge System often consist of native surfaced roads rather than paved highways, complicating maintenance strategies and long-term cost forecasts. Additionally, maintaining infrastructure on remote island refuges, such as Midway Atoll, pose unique logistical difficulties.

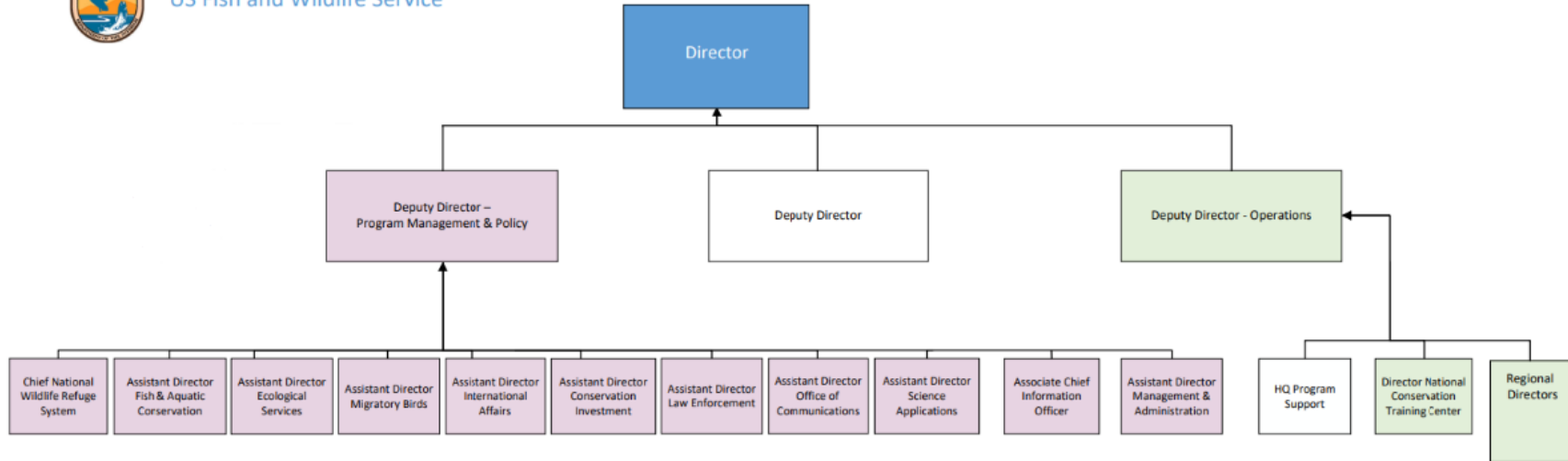
The budget reflects the Service's ongoing efforts to prioritize safety and accessibility while addressing maintenance needs across various asset categories, including buildings, roads, bridges, and water management structures. The infusion of funding for infrastructure not only enhances visitor experiences but also supports local economies and job creation through construction and maintenance projects. This aligns closely with Secretarial and Administration priorities, simultaneously promoting conservation and economic development.

In summary, the Service's commitment to infrastructure investment represents a vital step toward improving the functionality, accessibility and safety of national wildlife refuges, ensuring that they continue to serve as cherished spaces for wildlife and the public for generations to come.

# Organizational Chart



US Fish and Wildlife Service



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# Resource Management

## Appropriations Language

*For necessary expenses of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, as authorized by law, and for scientific and economic studies, general administration, and for the performance of other authorized functions related to such resources, \$1,303,574,000, to remain available until September 30, 2028, of which not to exceed \$15,000 may be for official reception and representation expenses: Provided, That not to exceed \$7,352,000 shall be used for implementing subsections (a), (b), (c), and (e) of section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, Public Law 93-205, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1533) (except for processing petitions, developing and issuing proposed and final regulations, and taking any other steps to implement actions described in subsection (c)(2)(A), (c)(2)(B)(i), or (c)(2)(B)(ii) of such section), of which not to exceed \$1,622,500 shall be used for any activity regarding the designation of critical habitat, pursuant to subsection (a)(3), excluding litigation support, for species listed pursuant to subsection (a)(1) prior to October 1, 2015; of which not to exceed \$516,250 shall be used for any activity regarding petitions to list species that are indigenous to the United States pursuant to subsections (b)(3)(A) and (b)(3)(B); and, of which not to exceed \$516,250 shall be used for implementing subsections (a), (b), (c), and (e) of section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533) for species that are not indigenous to the United States.*

## Justification of Language Changes

**Addition:** “... of which not to exceed \$1,622,500 shall be used for any activity regarding the designation of critical habitat, pursuant to subsection (a)(3), excluding litigation support, for species listed pursuant to subsection (a)(1) prior to October 1, 2015; of which not to exceed \$516,250 shall be used for any activity regarding petitions to list species that are indigenous to the United States pursuant to subsections (b)(3)(A) and (b)(3)(B); and, of which not to exceed \$516,250 shall be used for implementing subsections (a), (b), (c), and (e) of section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533) for species that are not indigenous to the United States.”

This new language provides funding sub-caps for the designation of critical habitat, the review of petitions to list species, and the listing of foreign species. The appropriations caps language provides the Service with a strategic means to allocate efforts among various mandatory duties under the Endangered Species Act. This modification is necessary to the appropriations language so that the Endangered Species Act program funding resources are directed to activities that provide the best conservation benefit, particularly for recovery of domestic species. The proposed budget sub-caps will allow the Service to balance the protection of both foreign and domestic species in a way that will not detract from efforts to protect imperiled domestic species.

## Authorizing Statutes

***African Elephant Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 4201-4245, 1538). Authorizes funding for approved projects for research, conservation, management or protection of African elephants. Authorizes prohibitions against the sale, importation, and exportation of ivory derived from African elephants.

***Agricultural Credit Act***, (P. L. 100-233). Section 616 authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer lands, interest therein, to Federal or State agencies for conservation purposes. The Fish and Wildlife

Service assesses inventory lands to determine when such lands would be of benefit to the National Wildlife Refuge System and makes transfer recommendations.

***Airborne Hunting Act***, (16 U.S.C. 742 j-1). Section 13 of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 prohibits taking or harassing wildlife from aircraft, except when protecting wildlife, livestock, and human health or safety as authorized by a Federal or State issued license or permit.

***Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 410hh-3233, 43 U.S.C 1602-1784). Provides for the designation and conservation of certain public lands in Alaska, including units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for the continuing subsistence needs of the Alaska Natives. Sec. 42(g) of this Act makes use of such Native lands subject to refuge regulations.

***Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act***, (43 U.S.C. 1601-1624). Provides various measures for settling the claims of Alaska Native peoples to land in Alaska, including authorization of selection and ownership of land within National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska by Native Corporations.

***Anadromous Fish Conservation Act***, (P. L. 89-304). Authorizes the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce to enter into cooperative agreements with the States and other non-Federal interests for the conservation, development, and enhancement of anadromous fish, including those in the Great Lakes, and to contribute up to 50 percent of the costs of carrying out such agreements.

***Antarctic Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 2401). Provides for the conservation and protection of the fauna and flora of Antarctica, and their ecosystems.

***Archaeological Resources Protection Act***, (16 U.S.C. 470aa-47011). Provides for protection of archaeological resources and sites on public and Tribal lands and for increased cooperation between government authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private collectors with collections obtained before October 31, 1979.

***Arctic Tundra Habitat Emergency Conservation Act***, (P.L.106-108). Requires the Secretary of the Interior to prepare, and as appropriate implement, a comprehensive, long-term plan for the management of mid-continent light geese and conservation of their habitat.

***Asian Elephant Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 4261-4266, 1538). Provides for cooperative projects for the conservation and protection of Asian elephants.

***Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act***, (16 U. S.C. 5151-5158). The purpose of this Act is to support and encourage development, implementation, and enforcement of effective interstate action regarding the conservation and management of Atlantic striped bass. The Act recognizes the commercial and recreational importance of Atlantic striped bass and establishes a consistent management scheme for its conservation. The three partners which share management responsibility for Atlantic striped bass are the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Every two years, the Services are required to produce an Atlantic Striped Bass Biennial Report to Congress on the status and health of Atlantic Coast Striped Bass Stocks.

***Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act***, (16 U.S.C. 668-668d). This Act provides for the protection of Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles by prohibiting take, possession, sale, purchase, transport, export or import of such eagles or their parts or nests. Take, possession, and transport are permitted for certain authorized purposes.

***Brown Tree Snake Eradication and Control Act***, (P.L. 108-384). Through this Act, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture support a multi-agency and partner effort to eradicate brown tree snakes in Guam and to prevent introduction or establishment of this invasive species on other Pacific islands or the U.S. mainland.

***Billy Frank Jr. Tell Your Story Act***, (P.L. 114-101). Establishes the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial within the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. The Department of the Interior must: (1) establish the boundaries of the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial and to provide for its administration and interpretation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and (2) coordinate with representatives of the Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Puyallup, and Squaxin Island Indian Tribes in providing for that interpretation.

***Chehalis River Basin Fishery Resources Study and Restoration Act***, (P. L. 101-452). Authorizes a joint Federal, State, and Tribal study for the restoration of the fishery resources of the Chehalis River Basin, Washington.

***Coastal Barrier Resources Act, as amended by the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990***, (16 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Requires the Secretary (delegated to the Service) to maintain the maps of the Coastal Barrier Resources System, to review the system at least every five years for changes which have occurred as a result of natural forces, and to make minor and technical changes to the maps of the System reflecting those natural changes. It also requires the Secretary to submit a study to Congress on the need to include the west coast in the system, and to lead an interagency task force to provide recommendations to Congress for legislative action and Federal policies on developed and undeveloped coastal barriers.

***Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act***, (16 U.S.C. 3951-3156). Provides a Federal grant program for the acquisition, restoration, management, and enhancement of coastal wetlands of States adjacent to the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes, and the Pacific, including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Pacific U.S. insular areas. Provides that the Service update and digitize wetlands maps in Texas and conduct an assessment of the status, condition, and trends of wetlands in that State. Provides permanent authorization to appropriate receipts, coastal wetlands conservation grants and North American Wetlands Conservation projects.

***Coastal Zone Management Act***, (16 U.S.C. 1451-1464). Establishes a voluntary national program within the Department of Commerce to encourage coastal States to develop and implement coastal zone management plans. Activities that affect coastal zones must be consistent with approved State programs. The Act also establishes a National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS).

***Colorado River Floodway Protection Act***, (43 U.S.C 1600; 42 U.S.C. 4029). Establishes a Task Force to advise the Secretary of the Interior on the specific boundaries for and management for the area.

***Colorado River Storage Project Act***, (43 U.S.C. 620). Provides that facilities will be built and operated to mitigate losses of, and improve conditions for, fish and wildlife in connection with the Colorado River Storage.

***Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act***, (42 U.S.C. 9601, et seq.). Provides that responsible parties, including Federal landowners, investigate and clean up releases of hazardous substances. Trustees for natural resources, which includes the Secretary of the Interior, may assess and recover damages for injury to natural resources from releases of hazardous substances and use the damages for restoration, replacement or acquisition of equivalent natural resources. Provides permanent authorization to appropriate receipts from responsible parties.

***Coral Reef Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.). Promotes wise management and sustainable use of coral reef ecosystems and develops sound scientific information on the condition of coral reef ecosystems and threats to them. Provides financial resources to local communities and nongovernmental organizations to assist in the preservation of coral reefs. It establishes a formal mechanism for collecting and allocating monetary donations from the private sector to be used for coral reef conservation projects.

***Delaware River Basin Restoration Act***, (P.L. 114-322). Establishes a Delaware River Basin restoration program and directs the Secretary to produce a basin-wide strategy that draws on existing conservation efforts, involves partners, and provides for the implementation of a shared set of science-based restoration and protection activities, including cost-effective projects with measurable results that maximize conservation outcomes with no net gain of Federal employees. Establishes a voluntary grant and technical assistance program. Sunsets on September 30, 2023. Enacted as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016.

***Duck Stamp Modernization Act of 2023***, (P.L. 118-25). Allows an individual to carry an electronic stamp, rather than a paper stamp, at the time of taking waterfowl.

***Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act of 2016***, (P.L. 114-231). Sets forth a national policy on wildlife trafficking and several directions for the U.S. Secretary of State. Creates a Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, the co-chairs of which include the Secretary of the Interior. Authorizes anti-poaching and anti-trafficking programs. Amends the Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman's Protection Act to require that Pelly certifications made to the President by the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior be reported to Congress.

***Emergency Wetlands Resources Act***, (16 U.S.C. 3901). Provides for the collection of entrance fees, thirty percent of which may be used for refuge operations and maintenance, and for the Secretary of the Interior to establish and periodically review a national wetlands priority conservation plan for Federal and State wetlands acquisition, complete National Wetlands Inventory maps for the contiguous United States by September 30, 1998, to update the report on wetlands status and trends by September 30, 1990, and at 10-year intervals thereafter.

***Endangered Species Act***, (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544). Prohibits the import, export, or taking of fish and wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species; provides for adding species to and removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species, and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery; provides for interagency cooperation to avoid take of listed species and for

issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities; provides for cooperation with States, including authorization of financial assistance; and implements the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

***Fallon-Paiute Shoshone Indian Water Settlement Act***, (P.L. 101-618). Establishes the Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund. Funds are administered by the Service for use in restoring Lahontan Valley wetlands and recovering the endangered and threatened fish of Pyramid Lake. Section 206(a) authorizes the acquisition of water rights for restoring wetlands in Lahontan Valley. The Act stipulates that sufficient water rights be acquired to restore and sustain, on a long-term average, approximately 25,000 acres of primary wetland habitat within Nevada's Lahontan Valley.

***Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Control Act***, (7 U.S.C. 136-136y). Provides for the registration of pesticides to avoid unreasonable adverse effects to humans or the environment. Such registrations are considered Federal actions and are subject to consultations with the Service under the Endangered Species Act.

***Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA)***, (16 U.S.C. 6801-6814). Through this Act, Congress authorized Federal collection of fees for recreational use of public lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service.

***Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA)***, (43 U.S.C. 2301-2306). Allows the sale of BLM lands identified for disposal, with sales proceeds used for land acquisition by the various land management agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

***Federal Power Act***, (16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.). Provides that each license for hydropower projects issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission includes fish ways prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, and that conditions for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of fish and wildlife based on recommendations of the Service and other agencies.

***Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act)***, (33 U.S.C. 1251-1387). Section 404 (m) authorizes the Service to comment on permit applications submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters of the United States. Section 208(i) authorizes the Service to provide technical assistance to States in developing management practices as part of its water pollution control programs and to continue with the National Wetlands Inventory. Section 320 authorizes the establishment of a State/Federal cooperative program to nominate estuaries of national significance and to develop and implement management plans to restore and maintain the biological and chemical integrity of estuarine waters.

***Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956***, (16 U.S.C. 742(a)-754). Establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.

***Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 2901-2911). Directs the Secretary of the Interior to undertake research and conservation activities, in coordination with other Federal, State, international and

private organizations, to fulfill responsibilities to conserve migratory nongame birds under existing authorities. The Secretary is required, for all species, subspecies, and migratory nongame birds, to monitor and assess population trends and status; to identify environmental change and human activities; and to identify species in need of additional conservation and identify conservation actions to ensure perpetuation of these species.

***Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act***, (16 U.S.C. 661-666(e)). Directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.

***Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 777 note; P.L. 106-502). Congress reauthorized the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) as part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, P.L. 111-11. FRIMA was established in 2000 and has been an important tool for addressing fish screening and fish passage needs in the Pacific Northwest States.

***Fishery Conservation and Management Act***, (Magnuson-Stevens Act), (16 U.S.C. 1801-1882, 90 Stat. 331). Authorizes the conservation and management of the fishery resources found within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States, including anadromous species, through eight Regional Fishery Management Councils. Establishes the Service as a nonvoting member of the Councils.

***Food Security Act***, (16 U.S.C. 801-3945). Provides that the Secretary of Agriculture consult with the Secretary of the Interior on the identification of wetlands, determinations of exemptions, and issuance of regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act. Requires the Service to concur in wetland mitigation plans in association with minimal effect exemptions and to concur in conservation plans for lands proposed for inclusion in the Wetlands Reserve program. Establishes a program to protect and restore wetlands on Farmers Home Administration inventory property and provides for the Service to identify such wetlands.

***Great Ape Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.). Authorizes grants to foreign governments, the CITES secretariat, and non-governmental organizations for the conservation of great apes. The funds are to be a sub-account of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund.

***Great Lakes Critical Programs Act***, (P.L. 101-596). Authorization for Service activities is contained in title III, the "Lake Champlain Special Designation Act of 1990".

***Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act***, (P.L. 109-326). The 2006 reauthorization places new emphasis on terrestrial wildlife projects, whereas the previous Acts were primarily devoted to fisheries. The bill also reauthorizes the existing State and Tribal grant program and provides new authority for the Service to undertake regional restoration projects. In addition, it directs the Service to create and maintain a website to document actions taken as a result of the Act. Under authority of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2006, the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act Grant Program provides Federal grants on a competitive basis to States, Tribes and other interested entities to encourage cooperative conservation, restoration and management of fish and wildlife resources and their habitat in the Great Lakes basin.

***Great Lakes Fishery Act***, (16 U.S.C. 931-939). Implements the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries between the United States and Canada, and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and the Service to undertake lamprey control and other measures related to the Convention.

***Highlands Conservation Act***, (P.L. 108-421). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to the States of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania (Highland States) to preserve and protect high priority conservation land in the Highlands region, an area depicted on a National Forest Service map entitled "The Highlands Region" dated June 2004.

***Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act***, (P.L. 117-58). This legislation provides new funding for infrastructure projects ranging from roads, bridges, and major projects; passenger and freight rail and transit systems; airports; ports and waterways; power; etc. The Service received some funding under BIL for ecosystem restoration, fish passage, and invasive species. Certain sections of the law allow for direct fund transfer to the Service to support environmental reviews.

***Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act***, (16 U.S.C. 719 et seq.). Authorizes an annual Junior Duck Stamp competition and environmental education program for school children; provides for the licensing and marketing of winning designs, with proceeds used for awards and scholarships to participants. Public Law 109-166 reauthorizes the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act of 1994.

***Klamath River Basin Fishery Resources Restoration Act***, (16 U.S.C.460ss et seq.). Requires the Secretary to develop and implement a restoration plan for the Klamath River Basin.

***Lacey Act Amendments of 1981***, (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378). Provides that the Secretary of the Interior designate injurious wildlife and ensure the humane treatment of wildlife shipped to the United States. Prohibits importation, exportation, transportation, sale, or purchase of fish and wildlife taken or possessed in violation of State, Federal, Indian Tribal, and foreign laws. Provides for enforcement of Federal wildlife laws, and Federal assistance to the States and foreign governments in the enforcement of non-Federal wildlife laws.

***Marine Mammal Protection Act***, (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407). Establishes a moratorium on taking and importing marine mammals, including parts and products. Defines the Federal responsibility for conservation of marine mammals, with management authority vested in the Department for the sea otter, walrus, polar bear, dugong, and manatee.

***Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grants***, (16 U.S.C. 1421f; 114 Stat. 2765. Title II of P.L. 106-555). Amends the Marine Mammal Protection Act to authorize grants to non-governmental organizations which participate in the rescue and rehabilitation of stranded marine mammals.

***Marine Turtle Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 6601-6607). Establishes a Marine Turtle Conservation Fund in the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. The fund is a separate account to assist in the conservation of marine turtles, and the nesting habitats of marine turtles in foreign countries.

***Migratory Bird Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 715-715d). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct investigations and publish documents related to North American birds and establishes a

Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) to approve areas recommended by the Secretary for acquisition. The MBCC also approves wetlands conservation projects recommended by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

***Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act***, (16 U.S.C. 718). This Act, commonly referred to as the Duck Stamp Act, requires waterfowl hunters, 16 years of age or older, to purchase and possess a valid Federal waterfowl hunting stamp prior to taking migratory waterfowl. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to use \$1 million from sales of migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps to promote additional sales of stamps.

***Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918***, (16 U.S.C. 703-712). Implements four international treaties that affect migratory birds common to the United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and the former Soviet Union. Establishes Federal responsibility for protection and management of migratory and non-game birds, including the establishment of season length, bag limits, and other hunting regulations, and the issuance of permits to band, possess or otherwise make use of migratory birds.

***National Aquaculture Development Act***, (16 U.S.C. 2801-2810). Establishes a coordinating group, the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture (JSA). The JSA has been responsible for developing the National Aquaculture Development Plan. The plan establishes a strategy for the development of an aquaculture industry in the United States.

***National Environmental Policy Act of 1969***, (NEPA), (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). Provides that the Service examine the environmental impacts, incorporate environmental information, and use public participation in the planning and implementation of all actions; integrate NEPA with other planning requirements; prepare NEPA documents to facilitate better environmental decision making; and review Federal agency environmental plans and documents when the Service has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impacts involved.

***National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act***, (16 U.S.C. 3701-3709). Establishes a Federally-chartered, nonprofit corporation to encourage and administer donations to benefit Service programs and other activities to conserve fish, wildlife, and plant resources.

***National Historic Preservation Act of 1966***, (16 U.S.C. 470-470b, 470c-470n). Directs Federal agencies to preserve, restore, and maintain historic cultural environments.

***National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act***, (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.). Provides authority, guidelines and directives for the Service to improve the National Wildlife Refuge System; administers a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and restoration of fish, wildlife and plant resources and habitat; ensures the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of refuges is maintained; defines compatible wildlife-dependent recreation as appropriate general public use of refuges; establishes hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education as priority uses; establishes a formal process for determining compatible uses of refuges; and provides for public involvement in developing comprehensive conservation plans for refuges.

***The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act***, (P.L. 105-57). Spells out wildlife conservation as the fundamental mission of the refuge system; requires comprehensive conservation planning to guide management of the refuge system; directs the involvement of private citizens in land management decisions; and provides that compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate use that should receive priority in refuge planning and management.

***The National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act***, (P.L. 106-408). Reinforces *National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act* provisions to raise public understanding and appreciation for the refuge system; calls on the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Centennial Commission to oversee special public outreach activities leading up to and during the Centennial year, leverage resources with public and private partners for outreach efforts, and plan and host a major conference in 2003; calls on the Service to develop a long-term plan to address the highest priority operations, maintenance, and construction needs of the National Wildlife Refuge System; and requires an annual report assessing the operations and maintenance backlogs and transition costs associated with newly acquired refuges lands.

***National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act*** (P.L. 105-242) Amended the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to promote volunteer programs and community partnerships for the benefit of National Wildlife Refuges.

***National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Improvement Act***, (P.L. 111-357). Authorizes cooperative agreements with nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and to promote volunteer, outreach, and education programs.

***Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*** (P.L. 101-601). Addresses the rights of lineal descendants, Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations (parties with standing) to Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony (cultural items). It requires Federal agencies and museums to provide information about Native American cultural items to parties with standing and, upon presentation of a valid claim, ensure the item(s) undergo disposition or repatriation.

***Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 6101 et. seq.). Authorizes grants for the conservation of neotropical migratory birds in the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean, with 75 percent of the amounts made available to be expended on projects outside the United States. The funds are to be a sub-account of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. Title III of P.L. 109-363, reauthorized appropriations for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

***New England Fishery Resources Restoration Act***, (P.L. 101-593). Authorizes the Service to formulate, establish, and implement cooperative programs to restore and maintain nationally significant interjurisdictional fishery resources in New England river systems.

***Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention and Control Act, as amended by the National Invasive Species Act***, (NISA, 16 U.S.C. 4701 et seq.). Authorizes the Service to develop and implement a program to prevent and control infestations of zebra mussels and other nonindigenous aquatic invasive species in waters of the United States.

***North American Wetlands Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 4401). Authorizes grants to public-private partnerships in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to protect, enhance, restore, and manage waterfowl, other migratory birds and other fish and wildlife, and the wetland ecosystems and other habitats upon which they depend, consistent with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. There is a Standard and a Small Grants Program. Both are competitive grants programs which require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute towards a project but are not eligible as match. Public Law 109-322 reauthorized the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

***Nutria Eradication and Control Act***, (P.L. 108-16). Provides for the States of Maryland and Louisiana to implement nutria eradication or control measures and restore marshland damaged by nutria.

***Oil Pollution Act***, (P.L. 101-380). Provides that the Service consult with others on the development of a fish and wildlife response plan for the protection, rescue, and rehabilitation of, and the minimization of risk of damage to fish and wildlife resources and their habitat harmed or jeopardized by an oil discharge.

***Partnerships for Wildlife Act***, (16 U.S.C. 3741-3744). This Act establishes a Wildlife Conservation and Appreciation Fund to receive appropriated funds and donations from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and other private sources to assist the State fish and game agencies in carrying out their responsibilities for conservation of nongame species and authorizes grants to the States for programs and projects to conserve nongame species.

***Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act***, (16 U.S.C. 3771-3774). Provides for the restoration, enhancement, and management of fish and wildlife habitats on private land through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, a program that works with private landowners to conduct cost-effective habitat projects for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources in the United States.

***Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen's Protective Act***, (22 U.S.C. 1978). Authorizes the President to embargo wildlife products, including fish, and limit other imports from nations whose nationals are determined by the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce to be engaging in trade or take that undermines the effectiveness of any international treaty or convention for the protection of endangered or threatened species to which the United States is a party.

***Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act***, (P.L. 113-239). Authorizes the Service to permanently allow any State to provide hunting and conservation stamps for migratory birds (referred to as Federal Duck Stamps) electronically. The electronic stamps would remain valid for 45 days to allow for the physical stamps to arrive in the mail.

***Public Lands Corps Act of 1993*** (P.L. 91-378, amended through P.L. 116-9). Establishes a pilot program in the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture designated as the Youth Conservation Corps.

***Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act***, (16 U.S.C. 2602-2645) and ***Energy Security Act of 1980***, (16 U.S.C. 792-828(c)). Authorizes the Service to investigate and report on effects of hydropower development on fish and wildlife during the licensing process of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

***Recreational Use of Fish and Wildlife Areas***, (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4). Commonly known as the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use when such use does not interfere with the primary purpose for which these areas were established.

***Refuge Recreation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4). Public Law 87-714, approved September 28, 1962 (76 Stat. 653) as amended by Public Law 89-669, approved October 14, 1966, (80 Stat. 930) and P.L. 92-534, approved October 23, 1972, (86 Stat. 1063). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use, when such uses do not interfere with the areas' primary purposes.

***Resource Conservation Recovery Act***, (42 U.S.C. 6901). Establishes standards for Federal agencies on the treatment, transportation, storage, and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes on Federal lands and facilities.

***Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 5306(a), 1538). Authorizes grants to other nations and to the CITES Secretariat for programs directly or indirectly assisting in the conservation of rhinoceros and tigers. Prohibits the sale, importation, and exportation of products derived from any species of rhinoceros and tiger.

***Salmon and Steelhead and Conservation and Enhancement Act of 1980***, (16 U.S.C. 3301, 11-15, 21-25, 31-36, 41-45). Provides for management and enhancement planning to help prevent a further decline of salmon and steelhead stocks, and to assist in increasing the supply of these stocks within the Columbia River conservation area and the Washington conservation area.

***Sikes Act***, (16 U.S.C. 670a-670o). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to cooperate with the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Bureau of Land Management, and State agencies in planning, developing, maintaining, and rehabilitating Federal lands for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources and their habitat.

***Strategic Response to Asian Carp Invasion Act***, (P.L. 113-121). Requires the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey, to lead a multiagency effort to slow the spread of Invasive Carp in the Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basins and tributaries by providing high-level technical assistance, coordination, best practices, and support to State and local government strategies, to slow, and eventually eliminate, the threat posed by such Carp. Enacted in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014.

***Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act***, (30 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to regulate surface mining and reclamation at existing and future mining areas. The Service provides technical assistance for fish and wildlife aspects of the Department of the Interior's programs on active and abandoned mine lands.

***Water Resources Development Act***, (90 Stat. 2921). Authorizes the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan to mitigate fish and wildlife losses caused by power generation at four U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dams on the Lower Snake River in Washington.

***Wild Bird Conservation Act***, (16 U.S.C. 4901-4916). Requires that all trade in wild birds involving the United States is biologically sustainable and to the benefit of the species, and by limiting or prohibiting imports of exotic birds when not beneficial to the species.

***Wilderness Act of 1964*** (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136) Established the National Wilderness Preservation System, a national network of more than 800 Federally-designated wilderness areas. These wilderness areas are managed by the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

***Youth Conservation Corps Act***, (16 USC 1701-1706) as amended by P.L. 93-408, September 3, 1974. Expands and makes permanent the Youth Conservation Corps, and for other purposes. The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program, started in 1971, is a summer employment program for young men and women (ages 15–18) from all segments of society who work, learn, and earn together by doing projects for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Wildlife Refuge System lands and National Fish Hatcheries. The objectives of this program (as reflected in Public Law 93-408) authorize the Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service to operate the YCC Program.

**Summary of Requirements**  
**Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**Appropriation: Resource Management**  
*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Treasury Account/Activity	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				2027 Request		Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Resource Management</b>											
Ecological Services	290,534	1,427	277,530	1,285	-894	-	+151,324	+200	427,960	1,485	+150,430
Habitat Conservation	72,000	260	69,760	246	-151	-	-2,694	-11	66,915	235	-2,845
Nat'l Wildlife Refuge System Conservation and Enforcement	527,857	2,204	522,035	1,948	-518	-	-104,529	-276	416,988	1,672	-105,047
Fish and Aquatic Conservation	172,664	712	171,808	650	-512	-	-35,335	-50	135,961	600	-35,847
Science Applications	223,016	703	225,775	617	-424	-	-70,760	-49	154,591	568	-71,184
General Operations	33,781	85	30,781	40	-	-	-30,781	-40	-	-	-30,781
Stewardship Priorities	155,501	714	134,711	279	-1,841	-	-31,711	-	101,159	279	-33,552
	-	-	19,115	-	-	-	-19,115	-	-	-	-19,115
<b>Subtotal, Resource Management w/o Supplementals</b>	<b>1,475,353</b>	<b>6,105</b>	<b>1,451,515</b>	<b>5,065</b>	<b>-4,340</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-143,601</b>	<b>-226</b>	<b>1,303,574</b>	<b>4,839</b>	<b>-147,941</b>
<i>Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58)</i>	97,545	79	97,545	-	-	-	-97,545	-	-	-	-97,545
<i>Transfer to OIG (P.L. 117-58)</i>	[-455]	-	[-455]	-	-	-	[+455]	-	-	-	[+455]
<i>Transfer from USFS (P.L. 117-58)</i>	[7,000]	-	[7,000]	-	-	-	[-7,000]	-	-	-	[-7,000]
<i>Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169)</i>	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total, Resource Management w/ Supplementals<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,572,898</b>	<b>6,259</b>	<b>1,549,060</b>	<b>5,065</b>	<b>-4,340</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-241,146</b>	<b>-226</b>	<b>1,303,574</b>	<b>4,839</b>	<b>-245,486</b>

<sup>1</sup> Supplemental funding reflects amounts made available in the fiscal year, not estimated allocations or obligations.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Resource Management  
Justification of Fixed Costs Changes**

*(Dollars In Thousands)*

<b>Fixed Cost Element</b>	<b>2026 Enacted Change</b>	<b>2026 Enacted to 2027 Request Change</b>	<b>Description</b>
Change in Number of Paid Days	0	0	Total paid days for FY2027 is 261 (2088 hours) which is the same number of days as FY2026. This information is consistent with the published Circular A-11.
Pay Raise	+12,383	+1,972	The President's Budget for 2027 includes one quarter (October-December 2026) of the 1.0% pay raise for 2026 and 0.0% pay raise for 2027. Pay raises are consistent with the published OMB Circular A-11.
Employer Share of Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS)	0	-2,479	The estimates do not reflect increases to the employer contribution for FERS or Law Enforcement FERS for FY2027 in accordance with the published OMB Circular A-11.
Departmental Working Capital Fund (WCF)	+61	-1,191	The estimates reflect Department decisions on the FY 2027 Working Capital Fund Central Bill.
Workers' Compensation Payments	+629	-213	The amount reflects final chargeback costs of compensating injured employees and dependents of employees who suffer accidental death while on duty. This amount reflects the final Workers Compensation bill for FY 2027 payable to the Department of Labor, Federal Employees Compensation Fund, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 8147(b) as amended by Public Law 94-273.
Unemployment Compensation Payments	-90	0	The amount reflects projected changes in the costs of unemployment compensation claims to be paid to the Department of Labor, Federal Employees Compensation Account, in the Unemployment Trust Fund, pursuant to Public Law 96-499. This estimate reflects an applied annual inflation factor of 3.0% to the 5-year average of actuals between 2020-2024.
GSA and Non-GSA Rents	-2,247	-2,627	This estimate reflects the FY 2027 President's Budget Exhibit 54s as submitted. The amounts reflect changes in the costs payable to General Services Administration (GSA) and others for office and non-office space as estimated by GSA, as well as the rental costs of other currently occupied space. These estimates reflect Udall Building rent, Security, Federal Reserve Parking, and Operations and Maintenance, distributed by bureau and office, based upon OFAS provided Udall Building occupancy levels. Costs of mandatory office relocations, i.e. relocations in cases where due to external events there is no alternative but to vacate the currently occupied space, are also included.
Baseline Adjustments for O&M Increases	+53	+198	This adjustment captures the associated increase to baseline operations and maintenance requirements resulting from movement out of GSA or direct-leased (commercial) space into Bureau-owned space. During these transitions, bureaus often encounter an increase to baseline O&M costs not otherwise captured in fixed costs. This category of funding properly adjusts the baseline fixed cost amount to maintain steady-state funding for these requirements.
<b>Account Total Fixed Cost</b>	<b>+10,789</b>	<b>-4,340</b>	

# Ecological Services

## Activity: Ecological Services<sup>1</sup>

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Change from 2026 Enacted		
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Ecological Services</b>											
<b>Listing</b>											
Listing	22,000	100	14,000	60	-23	-	-6,625	-33	7,352	27	-6,648
<b>Planning and Consultation</b>											
Ecosystem Restoration - Bay Delta	2,859	-	2,859	-	-	-	-2,859	-	-	-	-2,859
Environmental Contaminants	2,772	-	2,772	-	-	-	-	-	2,772	-	-
General Program Activities	102,206	642	96,500	629	-456	-	-11,378	-41	84,666	588	-11,834
Gulf Coast Restoration	4,000	-	4,000	-	-	-	-	-	4,000	-	-
Energy	13,354	-	10,354	-	-	-	+5,123	-	15,477	-	+5,123
<b>Conservation and Restoration</b>											
Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA)	1,428	-	1,428	-	-2	-	-520	-	906	-	-522
Environmental Contaminants	7,011	-	5,462	-	-16	-	-671	-	4,775	-	-687
Candidate Conservation	14,956	169	14,538	127	-40	-	-3,000	-37	11,498	90	-3,040
Marine Mammals	7,623	-	7,373	-	-25	-	-	-	7,348	-	-25
National Wetlands Inventory	3,553	-	3,471	-	-5	-	-1,745	-	1,721	-	-1,750
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3,250	-	3,250	-	-	-	-1,000	-	2,250	-	-1,000
Alaska Nannut Co-Management	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-1,000	-	-	-	-1,000
General Program Activities	-	-	300	-	-	-	-300	-	-	-	-300
<b>Recovery</b>											
De-Listing & Down Listing	4,373	-	4,373	-	-	-	+2,627	-	7,000	-	+2,627
Ecosystem Restoration - Bay Delta	1,659	-	1,659	-	-	-	-1,659	-	-	-	-1,659
General Program Activities	99,490	516	104,191	469	-327	-	-3,669	+104	100,195	573	-3,996

**Activity: Ecological Services<sup>1</sup>**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Marine Functions</b>											
ESA Sea Turtles	-	-	-	-	-	-	+13,422	-	13,422	-	+13,422
MMPA and ESA Marine Mammals	-	-	-	-	-	-	+22,529	-	22,529	-	+22,529
Alaska Co-management	-	-	-	-	-	-	+1,722	-	1,722	-	+1,722
Beluga Whales	-	-	-	-	-	-	+2,619	-	2,619	-	+2,619
ESA and CITES	-	-	-	-	-	-	+8,639	-	8,639	-	+8,639
Law Enforcement	-	-	-	-	-	-	+2,250	-	2,250	-	+2,250
ECOSphere	-	-	-	-	-	-	+2,000	-	2,000	-	+2,000
General Program Activities	-	-	-	-	-	-	+124,819	+207	124,819	207	+124,819
<b>Total, Ecological Services</b>	<b>290,534</b>	<b>1,427</b>	<b>277,530</b>	<b>1,285</b>	<b>-894</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+151,324</b>	<b>+200</b>	<b>427,960</b>	<b>1,485</b>	<b>+150,430</b>

<sup>1</sup> Table does not include supplemental funding.

## **Program Overview**

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The Ecological Services Program contributes to the Secretary's priority of Enjoying Our Natural Resources While Ensuring They Remain Sound and Sustainable. The work of the program is instrumental in ensuring that species and natural resources are protected while allowing Americans to utilize our abundant resources. It also contributes to the goal of Collaboration and Coordination Results in Better Outcomes for the Nation, States, and the People, particularly by working collaboratively with States, partners, and governments and providing reliable, valuable scientific information to partners.

Ecological Services Field Offices provide leadership in environmental response and restoration and assist communities in balancing economic growth and conservation through their work to conduct timely environmental reviews of Federal permits and projects, conserve and recover species listed under the ESA, and permit take of listed species.

## **Program Elements**

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To achieve our mission and the Administration's priorities, the Ecological Services Program is comprised of the following sub activities:

- Listing – Uses the best scientific and commercial information available to identify plant and animal species in danger of near-term extinction or likely to become in danger of extinction within the foreseeable future based on the 5 ESA criteria and thus merit protection under the ESA.
- Planning and Consultation – Provides integrated advanced project planning, environmental review, and permitting assistance to resolve environmental concerns in support of economic growth, energy and timber production, and landscape planning.
- Conservation and Restoration – Delivers species conservation in partnership with States, Tribes, local governments, and private landowners to prevent the need to list a species when possible; protects and restores habitat important to Federal trust species; and provides Americans, other Federal and State agencies, and other partners with databases and mapping products that are essential tools for conservation and restoration of species and habitats.
- Recovery – Works with communities and stakeholders to recover endangered and threatened species, with the goal to minimize or reduce threats to a listed species as determined through required 5-year reviews and downlist or delist species that no longer meets the 5 criteria for ESA listing.
- Marine Functions – These encompass activities that are proposed to be transferred from the National Marine Fisheries Service, including activity under the ESA and MMPA for all species.

## **Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders**

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The Service has the statutory mandate and trust responsibility to fulfill its mission derived from various statutes and authorities. The Ecological Services Program plays a significant role in implementing the roles and responsibilities assigned to the Service under the following authorities (not an exhaustive list):

- *Coastal Barrier Resources Act*, as amended by the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990, (16 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Under this authority, the Service, acting for the Secretary of Interior, maintains the maps of the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS), including proposing changes to Congress to correct mapping errors and add qualifying areas to the CBRS.
- *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act*, (42 U.S.C. 9601, et seq.). Under this authority, the Service works with other natural resource trustees to quantify injury to the environment caused by the release of hazardous substances, ensure polluters pay the cost of restoring the environment, and implement projects to restore the environment to the condition it would have been in if the release had not occurred.
- *Declaring a National Energy Emergency* (Executive Order 14156). This order directs agencies to streamline environmental regulations that may burden the facilitation of the country's energy supply and also requires the Secretary of the Interior to promptly review applications submitted for an exemption from the obligations imposed by Section 7 of the ESA.
- *Emergency Wetlands Resources Act*, (16 U.S.C. 3901). Under this authority, the Service's National Wetlands Inventory maintains the wetlands data layer on behalf of the Federal Government and provides the national report card on wetland status and trends at 10-year intervals that are used in policy direction across the government.
- *Endangered Species Act (ESA)*, (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544). The purpose of the ESA is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. The Service and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) administer the ESA. Currently, the Service has primary responsibility for terrestrial and freshwater organisms, while the responsibilities of NMFS are mainly marine plant and animal species such as whales and anadromous fish such as salmon. The FY27 budget request proposes to consolidate the ESA work of both the Service and NMFS into one program in Ecological Services.
- *Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act)*, (33 U.S.C. 1251-1387). Section 404 (m) authorizes the Service to comment on permit applications submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters of the United States. Section 208(i) authorizes the Service to provide technical assistance to States in developing management practices as part of its water pollution control programs and continue with the National Wetlands Inventory.
- *Federal Power Act*, (16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.). This Act provides that each license for hydropower projects issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission includes fish ways prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, and that conditions

for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of fish and wildlife are based on recommendations of the Service and other agencies.

- *Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA)*, (16 U.S.C. 661-666(e)). One of the early conservation laws, this Act directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water and provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- *Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production* (Executive Order 14225). This order aims to boost domestic timber production while also emphasizing forest health, wildfire mitigation, and economic benefits. It includes directives such as revising guidance to enhance timber production using tools like Good Neighbor Authority and Stewardship Contracting; streamlining forest management project consultation under the ESA; developing a programmatic consultation for Whitebark Pine; and exploring categorical exclusions under NEPA.
- *Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)*, (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407). Under this authority, the Service manages the conservation of certain marine mammals, such as sea otter, walrus, polar bear, dugong, and manatee, consistent with the provisions of the Act. NMFS manages cetaceans, seals and sea lions. The FY27 budget request proposes to consolidate the MMPA work of both the Service and NMFS into one program in Ecological Services.
- *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*, (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). The Service implements this Act to examine the impacts of its actions on the human environment, using public participation in the planning and implementation of all actions. The Service also reviews Federal agency environmental plans and documents when the Service has jurisdiction by law or special expertise.
- *Oil Pollution Act (OPA)*, (P.L. 101-380). Under this authority, the Service consults with others on the development of response plans that promote the protection, rescue, and rehabilitation of, and minimization of damage to, fish and wildlife resources and habitat harmed or jeopardized by an oil spill.
- *Unleashing America's Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources* (Executive Order 14285). This order Directs agencies to expedite seabed mineral development by streamlining licensing for exploration and recovery, mapping priority resource areas, and identifying commercial opportunities both domestically and abroad.

## Subactivity: Listing

Activity: Ecological Services

Sub Activity: Listing

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Listing</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Listing</b>		
<i>Listing Activities</i>	-6,625	-33
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-6,625</b>	<b>-33</b>

### Program Description

The purpose of the ESA is to provide regulatory protection to endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems on which they depend. For a plant or animal species to be regulated under the ESA, it must first be added to the US list of threatened and endangered wildlife and plants. Placing a species on the US List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife (50 CFR 17.11) or the US List of Endangered and Threatened Plants (50 CFR 17.12), and designating critical habitat as may be required under the ESA, focuses resources and efforts by the Service and its partners on delisting the species.

The Service works closely with States and Tribes and other stakeholders during the listing process, which often includes the development of a species status assessment (SSA) that reflects the best available scientific and commercial information regarding life history, biology, and the factors affecting the viability of a species. The Service maintains a national listing workplan to encourage States, Tribes, industry, and the public to undertake conservation activities now for species on the workplan so that the species does not merit listing under the ESA.<sup>1</sup>

### Justification of Program Changes

The 2027 budget request for Listing is \$7,352,000 and 27 FTE, a program change of -\$6,625,000 and -33 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Listing Activities (-\$6,625,000/-33 FTE)** – The Service anticipates completing 5 listing packages.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/listing-workplan.html>

**Subactivity: Planning and Consultation**

*Activity: Ecological Services*

*Sub Activity: Planning and Consultation*

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Planning and Consultation</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Ecosystem Restoration - Bay Delta</b>		
<i>Ecosystem Restoration - Bay Delta</i>	-2,859	+0
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>Pesticide Consultations</i>	-1,500	+0
<i>Planning and Consultation Activities</i>	-9,878	-41
<b>Energy</b>		
<i>Energy Activities</i>	+5,123	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-9,114</b>	<b>-41</b>

**Program Description**

Within Planning and Consultation, the Service works with stakeholders at the planning stages of Federally-authorized, licensed, or funded development projects—from highway expansions to energy development to mining and timber production—to ensure that development has minimal impact on wildlife and habitats, and development can proceed. The Service provides consultation in the ESA, Clean Water Act, NEPA, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Federal Power Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The Service makes an effort to decrease time from application to permit/opinion issuance by engaging in development processes early, streamlining the permitting process, reducing paperwork, and ensuring minimized environmental and community impacts of development projects.

Environmental review functions constitute a large and growing workload for the Service, particularly given the President’s priority of increasing energy, timber, and mineral production for the American people. Service biologists provide species-oriented technical assistance to other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, contractors, and private industry to assist with project siting and minimization and mitigation of impacts, thereby facilitating timely environmental reviews, improving conservation outcomes, and implementing compliance and effectiveness monitoring.

Using the incidental take permit authority under section 10 of the ESA, the Service works in partnership with non-Federal entities to develop incidental take permit applications that include Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), and issue incidental take permits. The Service’s incidental take permit program is a flexible process for addressing situations in which a non-Federal property owner’s activities might result in incidental take of listed wildlife. Under section 10, the Service facilitates private and other non-Federal land development through species and conservation planning that strikes a regulatory balance for development while mitigating impacts to species.

## **Justification of Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Planning and Consultation is \$106,915,000 and 588 FTE, a program change of -\$9,114,000 and -41 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Planning and Consultation Activities (-\$9,878,000 / -41 FTE)** – The Service expects to complete approximately 790 formal Section 7 consultations and 8,730 informal consultations. Funding will continue to support further streamline consultations by developing additional determination keys, which are structured sets of questions designed to assist project proponents determine if a project qualifies for a pre-determined consultation outcome.

**Ecosystem Restoration - Bay Delta (-\$2,859,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Pesticide Consultations (-\$1,500,000/ -0 FTE)** – Work will focus on the highest priority pesticide consultations.

**Energy (+\$5,123,000/ +0 FTE)** – The 2027 budget increases funding for Energy project reviews. With this funding, the Service expects to accelerate the review of energy plans and projects that support the Administration’s priorities, as outlined in various Executive Orders (EOs) and Secretary’s Orders (SOs), including: EO 14154, Unleashing American Energy, EO 14156, Declaring a National Energy Emergency, SO 3417, Addressing the National Energy Emergency, and SO 3418, Unleashing American Energy. This includes, for instance, the development and use of programmatic tools to automate ESA compliance using the Service’s Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system. The Service anticipates reducing informal ESA section 7 consultation timeframes from 30 to 14 days for projects covered under the programmatic tools and implemented through IPaC. Similarly, the Service anticipates reducing formal ESA section 7 consultation timeframes from that allowed by Statute (135 days) to no more than 30 days for projects covered under the programmatic tools and implemented through IPaC.

**Subactivity: Conservation and Restoration**

*Activity: Ecological Services*  
*Sub Activity: Conservation and Restoration*

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Conservation and Restoration</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA)</b>		
<i>Coastal Barrier Resources Act</i>	-520	+0
<b>Environmental Contaminants</b>		
<i>Environmental Contaminants</i>	-671	+0
<b>Candidate Conservation</b>		
<i>Candidate Conservation</i>	-3,000	-37
<b>National Wetlands Inventory</b>		
<i>National Wetlands Inventory</i>	-1,745	+0
<b>Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem</b>		
<i>Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem</i>	-1,000	+0
<b>Alaska Nannut Co-Management</b>		
<i>Alaska Nannut Co-Management</i>	-1,000	+0
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>General Program Activities</i>	-300	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-8,236</b>	<b>-37</b>

**Program Description**

Through the Conservation and Restoration program, the Service supports collaborative species conservation efforts, works to protect and restore habitats important to Federal trust species, and provides mapping products and databases that are essential tools for conservation and restoration of species and habitats by other Federal and State agencies, Tribes, stakeholders, and the public. Activities under this program further the Administration’s priorities in multiple areas and provide technical experts to improve habitat connectivity and protect wildlife and habitat; provide tools and technologies to assist other Federal agencies, industry, States, Tribes and other partners in their decision-making to advance conservation of listed and at-risk species while balancing the needs of the communities; align conservation with the needs of landowners through different working models for partnerships; reduce the potential of harm to the environment through planning and preparedness for oil and hazardous materials spill response; encourage mitigation/adaptation efforts for riverine or coastal projects; and provide information and tools to advance community planning in order to prevent repeated damage from natural disasters.

### **Candidate Conservation**

Candidate Conservation focuses on two primary activities: species assessment and facilitating voluntary conservation efforts for species considered for listing under the ESA. Candidate Conservation uses all available information to conduct a scientifically rigorous assessment process that identifies species that warrant listing and publish a Candidate Notice of Review identifying those species. The Service uses a species status assessment framework (SSA), which is an analytical approach to deliver foundational science for informing all ESA decisions.

### **Facilitating voluntary conservation efforts**

The Service's Candidate Conservation Program works with landowners to develop conservation agreements for actions that impact at-risk species to prevent the need to list the species in the future. Proactive conservation for at-risk species requires significant investment from and close engagement with communities and landowners because a majority of at-risk species are found on private lands. It takes private citizens, State and local government, and businesses to care and invest in saving these species. The Service's partnerships with these entities and support through technical assistance is critical. Conservation Benefit Agreements (formerly Candidate Conservation Agreements or Safe Harbor Agreements) contribute to the conservation of at-risk species while providing participating landowners regulatory assurances via permits that authorize harm to species that is incidental to carrying out beneficial management actions. At the end of calendar year 2025, the Service had over 180 agreements with over 18 million acres and 2,800 stream miles enrolled. These agreements have contributed to preventing listing for many species such as the eastern population of the gopher tortoise, Arctic grayling, Virgin River spinedace, San Fernando Valley spineflower, and Chapin Mesa milkvetch, and have the potential to do even more.

### **Marine Mammals**

Marine mammals are a resource of great cultural, aesthetic, economic, and recreational significance. Enacted in 1972, the MMPA prohibits (with certain exceptions): (1) take of marine mammals in U.S. waters and by U.S. citizens on the high seas, and (2) the import, export, and sale of marine mammals and marine mammal parts and products in the U.S. Under the MMPA, marine mammal populations, and the health and stability of marine ecosystems upon which they depend, are required to be maintained at, or returned to, healthy levels. The Department of the Interior, through the Service, is currently responsible for the conservation and management of polar bears, walruses, sea otters, manatees, and dugongs, and this budget request proposes to consolidate all other marine mammal activity currently under the purview of NMFS into one program in Ecological Services. Through regular monitoring, the Service can learn more about the health and dynamics of marine mammal populations and marine and coastal environments.

### **National Wetlands Inventory**

The Service is the principal Federal agency mandated with providing the public with the location and extent of wetland and deepwater habitats as well as wetland changes over time. The Service fulfills this mandate through production and stewardship of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Geospatial Dataset and mapper as well as the decadal National Wetlands Status and Trends Reports to Congress. Wetlands data is critical to supporting the Administration's priorities related to energy, minerals, and water security. NWI data streamlines planning and regulatory decision-making and lowers construction

and maintenance costs for infrastructure development, including energy and mineral exploration, extraction, and transportation. NWI data also enables better strategic decision-making for safeguarding clean freshwater and protecting communities from floods and droughts thereby fostering healthy communities and strong economies. Finally, the data supports conservation and recreation activities like hunting, fishing, and boating, as well commercial fisheries. The NWI website is one of the most visited in the Service. In 2024, the Wetlands Mapper was viewed over a million times and NWI's web map services received nearly 50 million requests for information. However, approximately 70 percent of NWI data is over 15 years old (large areas have data over 40 years old) and does not meet modern data quality standards. Approximately 30 percent of Alaska is unmapped. The Service partners extensively with Federal, State, and Tribal agencies as well as the private sector to produce and maintain the NWI data. In FY 2027, the Service will continue to manage and distribute wetlands data for the public and cost-share with others to produce and update priority wetlands data, in part using the information provided in the sixth report to Congress on the National Wetlands Status and Trends report. The Service will also continue to support Federal, Tribal, and State agencies, and other stakeholders in their use of the recent status and trends report data to meet their operational needs as well as plan for the next national report.

### **Coastal Barrier Resources Act**

In the early 1980s, Congress recognized that certain Federal actions and programs historically subsidized and encouraged development on coastal barriers, resulting in the expenditure of millions of tax dollars each year; threats to human life, health, and property; and the loss of natural resources. To remove the Federal incentive to develop these areas, Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) and subsequent authorizations designated relatively undeveloped coastal barriers along the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico coasts as part of the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System, which made these areas ineligible for most new Federal expenditures and financial assistance. CBRA does not prohibit or restrict development conducted with non-Federal funds.

### **Environmental Response and Restoration**

The Service's Environmental Response and Restoration Program protects and restores fish and wildlife populations, and habitats that have been injured by the release of oil or hazardous substances. To be effective in responding to emergency spills, the Service must maintain a cadre of trained responders. Funding for this preparedness is critical to maintain the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's required training certificates or medical monitoring, to supply responders and Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) practitioners with the equipment and supplies to prevent exposure and/or minimize injuries to spilled oil or environmental contaminants, and conduct associated pre-assessment investigations.

The Environmental Response and Restoration program oversees the NRDAR activities nationwide, covering nearly 90 percent of the 372 active Departmental cases. The Service uses appropriated funding to support ongoing cases and conduct early investigations that potentially lead to restoration projects worth millions of dollars. The program has a commitment to the public to restore injured natural resources.

## **Justification of Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Conservation and Restoration is \$28,498,000 and 90 FTE, a program change of -\$8,236,000 and -37 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council (-1,000,000/ -0 FTE)** — To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Candidate Conservation Activities (-\$3,000,000/ -37 FTE)** – Work on Conservation Benefit Agreements will continue, addressing the highest-priority activities. The Service will also look to the States to provide landowners with technical assistance to achieve specific conservation goals for candidate and petitioned species.

**Environmental Contaminants (-\$671,000)/ -0 FTE)** – Work on this program will continue, addressing the highest priority activities. The Service estimates it will complete approximately 50 restoration projects nationally.

**National Wetlands Inventory (-\$1,745,000/ -0 FTE)** – The National Wetlands Inventory program will add approximately 50 million acres of updated and standard compliant wetland data to the Federal Wetland Data layer.

**Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem (-\$1,000,000 / -0 FTE)** – The Service will continue to work with Federal and State partners to implement important on-the-ground conservation efforts for species within the sagebrush ecosystem.

**Coastal Barrier Resources Act Activities (-\$520,000/ -0 FTE)** – In FY 2027, the Service plans to conduct public review for a comprehensive remapping project for certain units in Alabama, Florida, and Texas and complete a five-year review for CBRS units in six States and territories. The Service will also continue to maintain the official CBRS maps and web mapping services that make CBRS data more accessible to property owners, project proponents, insurance and real estate industries, and other interested stakeholders and support CBRA consultations for Federally funded projects affecting the CBRS.

**General Program Activities (-\$300,000/ -0 FTE)** – FWS will focus on the highest priority activities.

**Subactivity: Recovery**

*Activity: Ecological Services  
Sub Activity: Recovery*

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Recovery</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>De-Listing &amp; Down Listing</b>		
<i>De-Listing &amp; Downlisting</i>	+2,627	+0
<b>Ecosystem Restoration - Bay Delta</b>		
<i>Ecosystem Restoration - Bay Delta</i>	-1,659	+0
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>Florida Grasshopper Sparrow</i>	-350	+0
<i>Priority Recovery Activities</i>	+19,661	+104
<i>Prescott Grant Program</i>	-2,500	+0
<i>Recovery Challenge</i>	-11,500	+0
<i>State of the Birds</i>	-4,750	+0
<i>Upper Colorado</i>	-730	+0
<i>White Nose</i>	-2,000	+0
<i>Wolf Livestock Demonstration Program</i>	-1,500	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-2,701</b>	<b>+104</b>

**Program Description**

Preventing extinction and delisting species is one of the Service’s highest priorities. It serves the Secretary’s objective of conserving our land and water by managing its fish and wildlife. The goal of recovery is to minimize or remove the threats that led to the species’ listing or reach a minimum viable population (self-sustaining) and to work toward reclassifying the species from endangered to threatened and delisting the species altogether. This process requires technical leadership, monitoring, planning, and management together with close coordination with Service partners. The Service plays a vital role in guiding the recovery planning process, and in facilitating, supporting, and monitoring the implementation of recovery actions.

Recovery plans, non-regulatory roadmaps for the work that needs to be done to achieve downlisting or delisting a species under the ESA, are required under the ESA and are developed collaboratively with States, Tribes, and interested partners. Recovery plans may address multiple species, identify specific recovery tasks, establish downlisting and delisting criteria, and provide timetables and cost estimates, and identify the goalposts for downlisting/delisting species. There is a public review process for each draft recovery plan.

The ESA requires the Service to review the status of listed species at least once every five years once listed to determine whether the current listing status is still warranted or if the original criteria in the

recovery plan have been reached and delisting is appropriate. This assessment includes a notice to the public requesting information on the species under review. These documents are important tools to gather new information, assess threats to the species, and validate whether protection under the ESA is still necessary.

### **Justification of Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Recovery of Listed Species is \$107,195,000 and 573 FTE, a program change of -\$2,701,000 and +104 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Recovery Challenge Activities (-\$11,500,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for these activities.

**State of the Birds Activities (-\$4,750,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for these activities.

**Prescott Grant Program (-\$2,500,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**White-Nose Syndrome (-\$2,000,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Ecosystem Restoration - Bay Delta (-\$1,659,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Wolf Livestock Demonstration Program (-\$1,500,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity

**Upper Colorado Activities (-\$730,000)/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for these activities

**Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Activities (-\$350,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for these activities.

**De-Listing & Down Listing-Recovery Prioritization (+2,627,000/ +0 FTE)** – The Service is focused on the ESA mandates that are inherently Federal, including development of recovery plans, five-year status reviews, and has prioritized rulemakings to downlist or delist species whose status has improved. At the requested FY 2027 funding level, the Service expects to propose or finalize 15 delisting or downlisting rules. This increase will also expand the Service’s capacity to work with other DOI bureaus, Federal agencies, States, and other stakeholders, to ensure recovery plans have objective and measurable recovery criteria and address five-year status review recommendations on the national workplan. The Service has established a process to revise recovery plans to ensure that each plan has quantitative criteria for what constitutes a recovered species, and is implementing a streamlined approach to recovery planning to facilitate timely development of plans for all newly listed species.

**Priority Recovery Activities (+\$19,661,000/ +104 FTE)** – Additional funds would be used to implement a new multi-year recovery prioritization initiative to catalyze and support high priority recovery activities that contribute to conservation actions outlined in Service recovery plans for priority species. This competitive funding will be allocated to projects that have the greatest potential to achieve de-listing and downlisting species. Additional weight will be given to projects that achieve the most reduction in regulatory burden, as well as projects that can leverage private partnerships and landscape-scale initiatives that benefit multiple species. There are over 15,000 priority 1 actions identified in recovery plans, most of which need additional funding to achieve the intended outcome. Dedicating funding to support on-the-ground recovery of listed species can facilitate conservation while expanding recovery activities across the range of listed species, thus leading to delisting or downlisting sooner.

**Subactivity: Marine Functions**

*Activity: Ecological Services  
Sub Activity: Marine Functions*

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Marine Functions<sup>1</sup></b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>ESA Sea Turtles</b>		
<i>ESA Sea Turtles</i>	+13,422	+0
<b>MMPA and ESA Marine Mammals</b>		
<i>MMPA and ESA Marine Mammals</i>	+22,529	+0
<b>Alaska Co-management</b>		
<i>Alaska Co-management</i>	+1,722	+0
<b>Beluga Whales</b>		
<i>Beluga Whales</i>	+2,619	+0
<b>ESA and CITES</b>		
<i>ESA and CITES</i>	+8,639	+0
<b>Law Enforcement</b>		
<i>Law Enforcement</i>	+2,250	+0
<b>ECOSphere</b>		
<i>ECO Sphere</i>	+2,000	+0
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>Marine Functions Activities</i>	+124,819	+207
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>+178,000</b>	<b>+207</b>

<sup>1</sup>The funding breakout by activity shown in this table was developed in partnership with NMFS and reflects current best estimates for necessary work. It is subject to change as FWS executes the merger and assesses needs.

**Program Description**

The Budget includes resources and authorities to transfer the NMFS’s Office of Protected Resources and associated ESA and MMPA implementation responsibilities into the Service, which will streamline permitting activities and ensure consistency in ESA and MMPA implementation across the Federal government. This consolidation will improve the efficiency of implementing the ESA by having only one agency review projects impacting endangered species, and not two that have to coordinate their reviews. With this proposal, the Service will take over the workload of listing, delisting, recovery, and consulting on projects impacting endangered species and would have sufficient funding to maintain marine mammal stock assessments. The program changes shown below reflect funding allocations that were developed and are the current best estimates for necessary work. The activity-level allocations are subject to change as FWS executes the merger and assesses needs.

**Justification of Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for the transfer of NMFS Functions to the Service is \$178,000,000 and 207 FTE, a program change of +\$178,000,000 and +207 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**ESA and MMPA Research and Statute Specific Work for All Species and Service Administration (+\$124,819,000/ +207 FTE)** – Funds support protected species research to understand and predict changes to marine ecosystems affecting protected species and critical habitats. Supports investigations for species listing decisions, critical habitat designations, ESA section 7 interagency consultations, and species recovery planning and implementation, including species specific conservation and recovery programs currently under the jurisdiction of NMFS. These funds are used to conduct status reviews of marine species to determine if listing is warranted under the ESA, designate critical habitat for listed species, conduct ESA section 7 interagency consultations on actions that may affect listed species, and leverage the services of other Federal, State, local, and Tribal entities, as well as interested organizations or individuals to develop and implement recovery plans, with the goal of recovering imperiled species. Funds are also used to permit and authorize activities that may result in take of protected species under the ESA or MMPA, determine the effects of noise on marine mammals from human-caused sources, and coordinate marine mammal stranding networks. This line also funds protected species stock surveys and assessments used to base regulatory decisions under the ESA and the MMPA. Funds will also support the administrative duties associated with moving the responsibility of NMFS under the Service.

**ESA and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Species, Other than Marine Mammals, Salmon, and Turtles (+\$8,639,000/ +0 FTE)** – Funds support all activities for ESA listed species not covered by other funding lines (marine mammals, salmon, marine turtles). Specific capabilities funded include: ESA status and listing evaluations, recovery planning, ESA consultation, ESA permitting, recovery implementation, and CITES administration.

**MMPA and ESA Marine Mammal Specific Activities (+\$22,529,000/ +0 FTE)** – Funds support any marine mammal research, conservation, and recovery activities, including species specific conservation and recovery programs currently under the jurisdiction of NMFS. It supports protected species stock surveys and assessments used to base regulatory decisions under the ESA and the MMPA. The MMPA requires that stock assessment reports be prepared annually for MMPA stocks. These assessments provide timely, reliable, and precise estimates of marine mammal distribution, abundance, and mortality. Funds are also used to permit and authorize activities that may result in take of marine mammals under the ESA or MMPA, determine the effects of noise on marine mammals from human-caused sources, and reduce marine mammal bycatch.

**Alaska Co-Management (+\$1,722,000/ + 0 FTE)** – Funds support agreements with Alaska Native Organizations regarding the management of harvested marine mammal stocks in Alaska, consistent with the authorization within the MMPA section 119. The agreements provide funding for cooperative management of these stocks.

**Beluga Whales (+\$2,619,000/ + 0 FTE)** – Funds support research on population characteristics and factors that hinder recovery, conservation actions to promote recovery, enforcement activities, and annual monitoring of beluga whale populations. Activities supported include developing timely, accurate, and precise biological information needed to monitor the status of this species and develop

and conduct conservation programs, including providing technical assistance and advice to Federal, State, and local partners; Alaska Native communities; and other constituents to ensure their actions promote whale recovery.

**ESA Sea Turtles (+\$13,422,000/ +0 FTE)** – Funds support the conservation and recovery of six ESA listed sea turtles in the marine environment that historically fell under NOAA's jurisdiction. The conservation and recovery of sea turtles requires multi-lateral cooperation and agreements to ensure the survival of these highly migratory animals. Activities include implementing modifications to commercial fishing gear to minimize interactions with sea turtles; implementing actions included in marine turtles recovery plans, research on marine turtle behavior and ecology; implementing improved Turtle Excluder Devices (TED measures); and cooperative work with southeastern U.S. coastal States to monitor long-term trends in the status of the loggerhead and Kemp's ridley sea turtle in nearshore waters of the southeastern U.S.

**Law Enforcement (+\$2,250,000/ +0 FTE)** – Funds support law enforcement duties associated with implementing the ESA and MMPA.

**ECOSphere (+\$2,000,000/ +0 FTE)** – Funds ensure the successful operations and maintenance of an expanded ECOSphere. This will support a unified online portal with data on all ESA-listed species to facilitate consultations in the most effective and efficient manner.

# Habitat Conservation

## Activity: Habitat Conservation

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Habitat Conservation</b>											
<b>Partners for Fish and Wildlife</b>											
Environment Data Quality and Access (WA Salmon Recovery)	-	-	643	-	-	-	-643	-	-	-	-643
General Program Activities	59,000	215	54,832	205	-118	-	-398	-10	54,316	195	-516
WA Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups	-	-	1,285	-	-	-	-1,285	-	-	-	-1,285
<b>Coastal Programs</b>											
Ecosystem Restoration - Gulf Coast	354	-	354	-	-	-	-	-	354	-	-
General Program Activities	12,646	45	12,278	41	-33	-	-	-1	12,245	40	-33
Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group	-	-	184	-	-	-	-184	-	-	-	-184
Long Live the Kings	-	-	184	-	-	-	-184	-	-	-	-184
<b>Total, Habitat Conservation</b>	<b>72,000</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>69,760</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>-151</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-2,694</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>66,915</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>-2,845</b>

## **Program Elements**

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The Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) and Coastal programs work through voluntary, nonregulatory, and collaborative partnerships to promote, identify, and support local solutions for conservation and restoration and build resilience in ecologically important lands and waters. These programs deliver cooperative, on-the-ground conservation in targeted geographic areas and biologically sensitive landscapes. Field-based employees have an intimate knowledge of the natural resource concerns and conservation challenges in local communities. They support project management and design, partnership development, and implementation of projects. They cooperate with local partners to provide resources, and assistance with grant development, compliance, and implementation of local conservation strategies on private lands, Tribal lands, and in some cases, public lands such as National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, and National Forests. Taken together, these programs empower landowners and local communities to conserve America's natural resources and traditional land use for future generations while also supporting healthy fish and wildlife populations, addressing conservation challenges such as habitat fragmentation and invasive species, and reducing the threats from natural disasters to communities and infrastructure.

The PFW and Coastal Programs provide Federal and leveraged funding to local, often rural, communities where they create on-the-ground habitat projects that also support new jobs and provide income to local contractors. The economic impacts of the PFW Program and Coastal Program funds are amplified in two dimensions. First, the program's expertise and funding leverage additional resources from other partners that support projects. Second, spending creates jobs, generates tax revenues, and stimulates local economic activity as wages and purchases flow through local communities.

These programs also effectively leverage other Federal resources. The PFW and Coastal Programs deliver assistance and leverage resources that assist landowners, communities, States, and other conservation partners to implement on-the-ground habitat conservation projects for healthy and resilient landscapes and communities.

## **Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders**

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The PFW and Coastal Programs are implemented under the following authorities:

- *Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act* (16 U.S.C. 661) directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water, and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- *Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956* (16 U.S.C. 742 a-j) establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.
- *Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act* (16 U.S.C. §§3771-3774) provides for the restoration, enhancement, and management of fish and wildlife habitats on private land through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, a program that works with private landowners to conduct cost-effective

habitat projects for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources in the United States.

- *Title LIII of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025* (P.L. 118-159) pertains to Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver reauthorization Act, which reauthorizes the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.
- *Coastal Habitat Conservation Act of 2023* (P.L.118-138) legislatively authorizes the Coastal Program to conduct collaborative landscape-level planning and on-the-ground coastal habitat assessment, coastal habitat protection, coastal habitat restoration, and coastal habitat enhancement projects in priority coastal landscapes to conserve and recover Federal trust species.
- *Restoring Gold Standard Science* (E.O. 14303) Conduct science in a rigorous, detailed manner and update applicable agency policies governing the production and use of scientific information.
- *Restoring America's Seafood Competitiveness* (E.O. 14276). In consultation with DOI, review commercial fishing in the Marine National Monuments.

**Activity: Habitat Conservation**  
**Subactivity: Partners for Fish and Wildlife**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Partners for Fish and Wildlife</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Environment Data Quality and Access (WA Salmon Recovery)</b>		
<i>Environment Data Quality and Access (WA Salmon Recovery)</i>	-643	+0
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>Klamath River Habitat Restoration</i>	-6,132	+0
<i>Nutria Eradication</i>	-3,200	-10
<i>Partners Activities</i>	+8,934	+0
<b>WA Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups</b>		
<i>WA Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups</i>	-1,285	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-2,326</b>	<b>-10</b>

**Program Overview**

The PFW Program is a non-regulatory, voluntary program for fish and wildlife habitat management on private land. Nearly 70 percent of the land in the United States is privately owned. To balance the needs of working private lands and wildlife conservation the Service must engage in collaborative conservation with private landowners to implement local strategies. The restored areas provide valuable benefits through improved forage for livestock, enhanced hunting and fishing opportunities, and reduced wildfire risk. The restored areas also benefit the nearby rural communities by supporting tourism and recreation, protecting infrastructure from flood damage (supporting EO 14239 Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness), and supporting America’s agricultural production by conserving soil, controlling pests, and protecting habitat for pollinators. The PFW Program provides grant funding to private landowners (individuals or NGOs) on big game migration corridors and fish passage, and improved recreation opportunities on private lands.

The Service works as habitat restoration and enhancement consultants who provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners, land managers, Tribes, schools, corporations, and local interest groups. Employees support partnership development and implementation from granting agencies, including other Federal agencies and States. This work includes using other voluntary tools like Conservation Benefit Agreements that protect private landowners who do voluntary wildlife habitat management on their property for listed species.

**PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: Grassland Restoration and Fuels Reduction on Private Land Adjacent to Valentine National Wildlife Refuge (Nebraska)**

Spanning 19,600 square miles, the Nebraska Sandhills are the largest stabilized dune system in the Western Hemisphere and one of the most intact grassland ecosystems in the world. Home to over 700

native plant species and 300 bird species, the region supports grass-based agriculture, with livestock grazing central to local livelihoods.

However, this ecosystem faces a growing threat from woody plant encroachment, especially eastern redcedar trees. Their spread across the Great Plains diminishes habitat for grassland wildlife, increases wildfire risk, and reduces forage availability—costing Nebraska over 419,000 tons of livestock forage annually.

To combat this, the PFW Program is working with a local rancher and conservation partners to restore native grasslands across nearly 89.2 square miles of private rangeland adjacent to the 112.5 square mile Valentine National Wildlife Refuge. The project involves mechanically removing all eastern redcedar trees from the area.

Once finished, this public-private partnership will have restored more than 200 square miles of the nearly 20,000 square mile ecosystem with native grassland, creating a large, contiguous block of resilient habitat. The benefits include improved forage for livestock, enhanced wildlife habitat for Sandhill cranes, and reduced catastrophic wildfire risk.

#### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Partners for Fish and Wildlife is \$54,316,000 and 195 FTE, a program change of -\$2,326,000 and -10 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Nutria Eradication (-\$3,200,000/ -10 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request specific funding for this activity.

**Environmental Data Quality and Access (WA Salmon Recovery) (-\$643,000/ +0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request specific funding for this activity.

**Washington Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (-\$1,285,000/ +0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request specific funding for this activity.

**Klamath River Habitat Restoration (-\$6,132,000/ +0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request specific funding for this activity.

**Partners for Fish and Wildlife Activities (+\$8,934,000/ +0 FTE)** – The Service will expand its work with private landowners to accomplish voluntary conservation on private lands, support high-priority DOI and Service efforts, and support for big-game migration corridors and seasonal habitat projects in 11 Western States through voluntary work with private landowners. This work supports DOI strategic plan Goal 3, EO 14313 Make American Beautiful Again, and EO 14239 Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness. The additional funding will allow the Service to leverage partnerships and voluntary actions to foster thriving wildlife populations and the resilient ecosystems that support these populations.

**Activity: Habitat Conservation**  
**Subactivity: Coastal Program**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Coastal Programs</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group</b>		
<i>Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group</i>	-184	+0
<b>Long Live the Kings</b>		
<i>Long Live the Kings</i>	-184	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-368</b>	<b>+0</b>

**Program Overview**

The Coastal Program is a non-regulatory, voluntary, collaborative, partnership-based program working in nationally important coastal watersheds to provide technical and financial assistance for solutions to natural resource problems, such as coastal habitat loss that endangers homes, industries, and infrastructure along the coast. The field-based employees work with communities to identify and support habitat conservation projects that accomplish locally-developed goals, such as restoring beaches and improving recreational opportunities. This work supports DOI strategic plan Goal 3, EO 14313 Make America Beautiful Again, and EO 14239 Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness.

Coastal Program employees assist with project management and design, partnership development, grant writing, and implementation of projects, including those from other grantmaking agencies, and other State or Federal watershed programs. Coastal Program projects vary based on the needs of the partners and the species, as well as the local challenges that our partners are seeking to address. Projects can focus on work such as restoring lost or degraded habitat, reducing nonpoint pollution, and removing invasive species.

Coastal areas, home to nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population, offer economic benefits like fisheries, tourism, and recreation. They support over 54 million jobs and generate about \$10 trillion in goods and services (<https://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/economics-and-demographics.html>). Coastal estuaries are vital, contributing to over 75 percent of the commercial fish and shellfish harvest and 90 percent of the recreational harvest in the U.S. Through its technical and financial assistance, the Service works with partners to deliver habitat projects on private and public lands to maintain and restore these vital coastal watersheds. The Coastal Program also co-administers the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program that helps States and U.S. Territories conserve and restore healthy coastal wetlands.

The Coastal Program provides value to the American public by leveraging partners’ resources at a ratio of 5:1, multiplying the Service’s impact in communities.

**PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: Managing Aquatic Invasive Vegetation to Restore Lake Erie Wetlands**

The Coastal Program is working with Ducks Unlimited to manage exotic invasive plants and restore Lake Erie coastal wetlands in Northwest Ohio. The work focuses on removing invasive species at Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, and surrounding areas, clearing 500 acres of unwanted weeds through herbicide application, mowing, and prescribed fire burning.

Aquatic invasive vegetation in the Great Lakes disrupts wetland ecosystems by forming dense monocultures, outcompeting native plants for resources, altering water levels, and reducing wildlife habitat for native plants and animals. The Coastal Program supports installation of water control structures such as gates or risers to aid in controlling water levels, allowing wetland managers to adapt to the impacts of changing environmental conditions and prevent the re-establishment of exotic invasive plants.



**Wetland managers use water control structures like this one to help regulate water levels to control exotic invasive vegetation at Cedar Point and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuges in Ohio. Photo: USFWS.**

**Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for the Coastal Program is \$12,599,000 and 40 FTE, a program change of -\$368,000 and -1 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (-\$184,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Long Live the Kings (-\$184,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

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# National Wildlife Refuge System

## Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System<sup>1</sup>

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)			
<b>National Wildlife Refuge System</b>											
<b>Wildlife and Habitat Management</b>											
General Program Activities	212,608	1,144	211,886	1,010	-301	-	-56,517	-215	155,068	795	-56,818
Invasive Species	16,925	-	16,925	-	-	-	-2,320	-	14,605	-	-2,320
Inventory & Monitoring	25,924	-	25,924	-	-	-	-10,267	-	15,657	-	-10,267
<b>Visitor Services</b>											
General Program Activities	66,600	400	65,000	348	-31	-	+2,500	-40	67,469	308	+2,469
Urban Wildlife Conservation Program	7,000	-	7,000	-	-	-	-7,000	-	-	-	-7,000
Youth and Careers in Nature	2,500	-	2,500	-	-	-	-2,500	-	-	-	-2,500
<b>Refuge Law Enforcement</b>											
General Program Activities	49,500	185	46,500	195	-21	-	+3,000	+5	49,479	200	+2,979
<b>Conservation Planning</b>											
Refuge Planning	2,800	17	2,300	15	-2	-	-800	-5	1,498	10	-802
<b>Refuge Maintenance</b>											
Annual Maintenance	25,850	458	25,850	380	-	-	-5,000	-21	20,850	359	-5,000
Deferred Maintenance	40,368	-	40,368	-	-	-	-18,000	-	22,368	-	-18,000
Equipment and Vehicle Management	12,201	-	12,201	-	-	-	-5,000	-	7,201	-	-5,000
Maintenance Support	65,581	-	65,581	-	-163	-	-2,625	-	62,793	-	-2,788
<b>Total, National Wildlife Refuge System</b>	<b>527,857</b>	<b>2,204</b>	<b>522,035</b>	<b>1,948</b>	<b>-518</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-104,529</b>	<b>-276</b>	<b>416,988</b>	<b>1,672</b>	<b>-105,047</b>

<sup>1</sup> Table does not include supplemental funding.

## Program Mission

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The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and restoration of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

## Program Elements

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The National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) is a vast and vital network of public lands and waters dedicated to conserving America's rich fish and wildlife heritage. Americans' demand for outdoor recreation has increased significantly in the last five years, highlighting the need for thoughtful planning, maintaining law enforcement presence, and infrastructure improvements so visitors can safely hunt, fish, watch birds, and enjoy the outdoors. The Refuge System spans more than 856 million acres of land and water and includes 573 national wildlife refuges, 38 wetland management districts, 48 coordination areas, seven National Monuments, and 760 million acres in Marine National Monuments.

The Refuge System protects waterways and public infrastructure across forests, prairies, deserts, coral reefs, tundra, and wetlands in all 50 States and five U.S. Territories, as well as providing important habitat for a range of wildlife, both rare and abundant. These protected areas play an indispensable role in safeguarding our country's natural heritage, tribal resources, food security, and local economies.



*Waterfowl hunting on Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The refuge is interwoven throughout four States including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois. Image: USFWS/Ian Shive*

### *Wildlife-Dependent Recreation Opportunities.*

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 identifies six priority recreational uses: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. These activities are priorities on every refuge, if found compatible with the refuge's statutory purposes. Alongside State lands, national wildlife refuges are especially known for waterfowl hunting experiences, and the Act ensures that this form of recreation can be practiced for years to come through sustainable harvests. A total of 366 wildlife refuges (64 percent) and 36 wetland management districts (95 percent) are open to hunting, and 301 wildlife refuges (53 percent) and 35 wetland management districts (92 percent) are open to fishing. Over 2.6 million hunters and over 8.3 million recreational anglers visited these refuges last year. Hundreds of hunting, fishing, and other recreation outfitters guide clients on wildlife refuges, providing a valuable renewable resource for local business owners.

### *Public Benefit*

The Refuge System delivers recreational and economic benefits to local communities. In FY 2025, the Refuge System hosted nearly 71 million visits to national wildlife refuges, an increase of over 50 percent since FY 2011. Additionally, adequately managed national wildlife refuges make landscapes more adaptable and protected from natural disasters and catastrophic weather events. By protecting and restoring habitats, refuges buffer area homes against floods, storm surges, erosion, and catastrophic fire, reducing costs tied to storm disaster recovery and safeguarding wildlife and communities.

### *Broad Management Toolbox*

In collaboration with local, State, territorial, and Tribal partners and through long-term planning and public engagement, refuge managers employ a variety of tools like habitat restoration, invasive species management, biological surveys and studies, and prescribed fire. They also manage cultural resources, public safety, and emergencies, and provide visitor services to engage local communities through volunteer and youth programs.

### *Tribal Trust Responsibilities*

The Refuge System honors our Trust Responsibilities to Tribal Nations. Refuge System leadership is committed to moving beyond the compliance/regulatory relationship toward a proactive approach of strategic collaboration with Tribes rooted in open communication and respect. These relationships will empower communities and enhance the quality of conservation for the benefit of present and future generations.

### *Emergency Management & Physical Security*

The Office of Emergency Management and Physical Security program (OEMPS) delivers the Service's emergency management and physical security responsibilities nationwide. The Physical Security program protects Service employees, properties, and facilities from unauthorized agents and unlawful activities. The Emergency Management program addresses preparedness and leads the Service's response to disasters and emergencies such as hurricanes, wildlife disease outbreaks, unusual mortality events, and hazardous chemical spills.

The Refuge System provides oversight, guidance, expertise, and leadership through the integration of our programs and participates in activities as described in the National Response Framework. Through this effort, the Service takes measures to prevent, protect against, prepare for, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all hazards that may affect any part of the agency, the species, and habitats managed, and the people and communities served.

## **Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders**

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The National Wildlife Refuge System is implemented under the following authorities:

- *The Fish and Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j)* establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.
- *The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-666e)* directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water, and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- *The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee)* provides authority, guidelines, and directives for the Service in administering the lands and waters of the National Wildlife Refuge System, including establishing six wildlife-dependent recreation activities as priority uses.
- *The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (P.L. 105-57)* spells out wildlife conservation as the fundamental mission of the Refuge System, requires comprehensive conservation planning to guide management of the Refuge System, directs involvement of private citizens in land management decisions, and provides that compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate use that should receive priority in refuge planning and management.
- *The National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Improvement Act (P.L. 111-357)* authorizes cooperative agreements with nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and promotes volunteer, outreach, and education programs.
- *The Refuge Recreation Act (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4)* authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use, when such uses do not interfere with the area's primary purposes.
- *The EXPLORE Act (P.L. 118-234)* provides certain Federal land management agency authorities aimed at improving outdoor recreation opportunities on Federal lands and waters.
- *The Nutria Eradication and Control Act (P.L. 108-16)* allows the Department of the Interior to provide financial assistance to States for (1) eradicating or controlling nutria, and (2) restoring marshland damaged by nutria. Nutria are invasive, semi-aquatic rodents.
- *The National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act (P.L. 106-408)* reinforces National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act provisions to raise public understanding and appreciation for the Refuge System.
- *The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 410hh-3233, 43 U.S.C. 1602-1784)* provides for the designation and conservation of certain public lands in Alaska, including units of the Refuge System, and for the continuing subsistence needs of Alaska Natives.
- *The Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715-715d, 715e, 715f-715r)* authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct investigations and publish documents related to North American birds and

establishes a Migratory Bird Conservation Commission to approve areas recommended by the Secretary for acquisition.

- *The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act (16 U.S.C. 718a-718k)* requires waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older to possess a valid Federal Duck Stamp.
- *The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712)* establishes Federal responsibility for protecting and managing migratory birds.
- *The Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136)* establishes a National Wilderness Preservation System.
- *The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271-1287)* establishes a National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- *The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-295, title VI)* mandates the development of both the National Preparedness Goal and National Preparedness System.
- *The Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-417)* improves the Country's public health and medical preparedness and response capabilities for emergencies, whether deliberate, accidental, or natural.
- *The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-296, title V)* created the Department of Homeland Security. Title V addresses the response time and preparedness of responders, for terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. In addition, it establishes standards, joint exercises, and trainings.
- *The Presidential Policy Directive-40 (PPD-40) (July 15, 2016)*, National Continuity Policy, prescribes continuity requirements for all Federal Executive Branch Departments and Agencies to ensure a comprehensive and integrated national continuity program that will enhance the credibility of our national security posture and enable a more rapid and effective response to and recovery from a national emergency.
- *The Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (Feb. 28, 2003)* enhances the Country's ability to manage domestic incidents by establishing a single, comprehensive National Incident Management System.
- *The Department of the Interior Departmental Manual Part 900 - Emergency Management Program* outlines policy, functions, and responsibilities for emergency management and homeland and national security for all bureaus and offices within the Department.
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policies (090 FW 1, 090 FW 2, 32 FW 1)* establish responsibilities for continuity of operations, emergency management, and physical security within the Service.
- *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, Recreation Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-9 further amends Public Land Corps Act of 1993 Under Title 42 USC Sec 12591; Title 16 USC Sec 1721-1726.* Beyond permanently authorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Dingell Act includes provisions like amendments to the Public Lands Corps Act: enhancing public land access, establishing the Every Kid Outdoors program, improving wildlife habitat protections, and promoting outdoor recreation opportunities across public lands nationwide; it also includes measures to improve wildfire response resource tracking and management.
- *Restoring America's Seafood Competitiveness (E.O. 14276).* Directs the Service to, in consultation with DOI, review commercial fishing in the Marine National Monuments.
- *Make America Beautiful Again Commission (E.O. 14313)* Directs the Service to expand access for hunting, fishing, and outdoor activities, addressing maintenance backlogs.
- *Celebrating America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday (E.O. 14189)* Directs the Service to hold events to celebrate A250.

- *Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History* (E.O. 14253 and S.O. 3431) Directs the Service to review properties and remove content against criteria listed in the executive order and encourages public participation by placing QR codes at each unit of the Refuge System.
- *Imposing Duties to Address the Situation at Our Southern Border* (E.O. 14194) The Service's Federal Wildlife Officers will work cooperatively with other law enforcement to combat drug trafficking and address border security issues.
- *Progress on the Situation at Our Southern Border* (E.O. 14198) The Service's Federal Wildlife Officers will work cooperatively with other law enforcement to combat drug trafficking and address border security issues.

**Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System**  
**Subactivity: Wildlife and Habitat Management**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Wildlife and Habitat Management</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>Nutria Eradication</i>	-3,000	+0
<i>Refuge Water Efficiency-Quivira</i>	-500	+0
<i>Wildlife and Habitat Management Activities</i>	-53,017	-215
<b>Invasive Species</b>		
<i>Invasive Species</i>	-2,320	+0
<b>Inventory &amp; Monitoring</b>		
<i>Inventory and Monitoring</i>	-6,267	+0
<i>Pollinators</i>	-4,000	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-69,104</b>	<b>-215</b>

**Program Overview**

The Refuge System facilitates conservation on millions of acres across the U.S. and its territories through its wide-ranging wildlife and habitat management and partnership activities. Refuges provide habitat for nearly half of all bird and mammal species in the U.S. and protect critical spawning and nursery habitats for commercially and recreationally important fish. The Service manages refuges in an adaptive management cycle (planning, design, implementation, and monitoring) to achieve specific outcomes for the benefit of wildlife and habitat and to support high-quality, wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting and fishing for the American public.

**General Wildlife and Habitat Management**

Wildlife and Habitat Management includes water management, habitat management and restoration, wilderness character, and invasive species prevention, eradication, and control. These tools, often used in collaboration with State and local partners, are all aimed at ensuring a balanced conservation approach to benefit both wildlife and the American public. This work requires significant investment in our capacity to be responsive to our many partners and carry out efficient and effective conservation.

Specifically, this funding provides for refuge operations, including monitoring plant and animal populations; restoring wetland, forest, grassland and marine habitats and ensuring native seed sources; managing habitats through activities such as manipulation of water levels, prescribed burning, haying, grazing, timber harvest, and planting vegetation; preventing and managing invasive plants and animals; monitoring air quality; investigating and cleaning contaminants; preventing and controlling wildlife disease outbreaks; and assessing quality and quantity of water resources that are required by the refuge system units. These activities are vital for the Refuge System and support adjacent landowners and partners to achieve local, landscape and national level habitat and species goals.

## **Inventory and Monitoring**

The Refuge System prioritizes understanding habitat changes and monitoring management interventions to optimize conservation strategies through adaptive management and collaboration with partners. This process involves inventory and monitoring of wildlife populations and supports data curation to ensure effective access and utilization of information among employees, partners, and the public. Systematic monitoring promotes transparency and enhances efficiency of future management interventions.

## **Wildlife Health**

The Service co-chairs the Department of the Interior's One Health Group, which focuses on developing proactive strategies for wildlife, human, and environmental health issues. One Health promotes early detection and rapid response through incident command system implementation to limit exposure and prevent the geographic spread of diseases. The Service also chairs the Interagency Steering Committee for Avian Influenza Surveillance in Wild Migratory Birds and serves as the technical lead for the Department of the Interior's response to New World screwworm. The vaccination effort of California condors that began in 2023 for protection against highly pathogenic avian influenza, and the current preparation and contingency planning for refuge response to and mitigation of screwworm infestation in trust species, are examples of the critical wildlife health work conducted by the Refuge System's Wildlife Health office. Additionally, the Refuge System remains committed to the implementation of the Wildlife Health Initiative developed through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) with Federal, State, and tribal partners. This program supports cross-jurisdictional monitoring, detection, and response to wildlife disease, including those that may threaten livestock, pets, and humans.

The Wildlife Health office also monitors wild bison health on five refuges that provide healthy, wild bison for the conservation of the species as well as food security and cultural restoration for Tribes.

## **Invasive Species Management**

The Refuge System experiences first-hand the negative impacts of invasive species to hunting, fishing, infrastructure, human health, and native plants, fish, and wildlife populations. These impacts also compromise national resilience and preparedness by increasing vulnerability to natural disasters and straining the capacity of communities and agencies to respond to environmental and public health threats. The Service implements critical management activities on refuge units and adjacent lands to prevent the introduction and secondary spread of invasive species through systematic prevention, early detection, surveillance, rapid response, eradication, containment, control, and education. The Service also coordinates and collaborates with States, Tribes, territories, and private landowners to advance mutual priorities and promote efficiency and cost savings. Taken together, these efforts protect recreational opportunities, native ecosystems, food security, and critical infrastructure, and this comprehensive invasive species management framework has become a national model.

Two core components of the Refuge System's invasive species management framework include working with partners to implement the Invasive Species Strike Teams (ISST) and the Large Invasive Species (LIS) Project Funding. The Refuge System's ISST and their Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) efforts are critical tools for preventing widespread ecological and economic damage and are cornerstones of the DOI's National EDRR Framework. As of FY 2025, there were 21 ISSTs with at least

one team in each Region of the Service. The establishment of the LIS Project Funding in 2009 created a focused opportunity for projects targeting complex and challenging invasive species on or adjacent to refuges. With the goal of eradication or maximum control, the Refuge System has tackled a wide array of invasive species that threaten the health of our ecosystems and the well-being of people and our infrastructure. From rats, pigs, and horses to ants, bullfrogs, and cordgrass, the LIS funding has made significant strides in restoring native habitats and improving biodiversity.

### **Marine National Monuments**

The Refuge System co-manages five Marine National Monuments. The Service also has 182 National Wildlife Refuges in coastal areas, including the Great Lakes. These refuges and monuments protect nearly every type of coastal and marine ecosystem, including salt marshes, mangroves, corals, rocky shores, deep sea, Arctic, and hydrothermal vents. The areas also protect our maritime heritage, including areas that were heavily involved in World War II.

Funds appropriated for Marine National Monuments have provided for basic regional stewardship of these marine resources. These ecosystems are subject to significant threats, including foreign fishing fleets, diminishing fish stocks upon which people and communities depend, coastal erosion, ocean acidification, marine debris, coral bleaching, and harmful algal blooms. These areas support coastal and ocean economies that require healthy, abundant resources. The Service uses our place-based programs to educate and inspire visitors to become champions and stewards of the marine environment, ensuring these marine resources remain intact and healthy for generations to come.



*A diver photographs a shipwreck at Midway Atoll in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Image: NOAA*

## **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Wildlife and Habitat Management is \$185,330,000 and 795 FTE, a program change of -\$69,104,000 and -215 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Nutria Eradication (-\$3,000,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not include funding for this activity.

**Invasive Species (-\$2,320,000/ -0 FTE)** – The Refuge System’s invasive species program will continue to advance key Administration priorities related to national preparedness and readiness, public health, and cross-boundary conservation. This funding level will support 16 invasive species strike teams (ISST) focused on cost-effective prevention and EDRR work, with at least one ISST in each Service region, and large, complex eradication and control projects.

**Inventory and Monitoring Activities (-\$6,267,000/ -0 FTE)** – Funding will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of high-priority resource management actions. By monitoring the impacts of these actions, the Refuge System can better optimize effective conservation strategies. Funding will be used to continue to follow E.O. 14303 Restoring Gold Standard of Science.

**Pollinators (-\$4,000,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not include funding for this activity.

**Refuge Water Efficiency/Quivira (-\$500,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not include funding for this activity.

**Wildlife and Habitat Management Activities (-\$53,017,000/ -215 FTE)** – The Service will prioritize on-the-ground personnel that recover species and support habitat. These employees will focus their efforts on activities that support the Administration’s major conservation goals, including balancing stewardship and economic growth, encouraging responsible conservation, restoring America’s wildlife, lands and waters, and protecting our Nation’s outdoor heritage for the enjoyment of the American people.

**Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System**  
**Subactivity: Refuge Visitor Services**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Visitor Services</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>Refuge Visitor Service Activities</i>	+2,500	+0
<b>Urban Wildlife Conservation Program</b>		
<i>Urban Wildlife Conservation Program</i>	-7,000	-37
<b>Youth and Careers in Nature</b>		
<i>Youth and Careers in Nature</i>	-2,500	-3
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-7,000</b>	<b>-40</b>

**Program Overview**

Opportunities for outdoor recreation draw nearly 71 million visits each year to national wildlife refuges, boosting local economies across the country and the Service is instrumental in implementation of the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act in support of Secretary’s Order 3435. Refuges are near communities of all sizes, and offer visitors the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, view wildlife, and photograph nature. The Service enables these opportunities on national wildlife refuges with a customer-centered focus and by leveraging a myriad of national and local partnerships to increase awareness and engagement with these nearby outdoor spaces. The bureau also ensures cultural resource compliance, which is a cornerstone of our strong relationships with Native American Tribes.

*Public Access*

Refuges work closely with State agencies and private partners to provide outdoor access where it is compatible with refuge purposes. For example, hunting is allowed on 366 wildlife refuges and 36 wetland management districts. More than 92 million acres in the Refuge System are open to hunting in the continental U.S., including nearly all the refuge lands in Alaska. Wildlife refuges and wetland management districts deliver premier experiences from duck hunting in the Prairie Pothole Region to brown bear hunting in Alaska. Some hunts are designed specifically for youth and veterans.

*Customer-Centered Focus*

The Service is designated as a high-impact service provider due to the Refuge System’s recreational visitation. To ensure visitors have safe recreation visits on national wildlife refuges, the Service maintains virtual trip planning resources, including electronic passes and permits, and maintains on-site wayfinding and interpretive signage and printed guides. The Service is committed, through the National Visitor Survey, to visitor monitoring to ensure resource protection, visitor management, and quality of visitor experience.



*Wildlife viewing via kayak at Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, AZ Image: USFWS/Ian Shive*

### **Local Partnerships**

The Services' conservation success in the Refuge System is partly due to its dedication to fostering strong public and private partnerships and serving as a vital asset to local communities. The Visitor Services program coordinates these partnerships to expand conservation efforts, enhance recreational access, and create lasting positive connections between communities across the country and their natural and cultural heritage. Vital partnerships include:

- *Friends groups.* Small nonprofits that support individual national wildlife refuges and other Service sites by managing nature stores, helping at events, supporting projects, and enhancing education programs.
- *Volunteers.* Individuals nationwide donate time and energy to refuges, restoring habitat, monitoring wildlife, greeting visitors, teaching youth to hunt and fish, and leading tours.
- *Local Community Engagement.* The Refuge System works with communities in cities, suburbs, and rural areas to ensure that conservation benefits are shared across many sectors. Partnerships range in size and scope. For example, hundreds of hunting, fishing, and other recreation outfitters guide clients on wildlife refuges, providing a valuable renewable resource for local business owners. In partnership with local businesses, refuges also help host wildlife viewing festivals in the Midwest and the South. These events bring vital revenue to rural and suburban communities.

### **Cultural Resources**

The Cultural Resources program began in the mid-late 1970s in response to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800. Today, the Service-wide cultural resources program is a primary means of engagement with Native American Tribes regarding Trust resources and stewards more than 6 million museum property items that have come to the agency via laws

like the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The program provides national guidance and support in administering Federal laws that conserve, manage, protect, and restore cultural resources.

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Visitor Services is \$67,469,000 and 308 FTE, which represents a program change of -\$7,000,000 and -40 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Urban Conservation Program (-\$7,000,000/ -37 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does include funding for this activity.

**Youth and Careers in Nature (-\$2,500,000/ -3 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does include funding for this activity

**Refuge Visitor Services (+\$2,500,000/ +0 FTE)** – With this funding, the Refuge System will work with partners to improve support for outdoor recreational activities such as hunting and fishing, maintain customer satisfaction, and continue public services that support nearby and gateway communities. It will fund critical new positions that will facilitate high-quality recreational experiences. Continued coordination and implementation of the EXPLORE Act remain a focus to ensure implementation of Secretary's Order 3435.

**Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System**  
**Subactivity: National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Refuge Law Enforcement</b> <i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>Refuge Law Enforcement Activities</i>	+3,000	+5
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>+3,000</b>	<b>+5</b>

**Program Overview**

The Refuge System Law Enforcement (NWRS LE) program supports the Secretary’s strategic goal of ensuring national security through the protection of the American people and property. The Refuge System’s cadre of Federal Wildlife Officers (FWOs) support recreational uses, protection of endangered species, habitat conservation, and a broad-spectrum of Service programs, ensuring public safety, education, and resource protection.

FWOs serve as ambassadors for the Refuge System and the Service. They support the public as hunter safety instructors; coordinate with veterans and disabled sportsperson’s groups to create outdoor opportunities; and lead youth shooting, hunting, and fishing events on refuges. These officers will support Executive Order 14313 *Establishing the President’s Make America Beautiful Again Commission* by ensuring expanded recreation, hunting, and fishing activities are done so in a safe and lawful manner. Officers are routinely involved with local and other Federal law enforcement agencies in cooperative efforts to support nationwide disaster recovery efforts, national security efforts along the borders, and other incident responses. FWOs are usually stationed in rural areas where mutually supporting their local law enforcement is vital.



*Federal Wildlife Officer speaks with a youth hunter during a duck hunt on Brazoria NWR, TX. Image: USFWS*

NWRS LE officers support Executive Orders 14194 *Imposing Duties to Address the Situation at Our Southern Border* and 14198 *Progress on the Situation at Our Southern Border* as they work cooperatively with other law enforcement to combat drug trafficking and address border security issues.



*Federal Wildlife Officers with illegally harvested oysters at Chincoteague NWR, VA. Image: USFWS*

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement is \$49,479,000 and 200 FTE, a program change of +\$3,000,000 and +5 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement Activities (+\$3,000,000/ +5 FTE)** – This funding will help support the cadre of FWOs who provide for the security and safety of over 71 million refuge visitors, employees, government property, and our country’s resources. This increase will support the retention of workforce gains, salary increases, and officer-related field support realized in previous years. These officers will support Executive Orders 14194 *Imposing Duties to Address the Situation at Our Southern Border* and 14198 *Progress on the Situation at Our Southern Border* as they work cooperatively with other law enforcement to combat the country’s drug problems and address border security issues. Additionally, the officers will support Executive Order 14313 *Establishing the President’s Make America Beautiful Again Commission* by ensuring expanded recreation, hunting, and fishing activities are done so in a safe and lawful manner.

**Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System**  
**Subactivity: Conservation Planning**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Conservation Planning</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Refuge Planning</b>		
<i>Conservation Planning Activities</i>	-800	-5
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-800</b>	<b>-5</b>

**Program Overview**

Refuge System planning processes aim to enhance public access while reducing regulatory burdens on the public. The Service accomplishes this goal by collaborating with States, Tribes and other key partners, gathering public input, and engaging interested parties and local communities. The 1997 Improvement Act mandates that the Service complete a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for every unit of the Refuge System and revise or review the CCP every 15 years.

**Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for Conservation Planning is \$1,498,000 and 10 FTEs, a program change of -\$800,000 and -5 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Conservation Planning Activities (-\$800,000/ -5 FTE)** – The Refuge System will continue supporting planning efforts to complete Compatibility Determinations, CCPs, and/ or step-down plans, which support public access to Refuge units and inform conservation investments.

**Activity: National Wildlife Refuge System**  
**Subactivity: Refuge Maintenance**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Refuge Maintenance</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Annual Maintenance</b>		
<i>Annual Maintenance</i>	-5,000	-21
<b>Deferred Maintenance</b>		
<i>Deferred Maintenance</i>	-18,000	+0
<b>Equipment and Vehicle Management</b>		
<i>Equipment and Vehicle Management</i>	-5,000	+0
<b>Maintenance Support</b>		
<i>Maintenance Support</i>	-2,625	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-30,625</b>	<b>-21</b>

**Program Overview**

The Refuge Maintenance subactivity underpins the Refuge System operations. Infrastructure investments enable open access to public lands for outdoor recreation such as fishing, hunting, and wildlife observation; create jobs; and support local, State, and national economies. Investments also maintain and modernize facilities and fleets to improve operational efficiency and reduce costs to the American taxpayer. Refuge Maintenance is one of several Refuge System program areas where local maintenance and trade skill workers can find employment and training opportunities.

The Service is working toward a life-cycle approach to infrastructure management. This proactive approach emphasizes regular scheduled maintenance instead of deferring maintenance to failure. The Service conducts analysis of asset condition, mission impact, and project cost data to prioritize infrastructure investments. This approach enables the Service to identify the most efficient, cost-effective method for completing infrastructure projects, such as employing in-house Maintenance Action Teams, disposing of assets, and adopting strategies to extend the useful life of an asset.

The Service is responsible for a real property portfolio with a current replacement value (CRV) of \$62.2 billion, including the Refuge Systems' portfolio CRV of \$55.8 billion. As of the end of FY 2025, the Service maintains over 46,000 assets, including 6,388 buildings; 19,396 roads, bridges, and trails; 8,828 water management structures; and 12,200 other real property assets.

*Maintenance Support*

Refuge Maintenance Support includes supplies, materials, and salaries to maintain and manage facilities and equipment. Maintenance employees are a critical component of proactively maintaining refuge facilities for visitors, employees, and the trust resources that the Service protects. Maintenance employees

not only maintain infrastructure and equipment but also maintain habitat to support public recreational activities like hunting, fishing, hiking, and bird watching.

*Annual Maintenance*

Annual Maintenance encompasses non-salary expenditures for preventative maintenance imperative to keep the Refuge System infrastructure and fleet functioning. Proactively maintaining facilities through Maintenance Support and Annual Maintenance is more cost-effective on average than waiting until maintenance is deferred or assets are damaged or destroyed. Annual maintenance can include a variety of activities, from grading trails, roads, and parking lots to support safe and reliable access for hunting and fishing to maintaining high-hazard dams and flood protection levees to protect neighboring communities.

*Deferred Maintenance*

Deferred Maintenance (DM) projects repair, rehabilitate, dispose of, or replace constructed real property assets. Funds are directed to the highest-priority, mission-critical projects based on facility condition, asset priority, consequences of failure to act, and return on investment in accordance with Departmental and Service guidance. To help address the Service’s deferred maintenance backlog, the Service implements strategies such as utilizing in-house Maintenance Action Teams to the extent possible, partnering with non-profit volunteer organizations for labor, emphasizing proactive investments, improving data quality, and increasing focus on preventative and routine maintenance investments.

The Service provides Congress and the public with annual DM backlog financial reports that include explanations of major changes in the Service’s DM backlog from one year to another and identify each project’s mission support/criticality rating. For FY 2025, the Service reported a deferred maintenance and repair estimate (DM&R) of \$3.5 billion. The Refuge System’s portion of DM&R for FY 2025 was \$2.9 billion.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supports the reauthorization of the LRF as part of the 2027 President’s Budget, which would provide the Service with additional resources to address deferred maintenance.

**FY 2025 National Wildlife Refuge System Specific Assets**

<b>Asset Type</b>	<b>Current Replacement Value (billions)</b>	<b>Number of Assets</b>	<b>DM Backlog (billions)</b>
Buildings	\$8.328	5,185	\$0.641
Other Structures	\$6.199	9,793	\$0.406
Roads, Bridges, Trails	\$13.089	18,317	\$1.027
Water Management	\$28.211	8,495	\$0.786
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$55.827</b>	<b>41,790</b>	<b>\$2.860</b>

## FY 2025 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Assets

Asset Type	Current Replacement Value (billions)	Number of Assets	DM Backlog (billions)
Buildings	\$10.712	6,388	\$0.822
Other Structures	\$9.361	12,220	\$0.776
Roads, Bridges, Trails	\$13.639	19,396	\$1.113
Water Management	\$28.500	8,828	\$0.803
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$62.212</b>	<b>46,832</b>	<b>\$3.509</b>

### *Equipment and Vehicle Management*

The Refuge System requires an extensive fleet of vehicles and equipment to successfully carry out the conservation mission and provide safe and reliable public recreation and education opportunities. The Refuge System employs rental and leasing options to provide a cost-effective, efficient program. Equipment and Vehicle Management funds optimize fleet management to meet mission needs and serve as an example of efficient use of public assets.

### **Federal Lands Transportation Program**

Transportation touches every aspect of FWS. Demand for outdoor recreation has increased significantly since FY 2020, highlighting the need for transportation improvements so visitors can safely hunt, fish, watch birds, and enjoy the outdoors. Land managers also rely on safe access to FWS lands to carry out wildlife management activities. In support of FWS's conservation mission, the FWS develops transportation assets and road treatments to support visitors and employees, improves and constructs transportation systems and connectivity to other public systems, and repairs hydrologic flows with improved culverts and bridges to prevent flooding and damage to public lands and neighboring communities. The FWS network has over 5,600 miles of public-use roads, 6,000 public-use parking lots, over 300 public bridges, 25 on-refuge transit systems, and 3,215 miles of public terrestrial trails and boardwalks.

Local refuges and hatcheries work closely with neighboring communities and cities to identify opportunities for improvement, and frequently provide the needed match funding for the Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) awards provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation. FWS leverages a variety of funding sources to manage the extensive transportation system, including the FLTP, FLAP, and the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO), all funded through the Highway Trust Fund, as well as FWS appropriated and non-appropriated funding sources by completing projects through Maintenance Actions Teams with FLTP, Deferred Maintenance, and Great American Outdoors Act funds.

## **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Refuge Maintenance is \$113,212,000 and 359 FTE, a program change of -\$30,625,000 and -36 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Annual Maintenance (-\$5,000,000/ -21 FTE)** – The Refuge System will continue investing in high-priority, proactive preventative maintenance and repairs, which prevents maintenance from becoming deferred.

**Deferred Maintenance (-\$18,000,000/ -0 FTE)** – The Refuge System will focus on completing high-priority deferred maintenance projects that address critical areas of focus such as mitigation of safety risks and increasing public access. Projects include repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of visitor centers, visitor contact stations, trails, parking lots, dams, bridges, and other public-facing mission-critical assets.

**Equipment and Vehicle Management (-\$5,000,000/ -0 FTE)** – The Refuge System will focus on high-priority equipment and vehicle fleet modernization, implementing utilization and age standards, and investing in a smaller, more agile, and modernized fleet.

**Maintenance Support (-\$2,625,000/ -0 FTE)** – Maintenance personnel will continue to support refuge programs and prioritize projects that maintain wildlife habitats and maintain safe and reliable outdoor recreation for the American public.

# Migratory Bird Management

Activity: Conservation and Enforcement  
 Program: Migratory Bird Management

Activity: Conservation and Enforcement											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Conservation and Enforcement</b>											
<b>Migratory Bird Management</b>											
<b>Conservation and Monitoring</b>											
Bird-Livestock Conflicts	600	-	600	-	-	-	-	-	600	-	-
General Program Activities	22,373	113	20,667	96	-64	-	-2,067	-10	18,536	86	-2,131
Monitoring	6,294	-	6,294	-	-	-	-	-	6,294	-	-
Energy	800	-	800	-	-	-	-	-	800	-	-
Urban Bird Treaties	333	-	333	-	-	-	-333	-	-	-	-333
Permits	5,400	34	5,000	33	-5	-	-500	-2	4,495	31	-505
<b>Federal Duck Stamp Program</b>											
General Program Activities	591	2	591	2	-3	-	-13	-	575	2	-16
<b>North American Waterfowl Management Plan</b>											
General Program Activities	16,558	38	16,808	30	-11	-	-8,367	-11	8,430	19	-8,378
National Program Management	263	-	263	-	-	-	-	-	263	-	-
<b>Total, Migratory Bird Management</b>	<b>53,212</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>51,356</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>-83</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-11,280</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>39,993</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>-11,363</b>

## **Program Overview**

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The Migratory Bird Program works to conserve healthy bird populations. Our mission is to lead migratory bird conservation and management through effective partnerships, applied science, and innovative strategies, working with partners to manage birds under laws such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. We serve the American public through the following:

1. Provide Leadership in Migratory Bird Conservation
2. Conserve and Manage Sustainable Populations of Birds of Management Concern
3. Conserve Habitat for Migratory Birds of Management Concern
4. Manage Bird Data and Information for Use in Decision Making

The Program meets these objectives by operating continental-scale bird monitoring programs; coordinating bird conservation partnerships at nearly every geographic scale; issuing permits to authorize the take and possession of birds in a continued effort to balance resource use with conservation; and working with partners to conserve habitat. The Program also generates close to \$40 million a year of revenue from the sale of Duck Stamps, which is used to fund the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Birds are enjoyed by millions of Americans through multiple activities including hunting and bird watching. Birds are significant drivers of tourism, retail, and conservation funding in the U.S. The 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation Report estimated that 2.8 million people in the U.S. participate in migratory bird hunting and 3 out of 10 Americans consider themselves birdwatchers. Americans spend billions of dollars each year participating in bird-related activities. Birds also provide important ecosystem services, including insect and rodent control, plant pollination, and seed dispersal.

The Migratory Bird Program collaborates with various entities, including Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), to manage migratory bird species and conserve their habitats through partnerships and management plans. Over the last century, the Service and its partners have successfully protected millions of acres of habitat and prohibited the commercial use of migratory birds. However, migratory bird populations continue to decline due to threats like habitat loss, invasive species, feral cats, disease, and human-caused mortality. The Migratory Bird Program's mission remains as vital as ever: safeguarding healthy bird populations for current and future generations.

## **Program Elements**

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Four elements comprise the Migratory Bird Management program:

Conservation and Monitoring – Conducts monitoring and assessment activities on migratory bird species, sets hunting seasons, develops conservation plans, and collaborates with partners to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts and reduce human-caused mortality.

Permits – Facilitates public engagement in migratory bird activities through permitting and authorizations, while reducing regulatory burdens and promoting long-term conservation of migratory birds.

Federal Duck Stamp Office – Conducts the annual Federal Duck Stamp (Duck Stamp) Contest, produces the Duck Stamp required for waterfowl hunting, and provides proceeds to conserve wetland habitats. Coordinates the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design program for educational opportunities through the arts.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan and Migratory Bird Joint Venture Partnerships – Implements a continental conservation plan through collaborative, voluntary partnerships that conserve waterfowl and other migratory bird habitats.

## **Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders**

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More than 25 laws, treaties, and conventions mandate the Service sustain over 1,100 species of migratory birds including the following:

The *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 668-668C) prohibits the import, export, or take of bald or golden eagles including their parts and products without permits, and prohibits the sale, purchase, or barter of their parts or products.

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 2901-2911) directs the Secretary of the Interior to undertake research and conservation activities, in coordination with other Federal, State, international and private organizations, to fulfill responsibilities to conserve migratory nongame birds under existing authorities, including the identification non-game birds that without additional conservation action could become candidates for listing under ESA and the actions necessary for their conservation.

The *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act* (16 U.S.C. 718) requires waterfowl hunters to purchase and possess a valid Federal waterfowl hunting stamp before hunting migratory waterfowl and directs proceeds to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to conserve wetland habitats within the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (16 U.S.C. 703-712) establishes Federal responsibility for protecting and managing migratory birds and implements bilateral migratory bird conventions with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia.

The *Duck Stamp Modernization Act of 2023* (P.L. 118-25) allows an individual to carry an electronic stamp, rather than a paper stamp, at the time of hunting waterfowl.

**Subactivity: Migratory Bird Management  
Program Element: Conservation and Monitoring**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Management</b> <i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Conservation and Monitoring</b>		
General Program Activities		
<i>Conservation and Monitoring Activities</i>	-2,067	-10
Urban Bird Treaties		
<i>Urban Bird Treaties</i>	-333	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-2,400</b>	<b>-10</b>

**Program Description**

The Migratory Bird Program approaches its conservation and monitoring responsibilities by focusing primarily on Birds of Management Concern (BMC). BMC species are a subset of species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The following four categories of birds comprise the BMC: migratory birds for which we hold hunting seasons, Birds of Conservation Concern, migratory bird species in conflict with people, and Bald and Golden Eagles.

One of the primary reasons the U.S. signed international migratory bird treaties was to cooperatively manage and regulate the purposeful take of migratory birds used for recreational and subsistence hunting. Because birds migrate across State and international boundaries and are subject to international and Federal law, the Service is the only entity in the U.S. that has the authority to open annual hunting seasons for migratory birds. Data from our annual aerial surveys, hunter harvest surveys, and waterfowl banding efforts inform annual decisions on authorized harvest levels and seasons, made in close partnership with treaty partners, States, and Tribes.

The Service also is instrumental in conserving migratory nongame species. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act directs the Service to monitor and assess nongame bird population trends. Species at-risk for becoming listed as threatened or endangered are deemed a Bird of Conservation Concern. Through technical assistance and partnership, the Service promotes effective, voluntary conservation strategies. For example, initiatives like the Bird Collisions Prevention Alliance bring together over 100 organizations to reduce bird mortality from collisions and light pollution. The Service also provides the public with decision-support tools to guide the siting, design, and operation of projects, ensuring they are bird-friendly. Working with conservation partners, the Migratory Bird Program works to monitor and maintain bird populations and avoid future listings under the Endangered Species Act.

When a protected migratory bird harms the American people or their interests, like agriculture, the Service takes a systematic approach to find and implement management solutions with stakeholders. The Migratory Bird Program promotes comprehensive solutions to these problems by coordinating

extensively across regions, programs, and often multiple agencies. This level of collaboration is necessary to address issues that are complex or larger in scale than typical cases where a depredation permit is issued, such as those involving double-crested cormorants. Lethal control, i.e., “take”, is one tool to manage bird-human conflicts and the Service is the only entity that can authorize the take of migratory bird species.

Bald eagles and golden eagles are iconic species of cultural importance to all Americans and many Native American Tribes. While Bald and Golden Eagles are protected by the MBTA, they are afforded additional protections under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The Service is responsible for managing eagles to ensure the preservation of both eagle species.

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Conservation and Monitoring is \$26,230,000 and 86 FTE, a program change of -\$2,400,000 and -10 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Conservation and Monitoring Activities (-\$2,067,000/ -10 FTE)** – The Service will focus on the most critical conservation and monitoring actions to ensure a data-driven approach to migratory bird management. FWS will continue setting sustainable harvest levels and establishing annual hunting seasons while exploring innovative, efficient methods to collect essential data. The Migratory Bird Program is committed to advancing the Administration’s agenda by conserving bird populations, supporting outdoor recreation including hunting, and reducing conflicts between Americans and species such as cormorants, ravens, and vultures. Through strong partnerships, technical assistance, and promotion of bird-friendly practices, we will tackle conservation challenges and deliver solutions that benefit wildlife and people across the country.

**Urban Bird Treaties (-\$333,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Subactivity: Migratory Bird Management**  
**Program Element: Permits**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Management</b> <i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Permits</b>		
<i>Permits Activities</i>	-500	-2
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-500</b>	<b>-2</b>

**Program Description**

In 1918, the MBTA was enacted to implement the first of four international treaties to protect migratory birds. Recognizing the need to protect and manage birds that were both injurious and beneficial to humans, the MBTA established a system of regulations and permits. Today, permits serve as the main way for the Service to engage with the American people on migratory birds. The goal is to support long-term conservation of migratory birds and promote shared stewardship. Our objective is to implement an efficient permitting program with a strong biological foundation.

Permits allow the public to engage in specific activities that comply with the MBTA and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, balancing usage and conservation. Permits also help build partnerships and monitor how activities affect migratory bird populations. By using innovative approaches like regulatory authorizations and general permits alongside traditional specific permits, the Migratory Bird Program is reducing regulatory burden on the American people while facilitating development of and promoting the long-term conservation of migratory birds and eagles. Both the MBTA and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act require permits for activities that could adversely affect these species. The Migratory Bird Program administers several regulations under these laws, detailing available permits, application procedures, and criteria for issuance. Permittees include industries, State and Tribal wildlife agencies, law enforcement, military airfields, zoos, aquariums, individual Americans, and others whose activities may impact migratory birds.

The Migratory Bird Program advances the Administration’s deregulatory agenda by modernizing permitting processes, reducing regulatory requirements, and improving public service delivery. Expanded use of automated general permits, regulatory authorizations, and streamlined permit processes reduces burdens on applicants while supporting efficient administration, innovation, and long-term conservation of migratory birds and eagles. We also seek to benefit the American public by advance meaningful, on-the-ground solutions to address conflicts involving MBTA species such as black vultures, double-crested cormorants, and common ravens, delivering tangible benefits to agricultural communities and State and Tribal wildlife managers. Through strong partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders, the Service is developing new permitting tools and coordinated approaches that empower local wildlife stewardship while sustaining healthy bird populations.

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Permits is \$4,495,000 and 31 FTE, a program change of -\$500,000 and -2 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Permits Activities (-\$500,000/ -2 FTE)** – The Service will continue to issue permits for activities covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act by advancing targeted improvements across people, process, and platforms that together improve efficiency. The Program will continue to fill key gaps to increase efficiency and reduce duplication; advance deregulation through expanded use of general permits issued instantly via registration and regulatory authorizations that establish clear eligibility and conditions without individual permits; and dedicate staff to support and modernize the electronic permitting system to ensure effective service delivery and migratory bird conservation.

**Subactivity: Migratory Bird Management**  
**Program Element: Federal Duck Stamp**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Management</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Federal Duck Stamp Program</b>		
General Program Activities		
<i>Duck Stamp Activities</i>	-13	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>+0</b>

**Program Description**

The Federal Duck Stamp Office plays a vital role in conserving migratory bird habitat within the National Wildlife Refuge System through the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or Duck Stamp. The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act requires all waterfowl hunters aged 16 years or older to possess a valid Federal Duck Stamp. Since its inception in 1934, Duck Stamp sales have generated over \$1.3 billion, conserving more than 6 million acres of habitat for birds and wildlife via the National Wildlife Refuge System. In addition, royalties from licensed products featuring Duck Stamp artwork provide extra funding for habitat conservation and education, further extending the program’s impact. The Migratory Bird Program conducts the annual art contest and produces the Duck Stamp, which sells for \$25, and raised over \$39 million in 2025. Ninety eight percent of duck stamp proceeds go toward wetland conservation by protecting and acquiring wetland habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The 2026-2027 stamp marks the 20th year of the Electronic Duck Stamp (E-Stamp) program, which has sold over 1 million E-Stamps since its inception. The E-Stamp is a useful tool for customers, allowing anyone with an internet connection to quickly buy Duck Stamps, no matter where they live. The Service will keep encouraging qualified States to participate in the program to better serve all Americans.

The Migratory Bird Program also conducts the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program, which actively engages K-12 students in wildlife education and conservation through art. About 20,000 students participate in the annual art contest which, along with related activities and events showcasing their artwork, reaches another 300,000 families, educators, and community members each year. The winning artwork is showcased on stamps and State hunting brochures.

**Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for Federal Duck Stamp Office is \$575,000 and 2 FTE, a program change of -\$13,000 and -0 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Federal Duck Stamp Activities (-\$13,000/ -0 FTE)** – The Service will continue to produce and sell the Federal Duck Stamp. The Service will also continue to implement the Duck Stamp Modernization Act of 2023 to further expand hunter access.

**Subactivity: Migratory Bird Management**

**Program Element: North American Waterfowl Management/Joint Ventures**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Management</b> <i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>North American Waterfowl Management Plan</b>		
General Program Activities		
<i>NAWMP/Joint Ventures Activities</i>	-8,367	-11
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-8,367</b>	<b>-11</b>

**Program Description**

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More than 40 years ago, waterfowl populations in North America were at historic lows. In response, the waterfowl management community in the U.S. and Canada created a strategy for habitat protection and restoration, recognizing the importance of international cooperation in restoring shared wildlife resources. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP or Plan) was the result of this cooperation and remains a model for international conservation efforts. The Plan has conserved waterfowl habitats through partnerships since 1986, sustaining healthy populations of ducks, geese, and swans and promoting awareness of their ecological and economic value.

Habitat goals are primarily implemented by 18 Migratory Bird Joint Ventures (JVs). These regional partnerships leverage advanced science and diverse resources from government, private, and nonprofit partners to sustain bird populations. Additionally, three species-specific JVs provide the scientific understanding necessary to manage Arctic Goose, Black Duck, and Sea Duck populations.

JVs coordinate partner efforts to deliver landscape-scale conservation that builds population resilience. By using the best available science, JVs target resources where they have the greatest impact at the lowest cost. These efforts often provide secondary community benefits, such as improved water quality and flood reduction, while simultaneously creating vital bird habitat.

**Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for NAWMP/Joint Ventures is \$8,693,000 and 19 FTE, a program change of -\$8,367,000 and -11 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**NAWMP Joint Ventures Activities (-\$8,367,000/ -11 FTE)** – The Service will fund Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, ensuring that high-priority, large-scale landscape priorities translate into practical, locally driven conservation actions. Working closely with States, private landowners, and industry partners, the Service will implement the NAWMP with an emphasis on waterfowl populations, habitat stewardship, and community objectives. This approach reflects Administration priorities of voluntary conservation and leveraging partnerships to deliver results efficiently while reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens.

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# Office of Law Enforcement

## Activity: Conservation and Enforcement

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element											
<b>Law Enforcement</b>											
<b>Law Enforcement Operations</b>											
General Program Activities	82,449	298	82,449	268	-376	-	-6,624	-33	75,449	235	-7,000
Wildlife Trafficking	8,500	-	8,500	-	-	-	-8,500	-	-	-	-8,500
Equipment Replacement	910	-	910	-	-	-	-910	-	-	-	-910
Port Inspections	-	135	-	160	-	-	-	+25	-	185	-
<b>Total, Law Enforcement Operations</b>	<b>91,859</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>91,859</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>-376</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-16,034</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>75,449</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>-16,410</b>

Activity: Conservation and Enforcement

Sub Activity: Law Enforcement

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Law Enforcement</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Law Enforcement Operations</b>		
General Program Activities		
<i>Increased Port Inspections</i>	-3,500	-6
<i>Indian Arts and Crafts Board</i>	-3,500	-10
<i>Law Enforcement Activities</i>	+376	+0
Wildlife Trafficking		
<i>Wildlife Trafficking</i>	-8,500	-17
<b>Equipment Replacement</b>		
<i>Equipment Replacement</i>	-910	+0
<b>Port Inspections</b>		
<i>Port Inspections</i>	+0	+25
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-16,034</b>	<b>-8</b>

### **Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders**

The Service has the statutory mandate and trust responsibility to fulfill its mission derived from the Nation’s wildlife and plant protection laws and several Presidential actions. Brief descriptions of several of these various laws follow:

- The *Lacey Act* (16 U.S.C. 3371-3378) prohibits the importation, exportation, transportation, sale, or purchase of fish, wildlife, or plants taken or possessed in violation of Federal, State, Tribal, or foreign laws.
- The *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (16 U.S.C. 703-712) makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, kill, capture, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird including their feathers, parts, and products.
- The *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 668-668C) prohibits import, export, or take of bald or golden eagles including their parts and products without permits, and prohibits the sale, purchase, or barter of their parts or products.
- The *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) prohibits the importation, exportation, take, and interstate or foreign commerce of fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species.

- The *Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species* (CITES) is an international treaty to which 183 countries are parties, including the United States. CITES is implemented in the United States under the ESA and provides a set of universal protections and controls involving the international movement of plant and animal species engaged in significant global trade.
- The *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act* (16 U.S.C. 718) requires waterfowl hunters to purchase and possess a valid Federal waterfowl hunting stamp before take of migratory waterfowl.
- The *Marine Mammal Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407) establishes a moratorium on the take and importation of marine mammals, including parts and products.
- The *Airborne Hunting Act* (16 U.S.C. 742j-1) prohibits taking or harassing wildlife from aircraft.
- The *National Refuge System Administration Act* (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) provides guidelines for administration and management of all areas in the refuge system.
- The *African Elephant Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4201-4245) places a moratorium on the importation of raw or worked ivory from African elephant-producing countries that do not meet certain criteria.
- The *Wild Bird Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4901) limits or prohibits the importation of exotic bird species as necessary to ensure that their populations are not harmed by international trade.
- The *Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 5301-5306) prohibits the import, export, or sale of any product, item, or substance containing, or labeled or advertised as containing, any substance derived from tiger or rhinoceros.
- The *Antarctic Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 2401) makes unlawful for any citizen to take, possess, or sell any native bird or mammal from Antarctica.
- The *Archeological Resources Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 470aa) prohibits excavation, removal, damage, or alteration to any archaeological resource located on public or Indian lands without a permit.
- The *Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990* (IACA) (P.L. 101-644) is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresentation in marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the United States.
- The *Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act* (P.L. 114-231) authorizes support for law enforcement training, investigative capacity building, range State conservation programs, and other important tools to protect and sustain wild populations of imperiled species in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and other critical locations.
- The *Big Cat Public Safety Act* (P.L. 117-243) governs the trade of big cats, limits the possession and exhibition of big cats, and restricts direct contact between the public and big cats.
- In conducting investigations of wildlife crimes, OLE frequently encounters and investigates violations of other Federal laws to include conspiracy, smuggling, money laundering, narcotics, cybercrimes, unlawful possession and trafficking of firearms, mail fraud, tax evasion, wire fraud, corruption, and bribery.
- The *Presidential Executive Order on Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking* (issued February 9, 2017) strengthens enforcement of Federal law in order to thwart transnational criminal organizations and subsidiary organizations, including criminal gangs, cartels, racketeering organizations, and

other groups engaged in illicit activities. This Executive Order specifically lists wildlife trafficking as a targeted transnational crime that presents a threat to public safety and national security.

The Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) is the investigative arm of the Service tasked with enforcing wildlife laws, regulating wildlife trade, and investigating wildlife crimes. It is our mission to protect wildlife and plant resources through the effective and efficient enforcement of Federal laws. By working collaboratively with Federal, State, Tribal and foreign enforcement agencies and other conservation partners, we help recover endangered species, conserve migratory birds, preserve wildlife habitat, safeguard fisheries, combat invasive species, and prevent global wildlife trafficking.



### **Program Elements**

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The program elements for the Office of Law Enforcement:

- Law Enforcement Operations – funds the day-to-day activities of special agents, intelligence analysts, forensic scientists, and support staff who serve critical roles in facilitating legal trade, fighting wildlife trafficking, and in the successful prosecution of criminals who break Federal and international wildlife laws.
- Equipment Replacement – repairs and replaces property and equipment, including scientific instruments at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory; maintains facilities; purchases and configures vehicles to satisfy operational requirements.

### **Economic Benefits**

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The Service recognizes the dedication and expertise of its OLE personnel, including special agents, wildlife inspectors, intelligence analysts, forensic scientists, and professional support staff. These professionals are on the front lines of safeguarding legal wildlife trade and combating illegal trafficking that threatens our national security and natural resources, undermines economic integrity, and funds transnational criminal networks. In FY 2025, OLE conducted nearly 12,000 wildlife crime investigations, which resulted in \$5.5 million in fines and restitution, \$4.3 million in civil penalties, 90 years in prison, and 242 years of probation. Wildlife Inspectors processed over 195,000 declared wildlife shipments and facilitated legal trade valued at nearly \$6.3 billion.

### **Program Overview**

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The Office of Law Enforcement plays a critical role in enforcing U.S. wildlife laws by investigating crimes, regulating wildlife trade, and interdicting illegal shipments of wildlife and injurious species at our Nation’s borders. These actions are integral to the Service’s mission of conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The OLE personnel help safeguard the United States from transnational crime, increase public health and safety, protect against biosecurity threats, and uphold commitments under domestic and international conservation statutes. The program’s investigative and inspection operations deter and

dismantle criminal enterprises that exploit wildlife resources to finance broader illicit activities, including drug and weapons trafficking and terrorism.

### **Protecting our Country's Interests**

Special agents serve as the Service's primary criminal investigators, targeting violations that pose risks to national security, public safety, economic stability, border integrity, and native species. Their caseload includes investigations that are often intertwined with other areas of trafficking and financial crime, as well as those focused on the exploitation of Federally protected species such as eagles, marine mammals, migratory birds, and at-risk wildlife and plants. Agents execute complex investigations by collecting evidence, conducting interviews and surveillance, executing search warrants, making arrests, and coordinating with local, State, Tribal and international partners.

These multi-year operations often require undercover infiltration of sophisticated trafficking networks. Priorities include high-value targets and foreign adversaries that exploit American resources or contribute to criminal enterprise. Enforcement efforts align with national security priorities, including President Trump's Executive Order 13773 on Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking.

Wildlife inspectors are stationed at key U.S. ports of entry, where they ensure compliance with wildlife trade laws while facilitating lawful commerce. Their work directly supports economic efficiency and international cooperation by helping businesses, research institutions, and other lawful entities navigate complex regulatory requirements. Inspectors also identify and interdict smuggled wildlife, reducing risks to public health and the environment.

The OLE's effectiveness is bolstered by specialized intelligence, cybercrime, digital forensics, and technical surveillance teams. These units deploy advanced tools to support investigations, strengthen interagency coordination, and enhance the Service's ability to identify, monitor, and disrupt criminal activity. The OLE's partnerships with the U.S. Intelligence Community, Department of Defense, and foreign governments further ensure that enforcement activities protect both national resources and global biodiversity.

### **National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory**

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The Service's National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory (Lab), the world's only full-service crime laboratory devoted exclusively to supporting wildlife law enforcement, is vital to the Service's efforts to fight the illegal wildlife trade and protect plants and animals. Lab scientists identify the species of wildlife parts and products (seized as evidence) to link suspect, victim, and crime scene through the examination of physical evidence, cause of death determinations, and crime scene analysis.

The Lab can scientifically identify the species source of mammal, bird, plant, and reptile wildlife parts and products, a function frequently used by Service special agents, wildlife inspectors, and U.S. Department of Justice prosecutors. Conclusive evidence of criminal activity in wildlife investigations often hinges on the ability of investigators and prosecutors to establish the origin of animal or animal parts, often by country, so the Lab's capacity is integral to enforcing wildlife laws and treaties.

## **Proposed Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for the Office of Law Enforcement is \$75,449,000 and 420 FTE, a program change of -\$16,034,000 and -8 FTE from the FY 2026 Enacted.

**Wildlife Trafficking Program (-\$8,500,000/ -17 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Indian Arts and Crafts Board (-\$3,500,000/ -10 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Port Inspections (-\$3,500,000/ -6 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity. FWS will fund port inspections through fees.

**Equipment Replacement (-\$910,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**General Program Activities (+\$376,000/ +0FTE)** – The budget increases funding for general program activities to support Office of Law Enforcement capacity. These funds will help the FWS in enforcing U.S. wildlife laws by investigating crimes, regulating wildlife trade, and interdicting illegal shipments of wildlife and injurious species at our Nation’s borders.

**Port Inspectors (+\$0/ +25 FTE)** – This technical FTE adjustment is associated with the Service’s expectation for port inspection activity in 2027.

# International Affairs

Activity: Conservation and Enforcement

Sub Activity: International Affairs

## Activity: Conservation and Enforcement

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Conservation and Enforcement</b>											
<b>International Affairs</b>											
<b>International Conservation</b>											
General Program Activities	6,400	26	7,400	12	-19	-	-2,317	-7	5,064	5	-2,336
Wildlife Trafficking	2,500	-	2,500	-	-	-	-89	-	2,411	-	-89
<b>International Wildlife Trade</b>											
General Program Activities	17,900	66	17,900	49	-34	-	-5,615	-12	12,251	37	-5,649
Wildlife Trafficking	793	-	793	-	-	-	-	-	793	-	-
<b>Total, International Affairs</b>	<b>27,593</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>28,593</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>-53</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-8,021</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>20,519</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>-8,074</b>

## **Program Mission**

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The International Affairs program leads domestic and international efforts to protect, restore, and enhance the world's wildlife and their habitats. Through implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Service works to ensure that wildlife trade is legal, traceable, and biologically sustainable. These efforts enforce responsible resource management and make America more prosperous by facilitating economic opportunities for U.S. individuals and businesses. The Service is a leader in evidence-based conservation, ensuring a strong return-on-investment (ROI) for every dollar going towards wildlife conservation. These investments safeguard valuable species and habitats and strengthen national security by deterring wildlife crime and supporting law enforcement to protect the American people and the strength of the U.S. economy.

## **Program Elements**

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The International Affairs program comprises the following elements:

- **International Conservation** – This program provides technical assistance and engages in partnerships to conserve high-priority species and habitats of value and concern to Americans. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's International Conservation program is a leader in the use of data to demonstrate the impact of adaptive management and innovation to maximize the effectiveness of the American people's investments abroad.
- **International Wildlife Trade** – This program is responsible for implementing CITES and domestic laws of the United States applicable to foreign species to ensure international wildlife trade is legal and remains a tool for American conservationists to harness private resources for foreign species conservation. Using the framework provided by CITES, this program enables the international trade in CITES-listed plants and animals between the United States and 184 additional CITES Parties, including 183 countries and the European Union. The program engages in scientific analysis to develop opinions on trade in, and sustainable use of, CITES-listed species. Additionally, the program manages permitting programs for all foreign species trade (domestic and international) and for international trade in native American species.

## **Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders**

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The Service has the legal mandate and responsibility to engage in the conservation of wildlife species both within and beyond our borders and to engage the public through clear and transparent communication. These obligations are directed by domestic laws, international treaties, and other multilateral agreements. Examples include:

- The *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) prohibits the importation, exportation, take, and interstate or foreign commerce of fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species.
- The *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES), which celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> year of implementation in 2025, is an international agreement to ensure international trade in specimens of CITES-listed animals and plants is legal, traceable, and does not threaten the survival of species in the wild.
- The *Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act* (16 U.S.C. 7601-7644)

aims to disrupt the ability of terrorists and criminal syndicates to profit from wildlife trafficking.

- The Pelly Amendment to the *Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967* (22 U.S.C. 1978) authorizes prohibition of the import of any products from a foreign country when nationals of that country, directly or indirectly, are engaged in harvest or trade that diminishes the effectiveness of any international program for the conservation of endangered or threatened species, and the Secretary has certified such fact to the President.
- The *Canada/Mexico/U.S. Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management* is an international treaty that provides an effective and efficient mechanism to address conservation and management of natural resources on a continental scale.
- The *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Convention) is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- The *Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation in the Western Hemisphere* is an international treaty that aims to preserve, in their natural habitats, all species and genera of native American fauna and flora from extinction, and areas of extraordinary beauty, striking geological formations, or regions of aesthetic, historic, or scientific value.
- The *Lacey Act* (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378) prohibits the importation, exportation, sale, or purchase of fish, wildlife, or plants taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of Federal, State, Tribal, or foreign laws. The Lacey Act also prohibits the importation and shipment of wildlife species that are designated by the Secretary of the Interior as injurious and requires live wildlife to be imported under humane conditions.
- The *Big Cat Public Safety Act* (BCPSA) (P.L. 117-243) amends the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the *Captive Wildlife Safety Act* (CWSA) and to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, including to end private ownership of big cats as pets and prohibit exhibitors from allowing direct public contact with big cats, including cubs.
- The *Wild Bird Conservation Act* (WBCA) (16 U.S.C. 4901-4916) helps ensure that exotic bird species are not harmed by international trade and encourages wild bird conservation programs in countries of origin.
- The *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703-712) makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, kill, capture, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird including their feathers, parts, and products.
- The *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* (BGEPA) (16 U.S.C. 668-668d) makes it unlawful to take; possess; sell; purchase; barter; offer to sell, purchase or barter; transport; export or import; at any time or any manner, any bald eagle or any golden eagle alive or dead, or any part (including feathers), nest, or egg thereof.
- The *Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region* (Cartagena Convention) and its *Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife* (SPAW Protocol) aim to protect, preserve, and sustainably manage areas that need conservation to safeguard their special value and the threatened or endangered flora and fauna they contain.

Activity: Conservation and Enforcement  
 Sub Activity: International Affairs

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for International Affairs</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>International Conservation</b>		
General Program Activities		
<i>International Conservation Activities</i>	-2,317	-7
Wildlife Trafficking		
<i>Wildlife Trafficking</i>	-89	+0
<b>International Wildlife Trade</b>		
General Program Activities		
<i>International Wildlife Trade Activities</i>	-3,115	-7
<i>Permitting Modernization</i>	-2,500	-5
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-8,021</b>	<b>-19</b>

### **Program Overview**

Maintaining America’s access to valuable natural resources, whether for enjoyment, economic growth, or security, requires coordinated and effective conservation efforts both domestically and abroad. Through the International Affairs program, the US Fish and Wildlife Service supports conservation efforts that mitigate threats to species’ survival in their native habitat and strengthen global partners’ capacity to manage and protect their native wildlife; provides leadership in global wildlife management policy; and implements laws and regulations in the United States to ensure the international trade in wild plants and animals is legal, traceable, and biologically sustainable. The program prioritizes conservation efforts with direct ties to United States national interests.

Through its International Conservation program, the US Fish and Wildlife Service addresses threats to wildlife species in their native countries through targeted assistance and partnerships, building self-reliance of foreign governments to protect these species in their native habitats, and fostering interagency collaboration to combat illegal wildlife trafficking and address other identified threats. The Service’s International Wildlife Trade program protects at-risk animal and plant species in several ways: It ensures protections under the Endangered Species Act reflect changing threats; evaluates international and interstate permit applications for activities ranging from scientific research to the importation of sport-hunted trophies, wildlife and plant products, and live animals and plants; and negotiates with and supports foreign governments to improve their compliance with CITES and other relevant agreements. These actions strengthen the work of key Service programs such as the Office of Law Enforcement, which implements wildlife laws, investigates violations, and supports prosecution of criminals, including in partnership with foreign government agencies, through extradition.

The Service’s work in the International Affairs program encompasses numerous native species whose ranges extend beyond U.S. borders, such as monarch butterflies, marine mammals, and marine turtles. It

also encompasses native species of animals and plants that are traded internationally, such as American alligator, American ginseng, paddlefish, bobcat, river otter, and various freshwater turtles. The conservation of these species and their habitats provides concrete benefits to Americans and to the U.S. economy. The Service works closely with State agencies and Tribes to ensure that wildlife trade involving U.S. native species is legal, traceable, and biologically sustainable and that U.S. businesses can compete internationally through a scientifically robust yet efficient permit process.

### **Conserving Priority Species and Habitats of Value and Concern to the American Public**

International Affairs works to safeguard native species from the potential negative impacts of unsustainable international trade and strengthen the Service's capacity to tackle conservation challenges that affect the health and viability of species that are important to the U.S. economy and have intrinsic value to the American people. The Service works with partners to find innovative solutions to mitigate threats to species' survival in the wild, improve compliance with CITES among foreign partners, and build national sovereignty and self-reliance in wildlife management globally. This global approach supports critical wildlife populations in the US, promoting long-term benefits to people, ecosystems, and economies within the United States and for our global partners.

### **International Wildlife Trade Strategies Sustainable Use of Wildlife**

The United States is one of the world's largest legal importers and exporters of wildlife and wildlife products from live plants and animals to timber and other products. To facilitate legal, traceable trade between the United States and other CITES Parties (currently 185 Parties, including 184 countries and the European Union) and ensure such trade does not threaten the survival of CITES-listed animals and plants in the wild, the Service serves as the U.S. CITES Management and Scientific Authorities. Each Party to the treaty is required to designate one or more Management and Scientific Authorities to make legal and scientific non-detriment opinions, issue CITES permits and certificates based on these opinions and monitor trade. For the United States, these authorities are delegated to the Service's International Affairs program.

### **Innovating and Improving a Responsive and Efficient Permitting Process**

The Service's conservation permitting program managed through the International Affairs program issues 185 different types of permits. Staff process an average of 17,000 permits or certificates per year under CITES and other permitting authorities. In 2025, the permits issued by this program facilitated more than \$1 billion in imports and exports of CITES-listed wildlife and plants. The permits and certificates authorize a wide variety of activities, such as import, export, re-export, and introduction from the sea; captive breeding of non-native species; and interstate commerce. This permitting work supports individuals, businesses, scientific institutions, States, Tribes, and others, and is a strong component of the Service's efforts in supporting the U.S. economy, small business, and local livelihoods dependent on our renewable natural resources. In addition, this work is a component of the Service's efforts to prevent emerging pandemics, as permits facilitate the import and re-export of biological samples needed for medical research, including studies preventing future outbreaks of zoonotic diseases.

The Service is carrying out a permit improvement plan to modernize its International Affairs permitting program, reduce processing delays, and meet current and future needs of the American public. Where

appropriate, steps will be automated, revised, or removed to speed up and standardize processing time and approvals.

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for International Affairs is \$20,519,000 and 42 FTE, a program change of -\$8,021,000 and -19 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**International Conservation Activities (-\$2,317,000/ -7 FTE)** – The Service will deliver technical assistance to support high-priority targeted and evidence-based interventions that support the compliance and enforcement of CITES and innovative interventions to address critical threats to wildlife. The Service will also coordinate engagement with partners on implementation of international agreements and the provision of targeted technical assistance to build capacity for effective resource management.

**Wildlife Trafficking (-\$89,000/ -0 FTE)** – The Service will provide technical assistance to support coordination on countertrafficking efforts across the Service and U.S. government partners as well as to build capacity to tackle illegal wildlife crimes before they reach U.S. borders.

**International Wildlife Trade Activities (-\$3,115,000/ -7 FTE)** – The Service will maintain the United States' leadership in international conservation by leading efforts to implement decisions made at CITES CoP20 within the required timeframes, and working with stakeholder groups to reduce burdens arising from any changes. The Service will continue to coordinate across Federal agencies and consult with States, Tribes, industry, and other stakeholders to implement changes, shape and support national positions, and deregulate where possible. The International Affairs program will continue managing CITES export programs for States and Tribes, supporting lawful trade in seven high-value native species listed under Appendix II. The program will also continue optimizing conservation permitting, improving processing times, and refining its risk-based approach to permit issuance.

**Permitting Modernization (-\$2,500,000/ -5 FTE)** – The Service will identify permits that can transition to a self-service model. This change will allow applicants to quickly submit applications and receive permits automatically when risks are low, and compliance can be reliably ensured. The Service will continue to digitize application forms to make the permitting process easier and more modern for applicants. We also will digitize report forms to enable permit holders to enter data more smoothly and help the Service collect and analyze conservation data more effectively. Finally, the Service will continue evaluating how AI might improve customer experience and permitting efficiency.

# Fish and Aquatic Conservation

Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation <sup>1</sup>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Fish and Aquatic Conservation</b>											
<b>National Fish Hatchery Operations</b>											
General Program Activities	72,047	311	75,550	301	-128	-	-15,071	-18	60,351	283	-15,199
Great Lakes Consent Decree	550	-	550	-	-	-	-	-	550	-	-
National Wild Fish Health Surveys	1,430	-	1,430	-	-	-	-	-	1,430	-	-
Washington State Mass Marking	1,475	-	1,475	-	-	-	-1,475	-	-	-	-1,475
<b>Maintenance and Equipment</b>											
Annual Maintenance	8,204	65	8,204	63	-6	-	-1,573	-4	6,625	59	-1,579
Deferred Maintenance	15,287	-	14,737	-	-	-	-2,380	-	12,357	-	-2,380
Equipment Replacement	1,088	-	1,088	-	-	-	-	-	1,088	-	-
General Program Activities	521	-	521	-	-	-	-	-	521	-	-
<b>Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation</b>											
<b>Habitat Assessment and Restoration</b>											
Fish Passage Improvements	15,000	74	15,000	52	-	-	-	-	15,000	52	-
General Program Activities	11,918	-	14,200	-	-12	-	-10,250	-	3,938	-	-10,262
Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement	9,750	-	9,750	-	-	-	-9,750	-	-	-	-9,750
National Fish Habitat Action Plan	7,164	-	7,164	-	-	-	-1,614	-	5,550	-	-1,614

Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation <sup>1</sup>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Population Assessment and Cooperative Management</b>											
Alaska Fisheries Subsistence	1,600	-	1,600	-	-	-	-	-	1,600	-	-
General Program Activities	20,234	135	16,671	97	-230	-	-791	-	15,650	97	-1,021
Great Lakes Consent Decree	1,000	-	1,000	-	-	-	-90	-	910	-	-90
Great Lakes F&W Restoration Program	2,913	-	3,000	-	-	-	-3,000	-	-	-	-3,000
Yukon River Salmon Treaty	2,692	-	2,692	-	-	-	-	-	2,692	-	-
<b>Aquatic Invasive Species</b>											
Invasive Carp	31,000	-	31,000	-	-	-	-17,083	-16	13,917	-16	-17,083
Control and Management	800	-	800	-	-	-	-	-	800	-	-
Ecosystem Restoration - Chesapeake Bay	145	-	145	-	-	-	-145	-	-	-	-145
Prevention	7,787	112	8,787	104	-48	-	-6,038	-8	2,701	96	-6,086
Quagga-Zebra Mussels	3,500	-	3,500	-	-	-	-	-	3,500	-	-
Hydrilla, Eel, and Milfoil	1,500	-	1,500	-	-	-	-1,500	-3	-	-3	-1,500
Sea Lamprey Admin Costs	1,011	-	1,011	-	-	-	-	-	1,011	-	-
State Plans/NISA Implementation/Coordination	4,400	6	4,400	-	-	-	-	-	4,400	-	-
<b>Total, Fish and Aquatic Conservation</b>	<b>223,016</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>225,775</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>-424</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-70,760</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>154,591</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>-71,184</b>

<sup>1</sup> Table does not include supplemental funding.

## **Program Overview**

Since its founding, the Service has worked to conserve and restore populations of aquatic species and their habitats. The Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program (FAC) operates in a collaborative and integrated fashion, utilizing innovative tools, expertise, partnerships, and strategies to provide a holistic approach rooted in the mission and goals of the Administration. These complementary strategies are as essential to our mission as the facilities and dedicated staff in communities across the country.

America's freshwater ecosystems are among the world's richest in abundance and variety. These waters, and the species that reside within them, support recreational, commercial, and subsistence fishing as well as economic, cultural, and community resilience. FAC contributes to the long-term conservation of these ecosystems by further supporting recreational, commercial, and subsistence fishing as well as rehabilitating habitat and restoring connectivity in these systems. Our facilities welcomed more than 1.3 million visitors last year, providing recreational opportunities, and inspiring new generations of stewards.

## **Program Elements**

The Fish and Aquatic Conservation program is comprised of the following program elements:

- National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) Operations - uses advanced propagation and supplementation techniques ensuring more than 100 million healthy fish and other aquatic species are available annually to meet mitigation and Tribal trust responsibilities as well as support recreational, subsistence, and commercial fishing economies. In addition to National Fish Hatcheries, the NFHS also includes Fish Health Centers, Fish Technology Centers, and the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership program.
- Maintenance and Equipment - maintains and improves property and equipment, including the repair, rehabilitation modernization, and replacement of mission critical assets, for 85 facilities and field offices conducting aquatic habitat and species conservation work.
- Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation - develops the science and evidence-based information the Service and its partners rely upon to assess, conserve, and restore freshwater aquatic habitats and native fish species. Specific program areas include:
  - Habitat Assessment and Restoration - improves habitat for native freshwater fish and other aquatic organisms through collaborative programs such as the National Fish Passage Program and the National Fish Habitat Partnership.
  - Population Assessment and Cooperative Management - works in cooperation with Tribes and other partners to understand current and emerging challenges facing our Nation's native aquatic species and freshwater habitats, to proactively manage these complex systems, and monitor and evaluate the impacts of conservation actions.
- Aquatic Invasive Species - prevents and controls the introduction and spread of invasive species, a primary threat to the country's natural resources.

## **Socio-Economic Benefits**

The cascading environmental, social, and economic benefits stemming from the Service's work to individuals and communities nationwide are clear, with investments resulting in substantial impacts. For example, Apache trout have been delisted after decades of work and co-stewardship with the White Mountain Apache Tribe; Early Detection and Rapid Response strategies with States are preventing

invasive species from taking hold in waters; and 13 Federal agencies are working together as part of the Federal Interagency Fish Passage Task Force . FAC's work through the National Fish Passage Program create construction, engineering, and other jobs, stimulating the local economies while restoring degraded and fragmented river, tidal, and floodplain habitats.

A recent analysis estimated that for every \$1 million invested in 2022-2023 for fish passage projects, an average of 13 jobs were supported and \$1.5 million was contributed to the project area's local economy through construction and implementation (<https://www.fws.gov/media/conserving-restoring-and-enhancing-americas-fisheries-and-aquatic-resources>). The 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation reported that nearly 40 million anglers, age 16 or older, went fishing in 2022, spending a combined \$99.4 billion, with the average angler spending \$2,490 per year (<https://www.fws.gov/media/2022-national-survey-fishing-hunting-and-wildlife-associated-recreation>).

### **Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders**

The Fish and Aquatic Conservation program is authorized by a wide range of statutes, treaties, compacts, court orders, mitigation agreements, and cooperative agreements. Relevant statutes include, but are not limited to:

- *The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j)* - establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.
- *The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-666(e))* - directs the Service to investigate and report on proposed Federal actions that affect any stream or other body of water and to provide recommendations to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- *The Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544)* - prohibits the import, export, or taking of fish and wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species; provides for adding species to and removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species; and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery.
- *The Mitchell Act (16 U.S.C. 755-757)* - authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to carry on activities for the conservation of fishery resources in the Columbia River Basin.
- *The Colorado River Storage Project Act (43 U.S.C. 620)* - provides that facilities will be built and operated to mitigate losses of, and improve conditions for, fish and wildlife in connection with the Colorado River Storage Project.
- *The Sikes Act (16 U.S.C. 670a-670o)* - directs the Secretary of War to conserve and rehabilitate natural resources on military installations and requires the military to work with the Service in preparing integrated natural resource management plans.
- *The Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention and Control Act, as amended by the National Invasive Species Act, (NISA, 16 U.S.C. 4701 et seq.)* - authorizes the Service to develop and implement a program to prevent and control infestations of zebra mussels and other nonindigenous aquatic invasive species in waters of the United States.
- *The Lacey Act Amendment, (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378)* - provides that the Secretary designate injurious wildlife and ensure the humane treatment of wildlife shipped to the United States.

- *America's Conservation Enhancement Act, (16 U.S.C 8201et seq.)* - Title II encourages partnerships among public agencies and other interested persons to promote fish conservation. It codified the National Fish Habitat Partnership and established a new 26-member National Fish Habitat Board to promote, oversee, and coordinate implementation of the program.
- *Executive Order 13921: Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth (May 7, 2020)* - directs agencies to collaborate to improve seafood trade deficits and includes aquaculture and aquatic animal health.
- *Executive Order 14276: Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness (April 17, 2025)* – promotes productive harvest of our seafood resources and protects seafood markets from unfair trade practices.
- *14292: Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research (May 5, 2025)* – addresses concerns about biological agents and pathogens without adequate safeguards.

**Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation**  
**Sub Activity: National Fish Hatchery Operations**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for National Fish Hatchery Operations</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership</i>	-200	+0
<i>Klamath Restoration</i>	-4,750	+0
<i>NFHS Activities</i>	-2,121	-18
<i>Warm Springs Fish Health Center</i>	-8,000	+0
<b>Washington State Mass Marking</b>		
<i>Washington State Mass Marking</i>	-1,475	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-16,546</b>	<b>-18</b>

**Program Description**

The National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) works with States, Tribes, and other partners and stakeholders to build healthy aquatic systems supporting recreational, subsistence and commercial fishing while advancing broad scale energy harvest and economic development through innovation and supplementation. The system has been operating for more than 150 years under the authority of numerous treaties and consent decrees, statutes, and recovery and restoration plans, and consists of 71 National Fish Hatcheries (NFH), one historic National Fish Hatchery, six Fish Health Centers (Health Centers), seven Fish Technology Centers (Technology Centers), and the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership Program (AADAP).

National Fish Hatcheries play a critical role in supporting the development of energy and agriculture, while ensuring health aquatic ecosystems supporting robust fishing opportunities (Executive Orders 13921 and 14276). Through expert propagation and supplementation, NFHs mitigate impacts of energy harvest, water diversion, and agricultural practices. By fostering collaboration between stakeholders, including energy developers, Federal agencies, and Tribes — NFHs ensure energy dominance (Executive Order 14154) and agricultural growth (Executive Order 14225) can coexist with the long-term preservation of over 100 vital fish species.

The Health Centers detect, identify, monitor, and mitigate diseases inside and outside fish hatcheries. By detecting emerging diseases in fish and other aquatic organisms, the work supports early intervention and risk management, preventing zoonotic spillover or disruptions to commercial aquaculture and fisheries. These efforts directly support Executive Order 14292 to improve safety and security of biological research by reinforcing biosafety practices, enabling science-based oversight, and minimizing the potential for unintended risks. Incorporating aquatic pathogen monitoring into national biosecurity frameworks ensures comprehensive threat reduction across both terrestrial and aquatic systems.

Technology Centers are instrumental in advancing innovative technologies that address critical aquatic system management challenges and advance industry growth, directly supporting the President’s Council

of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST, January 2025). Through their focus on aquaculture, species restoration, and fish health management, these centers generate essential scientific outputs that underpins evidence-based policymaking. By leveraging cutting-edge tools like artificial intelligence, data analytics, and genomics, they drive industry leading research and practical solutions for aquatic system health. Their collaborative efforts across government, academia, and industry contribute directly to maintaining the nation's leadership in both environmental conservation and emerging technologies, reinforcing the importance of a balanced, forward-thinking approach to innovation.

The Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership program is the only program in the country dedicated to securing U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approvals for fish health-related medications. AADAP's National Investigational New Animal Drug (INAD) Program provides legal access to 18 medications while they are working their way through FDA's drug approval process. These medications keep fish and other aquatic animals healthy by treating diseases caused by parasites and bacteria; sedating animals so that they may be safely handled; and assisting in spawning aquatic animals that would otherwise not spawn on their own. An average of 24 million fish per year are treated using INADs for 75 different fish species through 900 studies that are then used to support new drug development for aquatic animals. AADAP increases the Service's science capacity and contributes to the agency's unique and critical role in innovative new animal drug approvals to improve the health and fitness of fish reared at hatcheries as well as those introduced to the wild for restoration, recovery, and recreational purposes.

### **Justification of Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for National Fish Hatchery Operations is \$62,331,000 and 283 FTE, a program change of -\$16,546,000 and -4 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership (-\$200,000/ -0 FTE)** – The budget supports funding for the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership to continue to work with other federal agencies, along with State and industry partners, to obtain U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval of safe and effective new drugs needed for aquaculture and fisheries management.

**Washington State Mass Marking (-\$1,475,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Klamath Restoration (-\$4,750,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Warm Springs Fish Health Center (-\$8,000,000/ -3 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**General Program Activities (-\$2,121,000/ -18 FTE)** – This request will focus resources on propagating fish and other aquatic species to sustain wild populations, carry out Tribal obligations, and fishing opportunities.

**Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation**  
**Sub Activity: Maintenance and Equipment**

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Maintenance and Equipment</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Annual Maintenance</b>		
<i>Annual Maintenance</i>	-1,573	-4
<b>Deferred Maintenance</b>		
<i>Deferred Maintenance</i>	-2,380	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-3,953</b>	<b>-4</b>

**Program Description**

By developing and applying wide-ranging aquaculture methods and products, the NFHS builds healthy aquatic systems supporting recreational, subsistence and commercial fishing while advancing broad scale energy harvest and economic development through innovation and supplementation, directly reinforcing partners like Tribes and industry. The program undertakes priority deferred maintenance projects for the NFHS’ 85 facilities (71 National Fish Hatcheries, one historic National Fish Hatchery, six Fish Health Centers, and seven Fish Technology Centers), which need modernization to continue to operate effectively. These upgrades ensure the NFHS advances the needs and progress of the partners like Tribes and industry by innovating and sharing modern aquaculture practices.

Properly functioning hatcheries require complex life-sustaining systems of wells, pumps, pipelines, filters, and heating/cooling equipment to deliver a consistent, well-oxygenated water supply; tanks, ponds, and raceways to grow fish; and boats and trucks to transport this valuable cargo to its destination. A comprehensive asset management system prioritizes water flow, control and quality to sustain captive aquatic populations to meet NFHS and Service goals.

**Deferred Maintenance**

Applying deferred maintenance funds to the NFHS offers a critical opportunity to modernize and streamline its infrastructure in support of long-term mission resilience while also reducing the current deferred maintenance backlog. These funds can be strategically invested in upgrading water management systems, replacing aging mechanical and electrical equipment, and integrating cost efficient technologies. By focusing on projects that innovate outdated systems and mitigate risks, resource shortages, or system failure, the NFHS can transition from reactive asset management to a forward-looking, resilient operational model. This modernization effort directly supports federal priorities around infrastructure efficiency, cost-effective stewardship, and strategic investment in natural resource facilities.

## **Annual Maintenance**

Applying annual maintenance funds through a lens of lifecycle cost management and preventative maintenance ensures the NFHS maintains operational integrity while minimizing long-term expenses. Regular servicing and performance optimization of core infrastructure, such as pumps, filtration, and energy systems, streamlines operations and reduces emergency repairs resulting in improved production and performance of live animals. Embedding mission resilience and innovation into routine maintenance planning with tools like the Service Asset Maintenance Management System and condition assessments enables facilities to sustain performance under stress, extend the lifespan of assets, and better support goals. This proactive, cost-conscious approach aligns with current executive priorities promoting resilience, efficiency, and innovation in Federal infrastructure systems.

## **Fisheries Office Maintenance and Equipment**

FAC field office maintenance and equipment funds purchase and maintain assets such as boats, vehicles, and specialized fisheries equipment. This equipment is essential for inventory and monitoring of aquatic species and is critical to the Service's mission to build healthy aquatic systems supporting recreational, subsistence and commercial fishing while advancing broad scale energy harvest and economic development through innovation and supplementation.

## **Justification of Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Maintenance and Equipment is \$20,591,000 and 59 FTE, a program change of -\$3,953,000 and -4 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Annual Maintenance (-\$1,573,000/ -4 FTE)** – The budget ensures the health and safety of employees and visitors while allowing the Service to maintain complex water system capabilities for production of fish. These funds will enable the Service to continue to improve the condition of critical NFHS assets by funding the highest-priority maintenance work.

**Deferred Maintenance (-\$2,380,000 /-0 FTE)** – Funding will allow the Service to undertake the highest-priority deferred maintenance work, repairing or replacing infrastructure and components and making capital improvements and addressing deferred maintenance across the NFHS.

**Activity: Fish and Aquatic Conservation**  
**Sub Activity: Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation**

Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation (Dollars in Thousands)		
Program Changes	2027 Request Change	FTE Change
<b>Habitat Assessment and Restoration</b>		
General Program Activities		
<i>Chehalis Fisheries Restoration</i>	-268	+0
<i>Delaware River Basin Conservation Act</i>	-11,750	+0
<i>General Program Activities</i>	+1,968	+0
<i>Truckee River Operating Agreement</i>	-200	+0
Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement		
<i>Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement</i>	-9,750	+0
National Fish Habitat Action Plan		
<i>National Fish Habitat Action Plan</i>	-1,614	+0
<b>Population Assessment and Cooperative Management</b>		
General Program Activities		
<i>Atlantic Salmon Restoration</i>	-533	+0
<i>Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission</i>	-700	+0
<i>Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey</i>	-818	+0
<i>National Wild Fish Health Surveys</i>	-6	+0
<i>Penobscot River Restoration</i>	-458	+0
<i>Population Assessment and Cooperative Management Activities</i>	+2,950	+0
<i>Regional Mark Processing Center</i>	-226	+0
<i>Snakehead Eradication</i>	-1,000	+0
Great Lakes Consent Decree		
<i>Great Lakes Consent Decree</i>	-90	+0
Great Lakes F&W Restoration Program		
<i>Great Lakes F&amp;W Restoration Program</i>	-3,000	+0
<b>Aquatic Invasive Species</b>		
Invasive Carp		
<i>Contract Fishing</i>	-4,000	+0
<i>Invasive Carp</i>	-13,083	-16
Ecosystem Restoration - Chesapeake Bay		
<i>Ecosystem Restoration - Chesapeake Bay</i>	-145	+0
Prevention		
<i>Lake Tahoe Alpine Lakes Pilot Program</i>	-1,000	+0
<i>Lake Tahoe Restoration</i>	-5,038	-8
Hydrilla, Eel, and Milfoil		
<i>Hydrilla, Eel, and Milfoil</i>	-1,500	-3
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-50,261</b>	<b>-27</b>

## **Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation Overview**

The FAC Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation program supports a network of “waders in the water” field biologists dedicated to the protection, restoration, and recovery of native fish and our country's freshwater ecosystems. Through this program, Service biologists work with partners and local communities to monitor population status and trends; develop sound conservation and management plans; assess and restore habitat; prevent, eradicate, and control aquatic invasive species; and evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of aquatic conservation efforts. The program collaborates internally with other Service programs (e.g., National Wildlife Refuges, Ecological Services, Migratory Birds) and the DOI Office of Conservation Investment, and externally with Tribes, States, other Federal agencies, private landowners, and local communities to work towards unified goals and objectives on species and ecosystems that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Work through the Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation program ensures the responsible investment of taxpayer dollars and is essential to the mission of the Service. This work supports recreational opportunities and the subsequent economic benefits to local communities and provides lessons for future conservation actions to be implemented more effectively. America’s freshwater ecosystems provide important benefits to communities and local economies through recreational, commercial, and subsistence fishing resulting in economic and community resilience.

## **Habitat Assessment and Restoration Program Overview**

The Service utilizes its national network of field biologists to work with partners to restore aquatic habitats for the benefit of Federal trust species and local communities. Through this network, the Service works to restore normal flows to streams, rivers, floodplains and tidal areas, restore riparian areas and wetlands, remove barriers to fish passage and aquatic connectivity, and improve water quality. The Service enlists the voluntary efforts of landowners and local communities, provides technical expertise, delivers cost-shared resources to complete habitat conservation projects, and organizes habitat conservation projects with Federal agencies, State governments, private landowners, Tribes, local communities, and other organizations. Work to restore degraded habitats benefits communities through development of more resilient infrastructure, reduced public safety hazards, and improved recreational opportunities. The National Fish Passage Program (NFPP) and National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) are two of the tools used by the Service to collaboratively restore aquatic habitats with partners.

## **National Fish Passage Program**

The NFPP is a cooperative conservation program that relies on a small network of Service biologists and engineers stationed throughout the country to provide technical expertise, financial assistance, coordinate with partners to plan and implement aquatic ecosystem restoration projects ranging from large-scale dam projects to the repair or removal of culverts at road-stream crossings, and installation of fish screens and constructed riffles at agricultural water diversions. The completion of these projects reopens access to tens of thousands of miles of rivers and streams that improve habitat for aquatic organisms, strengthens infrastructure, improves safety, and provides long term economic and community benefits.

## **National Fish Habitat Action Plan**

Developed in 2006 and updated in 2012, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) provides the framework for the NFHP. In October of 2020, Title II of America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act codified NFHP and established a new 26-member National Fish Habitat Board (Board) to promote, oversee, and coordinate implementation of the program. The Service is leaning into the vision for program implementation established by Title II of the ACE Act.

The Service provides funding and staff support to the Board and 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) to coordinate hundreds of projects across the U.S. to protect, restore, and improve stream banks, provide aquatic connectivity, plant vegetation, renovate oyster reefs, and improve other habitat conditions. The Service coordinates with FHPs to develop strategic plans, identify and develop priority fish habitat conservation projects, provide technical and engineering support, and assist with required environmental compliance and permitting. All projects funded through this program are evaluated relative to the extent that they improve recreational fishing and increase public access.

## **Population Assessment and Cooperative Management Program Overview**

The Service aids partners in efforts to maintain self-sustaining, healthy, and diverse populations of native fish and other aquatic species. Service biologists monitor native fish and other aquatic species population status and trends, work with partners to develop sound plans to conserve these resources and evaluate the effectiveness and biological outcomes of aquatic conservation efforts. A particular focus through the Population Assessment and Cooperative Management program is fulfilling the Tribal trust responsibilities of the Federal government by providing fisheries technical assistance, training, financial support, and equipment to help strengthen Tribal nations.

## **Monitoring and Assessment**

For more than 150 years, the Service and its partners have assessed and monitored the outputs and outcomes of fish and aquatic conservation and management efforts. Service biologists across the country provide valuable technical expertise and capacity, working with partners to strategically plan, collect, and compile the data necessary to establish a wide range of conservation and management strategies and actions. These fundamental and foundational activities contribute to achieving a desired biological outcome for native fish and other aquatic species. Threats to fish and other aquatic species and their habitats are predicted to continue to grow in frequency and complexity, resulting in the need for robust assessment and monitoring capacity to collect, assemble, and provide the best available data to inform conservation and management actions.

## **Tribal Trust Responsibilities**

The Service works with Tribes, Tribal consortia, and Tribal resource agencies to manage a diverse array of fish and aquatic resources on millions of acres of Tribal and Alaska Native lands, usual and accustomed areas of Tribal use, and/or ceded lands pursuant to Treaty rights. The Service plays a key role fulfilling the Tribal trust responsibilities of the Federal government by providing technical assistance, training, financial support, and equipment to help strengthen Tribal nations.

## **Alaska Subsistence Management Program**

Subsistence harvest of wild foods is a cornerstone of traditional Native and non-Native rural life in Alaska. For many rural Alaska communities there are no alternative food sources. There are about 130,000 people living in rural areas of the state that qualify for a Federal subsistence priority, or approximately 16 percent of all Alaska residents. The State's rural residents harvest about 18,000 tons of wild foods each year - an average of 295 pounds per person. Fish make up about 56 percent of this harvest statewide. Federal subsistence management is a joint effort of both the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to implement the subsistence management program and enforce subsistence regulations.

## **Aquatic Invasive Species**

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) cause tremendous harm to our environment and inflict enormous economic burdens. Nonnative invasive species are a threat to national security and American interests with direct threats to energy systems, infrastructure, navigation, and human health and safety. Further, they diminish fish and wildlife resources, recreational opportunities, agricultural productivity, personal property values, and public utility operations. Studies have reported that invasive species cost the U.S. an average of approximately \$19.94 billion per year (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34743879/>).

The Service plays a critical role in safeguarding the country's waters from AIS by preventing high-risk nonnative species from entering the U.S., detecting and responding to new invasions, and suppressing existing invasive populations. Combating invasive species supports many Administration priorities, including reducing impacts to critical infrastructure that are directly or indirectly involved in energy production (Executive Order 14154), protecting our borders, reducing future economic impacts, increasing opportunities for recreation, protecting people and property, and providing States with tools and resources to enhance their preparedness against risks (Executive Order 14239).

Preventing the establishment of invasive species is the most effective strategy to avoid long-term costs to the American people. The Service's authority to prevent importation of harmful, injurious species into the U.S. is provided in part by Title 18 of the Lacey Act (18 U.S.C. 42(a)). Despite the best prevention measures, new introductions will occur, but locating and removing species before they can establish, spread and cause irreversible harm is the second line of defense. The Service has made significant strides to strengthen partnerships and use innovative approaches to assess risks and prevent invasive species threats before they become pervasive on the landscape. The AIS program is helping to advance applied technologies to assess and mitigate the environmental and economic risks and impacts associated with the introduction of AIS. Fish Technology Centers are leaders in the development and use of genetic tools to detect invasive species. Program staff also assesses species and pathway risks through risk screening, risk analysis, horizon scanning, and risk planning processes. Once an invasive species becomes established in the environment, multiple tools and significant resources are often necessary to lessen the impacts to public interests. AIS control work has focused on species such as invasive carp, zebra and quagga mussels, aquatic weeds, sea lamprey, and northern snakehead that are found across jurisdictional boundaries where Federal coordination is the most effective. FAC plays a lead role in coordinating, implementing, and funding some of this national scale work.

## **Justification of Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation is \$71,669,000 and 226 FTE, a program change of -\$50,261,000 and reduction of -27 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Chehalis Fisheries Restoration (-\$268,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Delaware River Basin Conservation Act (-\$11,750,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**General Program Activities (+\$1,968,000/ +0 FTE)** – This funding will facilitate the Service’s work with private landowners, non-profit organizations, Tribes, and local, State, and Federal agencies to restore aquatic habitats for the benefit of native fish and other aquatic resources, as well as local communities. Funding will provide resources for freshwater habitat conservation, specifically activities other than fish passage such as in-stream, riparian, and floodplain conservation, and freshwater habitat assessment. Service staff provide technical advice to States, and Federal agencies increasing efficiencies and effectiveness of projects working in the same watersheds by applying lessons learned from recent projects. Increased collaboration among agencies will prevent redundant investments in systems and data sets, boosting community impact, enhancing safety, and reducing regulatory burdens.

**Truckee River Operating Agreement (-\$200,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (-\$9,750,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**National Fish Habitat Action Plan (-\$1,614,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget reduces funding for this activity. The Service will continue supporting existing NFHAP partnerships.

**Atlantic Salmon Restoration (-\$533,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission (-\$700,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey (-\$818,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**National Wild Fish Health Surveys (-\$6,000/ -0 FTE)** – for the Service will continue to document and map occurrences of pathogens dangerous to wild aquatic populations across the country, allowing the Service and partners to improve conservation decision-making, and to reduce risk of spreading disease.

**Penobscot River Restoration (-\$458,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Population Assessment and Cooperative Management Activities (+\$2,950,000/ +0 FTE)** – This funding will increase FAC capacity to work with partners in efforts to restore and manage native fish populations. This investment will allow FAC to increase capacity to focus on the following areas: planning, coordination, and priority setting for native fish restoration; monitoring and assessment; and support to fulfill Tribal trust responsibilities. Funds will help staff apply innovative population assessment and monitoring technology in collaboration with community partners and in support of State and Federal habitat restoration efforts. This additional capacity will invest in locally led, collaborative conservation of native fish and their habitats, deliver benefits to the American people, and help the Service increase the effectiveness of other investments in our conservation mission.

**Regional Mark Processing Center (-\$226,000/ - 0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Snakehead Eradication (-\$1,000,000/ -0 FTE)** - To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Great Lakes Consent Decree (-\$90,000/ -0 FTE)** – The Service will continue critical work between the Service and the tribes to manage resources within the Great Lakes.

**Great Lakes F&W Restoration Program (-\$3,000,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Contract Fishing (Invasive Carp) (-\$4,000,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Invasive Carp (-\$13,083,000/ -16 FTE)** – This request will continue critical work with Tribes, States, and Federal partners to prevent the establishment and spread of Invasive Carp.

**Ecosystem Restoration - Chesapeake Bay (-\$145,000/ -0 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Lake Tahoe Alpine Lakes Pilot Program (-\$1,000,000/ -0 FTE)** The budget does not request funding for the Lake Tahoe Alpine Lakes Pilot Program.

**Lake Tahoe Restoration (-\$5,038,000/ -8 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

**Hydrilla, Eel, and Milfoil Invasive Grasses (-\$1,500,000/ -3 FTE)** – To address higher priorities, the budget does not request funding for this activity.

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# Science Applications

<b>Activity: Science Applications<sup>1</sup></b>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
	<b>2025 Actual</b>		<b>2026 Enacted</b>		<b>2027 Request</b>						
<b>Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element</b>	<b>Budget Authority</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Budget Authority</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Fixed Costs (+/-)</b>	<b>Internal Transfers (+/-)</b>	<b>Program Changes (\$)</b>	<b>FTE Changes (+/-)</b>	<b>Budget Authority</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Change from 2026 Enacted</b>
<b>Science Applications</b>	<b>33,781</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>30,781</b>	<b>40</b>	-	-	<b>-30,781</b>	<b>-40</b>	-	-	<b>-30,781</b>

<sup>1</sup> Table does not include supplemental funding.

## Program Overview

The Service prioritizes empowering landowners, States, and communities; keeping American conservation traditions alive; and preserving working lands for the benefit of all Americans and native species and agriculture, ranching, timber and other beneficial land uses. To better focus time and resources on those priorities, the 2027 President’s Budget does not include funding for this program.

## Justification of 2027 Program Changes

The budget does not request funding for Science Applications.

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## Activity: General Operations

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>General Operations</b>											
<b>Central Office Operations</b>											
Central Office Operations	33,284	210	22,657	80	-162	-	-4,004	-	18,491	80	-4,166
<b>Management and Administration</b>											
Joint Administrative Operations	28,837	294	25,837	124	-58	-	-7,286	-	18,493	124	-7,344
Information Resources and Technology Management	15,329	118	11,146	22	-	-	-11,146	-	-	22	-11,146
Aviation Management	3,296	7	3,296	7	-1	-	-	-	3,295	7	-1
<b>Servicewide Bill Paying</b>											
Communication, Information Technology and Security	8,229	-	8,229	-	-208	-	-	-	8,021	-	-208
Working Capital Fund (less realty appraisal)	28,015	-	24,790	-	-1,191	-	+3,225	-	26,824	-	+2,034
Worker's Compensation	4,178	-	4,178	-	-213	-	-	-	3,965	-	-213
Unemployment Compensation	981	-	981	-	-	-	-	-	981	-	-
Postage	458	-	458	-	-	-	-	-	458	-	-
Printing	255	-	255	-	-	-	-	-	255	-	-
IDEAS	321	-	321	-	-	-	-	-	321	-	-
Asst. Secretary - FWP	1,238	-	438	-	-	-	-	-	438	-	-
Misc. Support - RSA's	1,556	-	1,556	-	-	-	-	-	1,556	-	-
Memberships	69	-	69	-	-	-	-	-	69	-	-
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	1,955	1	5,500	1	-	-	-2,500	-	3,000	1	-2,500
<b>National Conservation Training Center</b>											
General Program Activities	21,962	80	19,462	40	-8	-	-8,462	-	10,992	40	-8,470
Annual Maintenance	5,538	4	5,538	5	-	-	-1,538	-	4,000	5	-1,538
<b>Total, General Operations</b>	<b>155,501</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>134,711</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>-1,841</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-31,711</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>101,159</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>-33,552</b>

## **Program Mission**

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The General Operations Program enables the Service to accomplish its mission by providing management and support across the organization. It provides headquarters, regions, and field offices with resources and support services such as: Directorate leadership; Native American outreach programs; document tracking; budgeting and performance; management of personal property and fleet; acquisition of leased space; economics, analytics, and risk management; safety and health programs; processing of tort and third-party claims and Freedom of Information Act requests; servicewide bill paying; Aviation management; National Fish & Wildlife Foundation; and operation of National Conservation Training Center. General Operations also ensures the Service is in compliance with legal, regulatory, and Departmental policies for all administrative functions.

## **Program Elements**

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Six subactivities comprise the General Operations Program:

Central Office Operations – Headquarters offices provide the Service with the leadership, strategic direction, and necessary resources to accomplish mission priorities and goals. The offices included in this sub-activity are: Office of the Director; Native American Coordination Office; Regional Directors Offices; and Document Tracking/Controlled Correspondence.

Management and Administration – The Assistant Director for Management and Administration is responsible for the Joint Administrative Operations function which oversees Budget and Performance; Safety; and Economics, Analytics, and Risk Management. The Service centralizes its administrative operations such that functions requiring extensive training, certification or specialized knowledge (e.g., personnel policies and authorities) are centralized for cost and operational efficiencies.

Servicewide Bill Paying – Funds bills for DOI services, including Information Technology (IT), communications, and security. Servicewide Bill Paying also funds Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, and mail printing services.

Aviation Management – Provides the safety and training oversight of the Fish and Wildlife Service's fleet of planes and pilots, develops aviation policy, and administers the Service's Aviation Fire program, Unmanned Aircraft System Program, and Emergency Management for Aviation incidents.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) – Serves as the official foundation for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It runs a competitive challenge grant program to implement projects that further the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources.

National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) – Opened in 1997 and located on 533 acres along the Potomac River in Shepherdstown, WV, NCTC is FWS's primary training facility and, as such, is considered the "Home" of the Service. NCTC consists of state-of-the-art training classrooms, an auditorium, a museum and archive, and a high-definition studio for video and broadcasting services.

Activity: General Operations

Sub Activity: Central Office Operations

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Central Office Operations</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<i>Central Office Operations</i>	<i>-4,004</i>	<i>+0</i>
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-4,004</b>	<b>+0</b>

### **Program Overview**

The Service's Central Office Operations provide leadership, strategic direction and the organizational management required to accomplish mission priorities and goals. These functions include policy provision from Administration-appointed officials, regional leadership, coordination of Service contact with Native American Tribes, and document tracking.

**Native American Programs Coordination Office** serves as a key point of contact for Native American Tribes. This office upholds Federal trust responsibility and supports Tribal sovereignty. It strives to work cooperatively with Tribes to further the Service's conservation mission

**Regional Directors** manage the conservation of our lands through the administration of programs throughout the Service. This includes development of recommendations on national and regional policies, plans, and procedures implemented by nearly 7,000 highly-skilled biologists, maintenance workers, law enforcement officers, and an array of additional talented personnel. RDs advise the Service Director and engage the public and partners by serving as liaisons to State, local, and Tribal governments, as well as civic groups within their respective jurisdictions.

**Office of the Director** includes the Director, Deputy Director, and staff specialists, and provides policy direction and support for program and management activities of the Service.

**Correspondence/Document Tracking (DTS)** is used by the Department to assign correspondence for action, route correspondence to officials for their review and concurrence, and track correspondence and other packages. Developed by the Service, DTS is used across all bureaus of the Department.

### **Justification of Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for Central Office Operations is \$18,491,000 and 80 FTE, a program change of -\$4,004,000 and 0 FTE from the FY 2026 Enacted.

**Central Office Operations (-\$4,004,000/ -0 FTE)** – Per Secretary's Order 3429 – Consolidation, Unification and Optimization of Administrative Functions, the budget requests reduced funds for certain centralized functions such as Office of the Director and Office of Communications, and does not request funding for the Equal Employment Office.

Activity: General Operations

Sub Activity: Management and Administration

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Management and Administration</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Joint Administrative Operations</b>		
<i>JAO Activities</i>	-7,286	+0
<b>Information Resources and Technology Management</b>		
<i>IRTM Activities</i>	-11,146	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-18,432</b>	<b>+0</b>

## Program Overview

### Information Resources and Technology Management (IRTM)

The Service’s IRTM organization is responsible for partnering with Service programs to ensure technology requirements of the FWS conservation programs are met. To that end, IRTM is responsible for the development of policy and Service-wide management and technology guidance, impacting a myriad of business management and operational activities within the Service. IRTM develops, plans, and manages Service-wide Information Management and Technology functions and resources that enable all programs and regions in the Service to perform their mission. The components of IRTM include Operations, Policy/Planning, Data Management, Cybersecurity and Privacy. These components cut across the full spectrum of information management and technology services to include customer support, infrastructure management, requirements processing, governance, strategic planning, application development and records management. In support of Secretarial Order 3429, Consolidation, Unification and Optimization of Administrative Functions, dated April 17, 2025, this organization was realigned and unified to the Office of the Secretary.

### Joint Administrative Operations (JAO)

The JAO provides administrative support essential to achieving conservation outcomes on the ground.

JAO includes:

- *Budget and Performance*: which formulates, justifies, coordinates, and executes the Service’s budget.
- *Administrative Services*: which includes management of personal property and fleet, and acquisition of leased space.
- *Workforce Planning and Project Management*: which assists Service leaders to ensure optimal organizational and programmatic alignment for the most efficient use of resources to meet mission needs.
- *Economics, Analytics, and Risk Management*: which coordinates audits, regulatory streamlining, creates Federal Register notices, performs enterprise risk management, economic analysis, enterprise analytics, geospatial services and information management.
- *Safety*: which ensures safety and occupational health and processes tort and third-party claims.

### **Justification of Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Management and Administration is \$18,493,000 and 146 FTE, a program change of -\$18,432,000 and 0 FTE from the FY 2026 Enacted.

**Information Resources and Technology Management (-\$11,146,000/ -0 FTE)** – Per Secretary’s Order 3429 – Consolidation, Unification and Optimization of Administrative Functions, Information Resources and Technology Management was unified under the Department.

**Joint Administrative Operations (-\$7,286,000/ -0 FTE)** – The budget requests reduced funding for Joint Administrative Operations. Per Secretary’s Order 3429 – Consolidation, Unification and Optimization of Administrative Functions, some of JAO’s functions were unified under the Department. The requested funds will be used to pay for the consolidated Departmental services and will support the work of the Assistant Director for Management and Administration, who leads the JAO in providing centralized administrative support services. The Service continues to require JAO’s leadership and behind-the-scenes support to effectively deliver the Administration’s priorities of conservation, customer service, and collaboration with partners around the country.

Activity: General Operations

Sub Activity: Servicewide Bill Paying

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for Servicewide Bill Paying</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>Working Capital Fund (less realty appraisal)</b>		
<i>Working Capital Fund (less realty appraisal)</i>	+3,225	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>+3,225</b>	<b>+0</b>

### **Program Overview**

Servicewide Bill Paying processes bills received by the Service for charges from the Department or other outside entities. These are fixed costs that the Service must cover.

### **Communications, Information Technology, and Security**

Expenses in this category include payments for domestic and international network services; costs associated with land, wireless, radio, and satellite communications; Certification and Accreditation (C&A) costs for IT systems; providing security for IT systems; and improving compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The funds in this category are exclusively for bills required to keep IT operations secure and modern.

### **DOI Working Capital Fund (WCF)**

The Department of the Interior provides centralized administrative and business services and systems to its bureaus and offices and to other customers. The budget request includes funding for the Service's portion of the WCF bill.

### **Servicewide Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Compensation Costs**

Workers' compensation covers costs associated with accidental on-duty injuries and deaths of employees. Unemployment compensation costs represent the estimated annual costs of paying unemployment compensation claims.

### **Postage**

Expenses in this category include contract charges for intra-agency and Departmental courier and mailroom services.

### **Printing**

Despite having reduced printing costs through the use of electronic media, printing is still required for certain documents during the course of business. The Service incurs the cost for printing these documents.

**Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks (AS-FWP)**

The Service contributes funding to cover the costs of salary, benefits, and travel for certain personnel under the Assistant Secretary for activities directly related to the Service.

**Reimbursable Support Agreements**

Expenses in this category relate to support services provided by the Department and external agencies. Examples include the Employee Assistance Program, administration of the Flexible Spending Plan, and storage services provided by the National Archives and Records Administration.

**Memberships**

Organizations sharing the Service's priorities may share membership and participation in professional, scientific, and conservation organizations.

**Justification of Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Servicewide Bill Paying is \$42,888,000 and 0 FTE, a program change of +\$3,225,000 and 0 FTE from the FY 2026 Enacted.

**Working Capital Fund (+3,225,000/ +0 FTE)** – This funding increase accounts for differences between FY 2026 appropriations and actual requirements to ensure the Service can fund necessary expenses.

## Aviation Management

### Program Overview

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The safety and training oversight of the Fish and Wildlife Service's fleet of planes and pilots is the responsibility of the National Aviation Management office. The Assistant Director of the Migratory Bird Program serves as the agency's Aviation Executive, overseeing this office and representing the Service as a voting member of the DOI's Executive Aviation Committee (EAC), which is responsible for developing strategic aviation objectives and initiatives. The National Aviation Manager, as a member of the DOI Executive Aviation Subcommittee (EAS), is responsible implementing the tasks assigned by the EAC. Additionally, the office is responsible for Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) program development within DOI, and the Service's Emergency Management for aviation incidents.

The National Aviation Management Office administers all Service aircraft acquisitions and vendor contracts in coordination with the Interior Business Center's Acquisition Services. The Service has identified and is implementing six priorities that will immediately improve its aviation enterprise: Automated Flight Following, Crew Resource Management, Instrument Procedures Simulator Training Program, Standardized Risk Assessment Processes, Aviation Management Communications, and National Aviation Training Plan.

The National Aviation Management Office uses its resources to meet the legal requirements of several important laws and Administration policy directives. These include the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Alaska Native Interests Lands Conservation Act, the Pacific Salmon Treaty, the Endangered Species Act, and Executive Order 14153 and DOI Secretary Order 3422, "Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential."

Activity: General Operations

Sub Activity: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<i>NFWF</i>	<i>-2,500</i>	<i>+0</i>
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-2,500</b>	<b>+0</b>

### **Program Overview**

Created by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) serves as the official foundation for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. NFWF is the Nation’s largest private conservation grant-maker supporting more than 20,400 projects in all 50 States. NFWF is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization lead by a Board of Directors approved by the Secretary of Interior.

The NFWF runs a competitive challenge grant program with a statutory non-Federal matching requirement of 1:1 for all Federally-appropriated dollars that NFWF awards. In recent years NFWF has averaged a 3:1 match. All grantee matching funds are non-Federal funds provided in cash or as in-kind services. NFWF uses the funding to leverage additional commitments of resources from corporations, foundations, and conservation partners. The funds are invested through outcome-focused grant programs guided by conservation business plans developed in partnership with the Service. Individual projects are reviewed by diverse outside reviewers (e.g., Federal, State, non-profit, educational and private sector), NFWF, and the Service.

### **Justification of Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is \$3,000,000 and 1 FTE, a program change of -\$2,500,000 and 0 FTE from the FY 2026 Enacted.

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (-\$2,500,000/ -0 FTE)** – The requested funding will be utilized in communities around the country to assist grant recipients with the cost of required environmental compliance, and to leverage resources from corporations, foundations, and conservation partners.

Activity: General Operations

Sub Activity: National Conservation Training Center

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for National Conservation Training Center</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<b>General Program Activities</b>		
<i>NCTC Activities</i>	-8,462	+0
<b>Annual Maintenance</b>		
<i>NCTC Annual Maintenance</i>	-1,538	+0
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-10,000</b>	<b>+0</b>

### **Program Overview**

The National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s primary training facility. It opened in 1997 and is located on 533 acres along the Potomac River in Shepherdstown, WV. In addition to training Service employees, NCTC provides training on a reimbursable basis to conservation professionals from DOI, Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, not-for-profit conservation organizations, private landowners, and the business community. NCTC is a state-of-the-art training facility with multiple classroom buildings, a maintenance professional training facility, auditorium, the USFWS Museum and Archive, the USFWS Library, and a high-definition studio for video and broadcasting.

The NCTC delivers training in person and in virtual environments that reaches over 8,300 participants across 75,000 hours. Courses include a wide range of mission-critical curricula including leadership, program academies, biology, conservation policy, safety, and maintenance professional training. The NCTC's innovative training is also adapted to support virtual courses through remote learning training videos and webinars. Training curricula aligns with the Administration and DOI’s priorities, such as enhanced recreational access to natural resources, restoring energy dominance, and fulfilling stewardship responsibilities.

In alignment with Secretary’s Order 3429–*Consolidation, Unification and Optimization of Administrative Functions*, some training functions will be consolidated in FY 2026 under the Department. The NCTC facilities will be utilized to support the Department of Interior’s Office of Employee Development, and approximately 30 FTE have been consolidated.

### **Justification of Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for the National Conservation Training Center is \$14,992,000 and 45 FTE, a program change of -\$10,000,000 and 0 FTE from the FY 2026 Enacted.

**NCTC Operations (-\$8,462,000/ -0 FTE)** – The budget requests reduced funding for Operations. This is in line with Secretary’s Order 3429 – *Consolidation, Unification and Optimization of Administrative Functions*, directing some training functions to be consolidated under the Department. Training

curricula and programmatic activities will realign per guidance from DOI's Office of Employee Development. The requested funds will allow the NCTC to support related initiatives as they apply to the Fish & Wildlife Service.

**NCTC Annual Maintenance (-\$1,538,000/ -0 FTE)** – Consistent with the requested reduction for operations and in line with Secretary's Order 3429, the budget requests a reduction for maintenance costs.

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# Construction

## Appropriations Language

*For construction, improvement, acquisition, or removal of buildings and other facilities required in the conservation, management, investigation, protection, and utilization of fish and wildlife resources, and the acquisition of lands and interests therein; \$13,705,000, to remain available until expended.*

## Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

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The Service has the legal mandate and responsibility to ensure its inventory of assets, facilities, and infrastructure is safe and adequate to accomplish its conservation mission and that operations are conducted in compliance with applicable regulations. More than 19 laws, statutes, and executive orders govern what the Construction program executes the funding it receives from Congress. Governing authorities are discussed below.

*Refuge Recreation Act* (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4). Authorizes development of fish and wildlife areas for recreational use, including land acquisition and facilities construction and management.

*National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act*, as amended (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award contracts for the provision of public accommodations of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

*Migratory Bird Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 715-715d, 715e, 715f-715r). Provides for land acquisition, construction, maintenance, development, and administration for migratory bird reservations.

*Fish and Wildlife Act* (16 U.S.C. 742a-742f). Authorizes the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources, including the acquisition and development of existing facilities.

*Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act*, as amended (42 U.S.C. 9601-9675). Authorizes Federal agencies to conduct cleanup and/or recover costs associated with releases of hazardous substances on or from land under our jurisdiction, custody, or control.

*Federal Facilities Compliance Act* (42 U.S.C. 6961). Requires Federal agencies to comply with Federal, State, and local solid and hazardous waste laws in the same manner as any private party.

*Pollution Prevention Act*, (42 U.S.C. 13101, 13101 note, 13102-13109), as amended by P.L. 101-508. Requires pollution that cannot be prevented at the source to be recycled in an environmentally sound manner and disposal as a last resort.

*Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act* (42 U.S.C. 7701 -7706). Establishes an earthquake hazards reduction program.

*National Dam Safety Program Act* (33 U.S.C. 467). Provides for Federal agencies to implement the Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety, which established management practices for dam safety at all Federal agencies.

*National Energy Conservation Policy Act* (42 U.S.C. 8152-8259). Establishes an energy management program in the Federal government and directs Federal agencies to perform energy surveys and implement energy conservation opportunities.

*Energy Policy Act (EPAct)* (P.L. 109-58). Extends previous Congressional direction to Federal facility managers with even greater goals of energy efficiency improvements in existing and new facilities, sustainable building design and construction, metering of all Federal buildings, and procurement of Energy Star equipment.

*Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA)* (P.L. 110-140). Intends to move the United States toward greater energy independence and security; protect consumers; increase the efficiency of products, buildings, and vehicles; and improve the energy performance of the Federal Government.

*Energy Act of 2020* (P.L. 116-260). Expands energy and water investment requirements; expands energy auditing and reporting requirements; adds water metering to covered facilities; authorizes the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) and establishes program goals around energy and water resilience and environmental stewardship.

*Migratory waterfowl and other wildlife refuge in California* (16 U.S.C. 695k-695r). Provides for limitations on reduction of areas by diking or other construction in California and Oregon in the case of migratory waterfowl and other refuges, as well as other construction provisions.

*Preservation of Fishery Resources* (16 U.S.C. 760-1 to 760-12). Provides for the construction, equipping, maintenance, and operation of several named fish hatcheries.

*National bridge and tunnel inventory and inspection standards* (23 U.S.C. 144). Requires bridges on public highways and roads to be inspected.

*Make America Beautiful Again Commission* (E.O. 14313). Directs the Service to expand access for hunting, fishing, and outdoor activities, addressing maintenance backlogs.

## Construction

### Justification of Fixed Costs Changes

*(Dollars In Thousands)*

Fixed Cost Element	2026 Enacted Change	2026 Enacted to 2027 Request Change	Description
Change in Number of Paid Days	0	0	Total paid days for FY 2027 is 261 (2088 hours) which is the same number of days as FY 2026. This information is consistent with the published OMB Circular A-11.
Pay Raise	+67	+14	The President's Budget for 2027 includes one quarter (October-December 2026) of the 1.0% pay raise for 2026 and 0.0% pay raise for 2027. Pay raises are consistent with the published OMB Circular A-11.
Employer Share of Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS)	0	-18	The estimates reflect adjustments to the employer contribution for FERS and Law Enforcement FERS for FY 2027. This information is consistent with the published OMB Circular A-11.
Departmental Working Capital Fund (WCF)	0	0	The estimates reflect Department decisions on the FY 2027 Working Capital Fund Central Bill.
Workers' Compensation Payments	0	0	The amount reflects final chargeback costs of compensating injured employees and dependents of employees who suffer accidental death while on duty. This amount reflects the final Workers Compensation bill for FY 2027 payable to the Department of Labor, Federal Employees Compensation Fund, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 8147(b) as amended by Public Law 94-273.
Unemployment Compensation Payments	0	0	The amount reflects projected changes in the costs of unemployment compensation claims to be paid to the Department of Labor, Federal Employees Compensation Account, in the Unemployment Trust Fund, pursuant to Public Law 96-499. This estimate reflects an applied annual inflation factor of 3.0% to the 5-year average of actuals between 2020-2024.
GSA and Non-GSA Rents	0	0	This estimate reflects the FY 2027 President's Budget Exhibit 54s as submitted. The amounts reflect changes in the costs payable to General Services Administration (GSA) and others for office and non-office space as estimated by GSA, as well as the rental costs of other currently occupied space. These estimates reflect Udall Building rent, Security, Federal Reserve Parking, and Operations and Maintenance, distributed by bureau and office, based upon OFAS provided Udall Building occupancy levels. Costs of mandatory office relocations, i.e. relocations in cases where due to external events there is no alternative but to vacate the currently occupied space, are also included.
Baseline Adjustments for O&M Increases	0	0	This adjustment captures the associated increase to baseline operations and maintenance requirements resulting from movement out of GSA or direct-leased (commercial) space into Bureau-owned space. During these transitions, bureaus often encounter an increase to baseline O&M costs not otherwise captured in fixed costs. This category of funding properly adjusts the baseline fixed cost amount to maintain steady-state funding for these requirements.
<b>Account Total Fixed Cost</b>	<b>+67</b>	<b>-4</b>	

**Appropriation: Construction**

**Activity: Nationwide Engineering Services**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)			
<b>Nationwide Engineering Services</b>											
Core Engineering Services	4,901	34	4,901	31	-4	-	-	-	4,897	31	-4
Environmental Compliance	624	-	624	-	-	-	-	-	624	-	-
Waste Prevention and Recycling	63	-	63	-	-	-	-	-	63	-	-
<b>Total, Nationwide Engineering Services</b>	<b>5,588</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>5,588</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,584</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>-4</b>

**Activity: Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)			
<b>Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety</b>											
Bridge Safety Inspections	1,239	3	1,239	3	-	-	-	-	1,239	3	-
Dam Safety Inspections	1,113	3	1,113	3	-	-	-	-	1,113	3	-
Seismic Safety	75	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	75	-	-
<b>Total, Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety</b>	<b>2,427</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2,427</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,427</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>

**Activity: Line Item Construction Projects**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)			
<b>Total, Line Item Construction Projects</b>	<b>11,265</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,694</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-1,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,694</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-1,000</b>

## **Program Overview**

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As a steward for America's public lands, the Service's infrastructure projects help millions of visitors experience our national treasures, provide water to the West, and support American jobs. The Service's infrastructure projects support modernizing facilities and operations through new construction and rehabilitation projects, using American-made materials. The agency's lifecycle management approach to infrastructure management delivers high-quality, timely, cost-effective, and code-compliant construction projects in support of the Service's wildlife and public use mission objectives, including hunting and fishing. The Construction program delivers exceptional engineering design and construction, facility maintenance, and regulatory compliance to provide these benefits and deliver the Service mission to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Construction program provides for the major maintenance, modernization, renewal, and improved lifespan of Service facilities and is integral to the overall management of the Services' portfolio.

Construction funding supports engineering and technical program management for the Service's entire inventory of assets, including 573 National Wildlife Refuges, 38 Wetland Management Districts, 48 coordination areas, seven National Monuments, 71 National Fish Hatcheries and one historic fish hatchery, 51 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices, six Fish Health Centers, seven Fish Technology Centers, Office of Law Enforcement Regional Area Offices, Field Offices, the Forensics Lab and Eagle Repository, and Ecological Services Field Offices, including the Puerto Rican Parrot recovery program and Black Footed Ferret recovery facility, as well as encouraging and expanding consolidation and colocation across Service programs.

## **Program Elements**

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Construction appropriations consist of three activities and program elements.

### **Nationwide Engineering Services**

Nationwide Engineering Services (NES) manages numerous construction and maintenance projects each year and protects employees, visitors, and volunteers by ensuring that operations comply with safety, laws and regulations and supports access to Service lands.

### **Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety**

The Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety activity supports the safety and security of Service dams, bridges, and buildings. This effort is primarily accomplished for the most critical structures through inspections, assessments, and monitoring. Many of the functions carried out in this activity are prescribed by law.

### **Line-Item Construction**

The Line-Item Construction activity contains the specific construction projects requesting funding each year. These projects reconstruct, repair, rehabilitate, and replace existing buildings or other structures/facilities, including dams and bridges. Projects for modernization, alteration, and construction of new buildings, structures and weather-related damage restoration and stabilization to ensure resiliency may be included. Funding covers project-specific planning, design, and construction management; construction, demolition, site work, and land acquisition; and the

purchase of associated fixtures and equipment. These investments are critical to protect Federal lands and neighboring communities and implement lifecycle management to maximize the return on investment and maintain infrastructure in good condition.

### **Program Overview**

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The **Nationwide Engineering Services** activity supports the implementation of safe, resilient construction and maintenance projects, regardless of funding source, and provides the guidance needed to comply with environmental and energy laws. The three program elements that comprise this activity are discussed below.

#### **Core Engineering Services**

Funding in Core Engineering Services provides technical oversight for construction and maintenance projects throughout the Service, regardless of funding source. Engineers provide technical expertise and assistance to the field for the entire construction lifecycle for Line-Item projects, Deferred Maintenance, and Federal Highways projects. Accomplishing these varied projects requires Headquarters' policy development, budget formulation and execution, coordination for efficiency and national technical consistency, and day-to-day supervision and technical guidance from regional managers.

#### **Environmental Compliance**

The Environmental Compliance program supports natural resource conservation and protects the health and safety of employees, visitors, and volunteers. On-site environmental compliance audits protect our natural resources by requiring proper management of hazardous wastes and hazardous materials and ensuring wastewater discharges entering rivers and streams are below EPA thresholds. Audits also ensure that drinking water provided by on-site systems is safe and in compliance with monitoring requirements. The program provides oversight, technical assistance, and training for more than 700 field stations to help ensure compliance with complex environmental laws and regulations at Federal, State, local, and Tribal levels. The program also helps restore natural resources by providing project oversight and technical assistance for the clean-up of large-scale environmental contamination of air, water and soil pollution that may adversely affect human health and the environment.

#### **Waste Prevention, Recycling and Environmental Management Systems**

This program element supports the cost-efficient management of resources across the Service. It focuses on reducing operational costs, improving energy and water efficiency, and optimizing key program areas such as fleet management, waste product disposal, and overall general waste reduction to enhance facility performance and ultimately result in cost savings.

### **Program Overview**

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The **Dam, Bridge, and Seismic Safety** activity provides information needed for engineers to assess the safety and security of Service dams, bridges, and buildings. The three program elements that comprise this activity are discussed below.

## Dam Safety and Security

The Dam Safety and Security program supports the safety and security of the Service's inventory of over 300 dams, including 16 high-hazard dams. These dams provide life-sustaining water resources to the American public throughout the country. Service dams serve several functions at once by providing community recreation, resiliency for flood control and flood risk reduction, drought mitigation, irrigation, wetland creation, water supply for hatcheries, nesting habitat for waterfowl, and recreational fishing. Funding supports critical activities to ensure the Service's existing portfolio of dams are resilient, maintained, identified for rehabilitation, and properly operated to protect human life, property, the environment, and the valuable natural resources on Service lands. The Service uses Comprehensive Risk Analysis, hazard classification, individual risk assessments, risk-informed decision making, and the overall inspection condition of the dam to identify and prioritize dam repair and rehabilitation projects within the Service's portfolio of dams in accordance with Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety, Departmental Manual, and current state of practice within the industry.



*Lake Rush Dam, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma.  
Credit: David Hibbs/USFWS*



*Little Grassy Dam Service Spillway, Crab Orchard, NWR, IL. Planning for rehabilitation is currently underway with a cooperative agreement between Region 3, NWRS and the USACE. Credit: USFWS*

The formal inspection, analyses and rehabilitation of low hazard dams are the lowest priority based on the risk associated with failure. Formal inspections are recommended every five years in accordance with FEMA P-93, Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety, and conducting these inspections would help ensure compliance with State dam safety programs. Emergency Action Plans for high and significant hazard potential dams provide site-specific guidance for on-site detection and mitigation of conditions that may cause

dam failures, incidents or uncontrolled reservoir releases, and communication protocols for notifying first responders and evacuating downstream populations. Routine Safety Evaluation of

Existing Dams (SEED) inspections identify dam deficiencies at the earliest stages so when addressed, the Service may stave off more serious/critical repairs, consequences, or interventions, reducing lifecycle costs, ensuring critical infrastructure resiliency, and avoid increasing the maintenance backlog.

### **Vehicular Bridge Safety**

This funding supports work to improve the safety and integrity of the Service's approximately 770 vehicular bridges that serve essential access functions or provide primary public access. The Service accomplishes this work through the application of technically current design guidelines and a comprehensive inspection, appraisal, and inventory program. Bridge inspections are conducted at time intervals set by statute. During bridge inspections, Service staff determine and verify safe load-carrying capacity; identify and recommend mitigation of unsafe conditions; and identify maintenance, rehabilitation, or reconstruction needs. As with dam safety projects, funding for bridge safety projects is requested as part of the Line-Item Construction activity.

### **Seismic Safety**

This program element funds planning and analysis of the seismic safety of the Service's approximately 6,500 buildings. The work allows the Service to identify buildings that present a substantial risk to the safety of Service personnel, volunteers, and visitors in the event of a significant earthquake. Program staff screen Service owned buildings to identify those that are exceptionally high risk (EHR). Any building found to meet EHR criteria undergoes a rigorous engineering analysis, which includes development of a cost estimate to mitigate seismic deficiencies.

### **Program Overview**

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The Service has committed to completing **Line-Item Construction** funded projects in a timely manner. The requested funding for maintenance balances the operational needs across the Service, ensuring that the highest priority mission assets are receiving lifecycle investments, while also ensuring that other critical mission delivery occurs. The Department and the Service are working to improve performance measurement for construction projects, including a measure that projects are on time and on budget. Taxpayers dollars deserve to be spent efficiently and on projects that provide the greatest benefits to the American people and our treasured resources.

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 budget request for Line-Item Construction Projects is \$5,694,000 and 0 FTE, a program change of -\$1,000,000 and -0 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

**Line-Item Construction (-\$1,000,000/ +0 FTE)** – The budget enables the Service to meet the needs of the American people through more resilient facilities that provide more opportunities for land use and enhanced technology to prevent invasive species and secure water sources. A list of the Line-Item projects for FY 2027 is provided below. A Project Data Sheet (PDS) for each project is included and provides key information about the project description, justification, cost, and schedule. Additionally, after the individual PDSs, a summary table for FYs 2027-2031

presents the Service's five-year construction plan and reflects funding directed to the most critical needs (i.e., health, safety, natural resources, and access). FWS selects and ranks projects in accordance with Department of the Interior and Service guidance and priorities.

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service  
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 90  
 Planned Funding FY 2027 \$4,388,000  
 Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

**Project Identification**

Project Title: Co-location Construction with Ecological Services (ES), Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC), Refuges (NWRS) and others  
 Project No: 2021366104  
 Unit/Facility Name: Patuxent Research Refuge  
 Region/Area/District: NORTHEAST  
 Congressional District: 05  
 State: MD

**Project Justification**

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
35290700	10021711	BLDG VC, NATIONAL WILDLIFE VC - #740 ST	100	0.99

**Project Description (PD):**

This project is to completely rehabilitate the Patuxent Research Refuge Visitor Center that was constructed in 1992 into a co-located facility with personnel from Refuges (NWRS), Ecological Services (ES), Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC), Science Applications (SA), and other governmental programs into one cross-programmatic facility. We will be re-purposing an underutilized 37,000 square foot visitor center, which currently has approximately 13 employees. Once the rehabilitation is complete, this cross-programmatic facility will have 60 employees working together. Additionally, this project addresses two Director's Orders; co-location of programs and getting out of leased space onto Service owned land. Last Comprehensive Condition Assessment was completed in 2018.

**Scope of Benefits (SB):**

This co-location project relates to many of the Director's Initiatives as well as priorities of the new Administration. First and foremost, we are hoping to vacate GSA-leased office space through this project. This is one of the last places we lease in the Northeast Region. In addition, by moving onto a National Wildlife Refuge, we are co-locating with various government environmental programs. Having this wealth of cross-programmatic resources, we will all benefit from this consortium of knowledge.

**Investment Strategy (IS):**

Currently, ES, FAC, and SA share a leased office building in Annapolis, Maryland. The 5-year GSA Lease is approximately \$575,000 per year. Patuxent Research Refuge has a total of 13 people currently working in this facility. The operations and maintenance expenses are being paid for by Refuges alone, as is their future deferred maintenance expenses. If other FWS programs were to move from the leased office space into this facility we, as a Service would save over 50% in annual operating costs and lease expenses. The estimated yearly cost for ES, FAC, and SA to be in this facility is approximately \$235,000, as compared to the \$575,000 for the GSA leases space. These shared expenses, if within one facility on service-owned land will contribute to the operations, maintenance, and future deferred maintenance needs for this co-location facility.

**Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):**

ES, FAC, and SA will forever lease office space if they cannot move into a Service-owned facility at Patuxent Research Refuge. There is no funding mechanism, nor land available for these three Service programs to be able to utilize to accomplish this task other than through this approach. With an approximate rehabilitation/co-location project budget of \$4.8 million dollars, the expected payback, as compared to lease rate is approximately 8 years. Through the strategic use of construction appropriations, we can fund the one-time rehabilitation of this facility to accommodate all of these other government programs and have them share space and expenses under one roof. It should be noted, that whether or not these other programs come, Refuges will continue to occupy and pay the expenses of this current under-utilized large, vast, visitor center. FWS should have 100% occupancy and share in the expenses of this facility, while getting out of leased GSA office space. Through this co-location effort, on service-owned land, the public will gain knowledge of the many programs within the Fish and Wildlife Service. A portion of this building, once complete, will remain a public-use visitor center for the public to visit and experience along with the lands immediately around this facility.

**Ranking Categories:**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating:	N/A	0.99
API Rating:	N/A	100
API/FCI Score:	20%	20
SB Score:	40%	40
IS Score:	20%	20
CFA Score:	20%	10
<b>Total Score:</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>90</b>

Combined ranking factors = (0.20 x API/FCI score) + (0.40 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

**Capital Asset Planning**

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No

VE Study: Scheduled TBD Completed TBD

**Project Costs and Status**

**Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance Work:	\$0	0
Modernization/Renewal Work:	\$4,363	100
Divestiture Work:	\$0	0
Total:	\$4,363	100

**Project Funding History (entire project):**

<u>History</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>
Funded to Date:	\$0
FY2027-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$4,388
FY2027-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2027-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$475
Total:	\$4,863

**Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D** C

Estimate Escalated to FY:

**Planning and Design Funds:**

Planning Funds Received in FY	*	\$0
Design Funds Received in FY	*	\$0

\*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2027 budget on this project data sheet.

**Major Milestones**

Construction Award/Start

- Scheduled:
- Actual:                   TBD

Project  
Complete:

- Scheduled:
- Actual:                   TBD

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**Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$**

Current:	3,603
Projected:	3,600
Net Change:	-3

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service  
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking:

Planned Funding FY 2027 \$306,000

Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

**Project Identification**

Project Title: Secure Water Source for Valley City NFH and Baldhill Dam  
 Phase III Project No: 2024618476  
 Unit/Facility Name: Valley City NFH  
 Region/Area/District: MOUNTAIN  
 PRAIRIE Congressional District: 00  
 State: ND

**Project Justification**

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
35500200	10027071	BLDG PUMP HOUSE, INTAKE PUMP HOUSE AND RIVER ACCES	100	0.99

**Project Description (PD):**

The intake pump house at Valley City was constructed in 1967 of concrete at 823 square feet. Sheyenne River water flows are consistently two feet higher than when originally built and has reduced the efficacy of the intake pump house due to silt loads and increases the risk of flood on station. The pipes and pumps need to be replaced due to pipe corrosion and the pumps being outdated, underrated, inefficient, and obsolete. Baldhill Dam NFH subunit receives its water from a reservoir (Lake Ashtabula) located upriver of Valley City NFH via a siphon extending out from the face of the dam. Both of these water sources are now positive for zebra mussels.

To eliminate invasive zebra mussels, new water filtration systems containing a rotating drum filter and Ultraviolet (UV) treatment system is needed at both Valley City NFH and Baldhill Dam NFH to secure their water sources. Value Engineering (VE) will be accomplished during the planning/ design phase. An Architecture and Engineering firm completed a 15% planning and design in 2022 and the 85% solution is scheduled to occur in 2026.

These deficiencies were identified during the 2022 Comprehensive Condition Assessment (CCA) via inspection work order (INCA) 2022455765.

BEGIN PHASE INFO WO# 2018308805: Phase 1 [p/d]: Plan Year:2022, Plan Cost:\$ 326,000; WO# 2024618476: Phase 2 [c]: Plan Year:2026, Plan Cost:\$ 3,700,000 : Phase 3 [c]: Plan Year:2027, Plan Cost:\$ 306,000

**Scope of Benefits (SB):**

Valley City National Fish Hatchery including the Baldhill Dam NFH subunit are the only Federal Fish Hatchery facilities located in the Hudson Bay Drainage. Conservation efforts located in this reach including Canadian provinces and interjurisdictional fisheries are negatively impacted by presence and threat of Zebra Mussel in these facilities water supply. The presence of Zebra Mussels requires securing the water source at both facilities to prevent expansion of Zebra Mussels and further infrastructure failures so that continued restoration and support of wild populations of aquatic animals can take place.

**Investment Strategy (IS):**

This project will necessarily increase O&M costs due to the additional drum filtration, Ultraviolet (UV) sterilizers, and heaters in the winter.

**Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):**

Failure to complete this project could potentially allow for future failure of the pumps and pipes, thus preventing water flow for fish production. This will also allow for the infiltration of Zebra Mussels into the production systems of both Valley City NFH and subunit Baldhill Dam.

**Ranking Categories:**

<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage</u></b>	<b><u>Score</u></b>
FCI Rating:	N/A	0.99
API Rating:	N/A	100
API/FCI Score:	20%	20
SB Score:	40%	40
IS Score:	20%	-5
CFA Score:	20%	10
<b>Total Score:</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>65</b>

Combined ranking factors = (0.20 x API/FCI score) + (0.40 x SB score) + (0.20 x IS score) + (0.20 x CFA score)

**Capital Asset Planning**

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No

VE Study: Scheduled 2024 Completed TBD

**Project Costs and Status**

**Project Cost Estimate (this PDS):**

<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Dollars in thousands</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>
Maintenance Work:	\$0	0
Modernization/Renewal Work:	\$306	100
Divestiture Work:	\$0	0
Total:	\$306	100

**Project Funding History (entire project):**

<b><u>History</u></b>	<b><u>Dollars in thousands</u></b>
Funded to Date:	\$3,720
FY2027-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$306
FY2027-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
FY2027-FLREA/FLTP/Donation Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$0
Total:	\$4.026

**Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D** C

Estimate Escalated to FY:

**Planning and Design Funds:**

Planning Funds Received in FY	*	\$0
Design Funds Received in FY	*	\$0

\*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2027 budget on this project data sheet.

**Major Milestones**

Construction Award/Start

- Scheduled:

- Actual: TBD

Project

Complete:

- Scheduled:

- Actual: TBD

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**Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$**

Current: 3,794

Projected: 5,000

Net Change: 1,206

**U.S Fish and Wildlife Service  
Project Data Sheet**

Total Project Score/Ranking: 45  
 Planned Funding FY 2027 \$1,000,000  
 Funding Source: CONSTRUCT

**Project Identification**

Project Title: Construct Ankeny Hill Nature Center Phase II of III  
 Project No: 2023525138  
 Unit/Facility Name: Ankeny NWR  
 Region: Columbia-Pacific Northwest  
 Congressional District: 05  
 State: OR

**Project Justification**

DOI Asset Code	FRPP Unique Id #	Description	API:	FCI-Before:
	13588	Ankeny NWR	100	0

**Project Description (PD):**

Construct Phase II of the Ankeny Hill Nature Center (AHNC) at Ankeny NWR in partnership with the Salem Audubon Society (SAS). Phase I was constructed in 2018 by SAS (\$780,000) and the Service constructed the new driveway, parking lot, trails, interpretive elements and other site developments in 2020 (\$1.35M). Phase II will double the size of the Nature Center (an additional 2700 sq. ft) and will consist of an exhibit hall entry, two functional classrooms, a reception area with two support offices, storage areas and a Nature Store operated by the Friends. The facility is the only indoor facility on the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex (WVNWRC) that offers environmental education and interpretation. The project is highly leveraged by external partners: in addition to SAS funding, Friends has funded \$130,000 in interpretive elements, and the Service has invested \$1.2M (via the Federal Lands Transportation Program) in site developments. The cost estimate for phase II of the AHNC building is \$2,200,000, however SAS has already secured \$200,000 towards Phase II, therefore the USFWS service portion is \$2,000,000.

Phased Project? Y Number of Phases 3

This project will not address DM&R costs for Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Scope of Benefits (SB):**

It is estimated that the Center will serve an estimated 135,000 visitors annually including school groups, families, and individuals seeking hiking, birding, photography, and interpretive/educational opportunities. This location will provide existing and new visitors extraordinary opportunities to experience wildlife viewing and nature education.

**Investment Strategy (IS):**

This project will create a facility at a minimal cost to the government through partner support in funding and participation.

**Consequences of Failure to Act (CFA):**

Failure to complete this phase of the project will result in limited space for community engagement, environmental education. It may also result in the loss of partner funding and in turn partner support of the station.

**Ranking Categories:**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Score</u>
FCI Rating:	N/A	N/A
API Rating:	N/A	100
API/FCI Score:	20%	
SB Score:	40%	40
IS Score:	20%	0
CFA Score:	20%	5

Capital Plan Business Case Required: No  
 VE Study: Scheduled TBD Completed TBD

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**Project Costs and Status**

**Project Cost Estimate (this**

**PDS):**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dollars in thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintenance Work:	\$0	0
Modernization/Renewal Work:	\$1,376	100
Divestiture Work:	\$0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,376</b>	<b>100</b>

**Project Funding History (entire project):**

**History**

**Dollars in thousands**

Funded to Date*:	\$2,130
FY2027-CONSTRUCTFunding (this PDS):	\$1,000
FY2027-FLREA/FLTP/Donation, Funding:	\$0
FY2027-FLREA/FLTP/Donation, Funding:	\$0
Future Funding to Complete Project:	\$1000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$4,130</b>

\*includes non-Federal funds from a partner organization as described in the Project Description

**Class of Estimate: A,B,C, D**

Estimate Escalated to FY: C  
22

**Planning and Design Funds:**

Planning Funds Received in FY \$0  
 Design Funds Received in FY \$0

\*These amounts for planning and design are included in the total formulated to the FY2027 budget on this project data sheet.

**Major Milestones**

Construction Award/Start  
 - Scheduled: 1/27  
 - Actual: TBD  
 Project Complete:  
 - Scheduled: 04/29  
 - Actual: TBD

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**Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs \$**

Current: 0  
 Projected: \$4,050  
 Net Change: \$4,050

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Line Item Construction Five Year Plan -- FY2027-2031

Plan Fund Year	Priority	Facility or Unit Name	Project Title	Cong. District	Total Project	Funded to Date	Total	Remaining to be Funded	Future Years of Plan with Funding	Investment Category/Work Classification	Funding Sources for Other Phases	DOI Score	Estimated DM&R Addressed
2027	1	Patuxent NWR	Chesapeake Bay colocation ES/LE/FWCO	MD-05	\$4,863	\$0	\$4,388	\$475		Modernization and Renewal (New Const.)		90	\$4,800
2027	2	Ankeny NWR	Construct Ankeny Hill Nature Center Phase II of III	OR-05	\$4,130	\$2,130	\$1,000	\$1,000		Modernization and Renewal (New Const.)		45	\$0
2027	3	Valley City NFH	Secure Water Source for Valley City NFH and subunit, Baldhill Dam [c] Phase III of III	ND-AL	\$4,026	\$3,720	\$306	\$0		Modernization and Renewal (Recapitalization)		65	\$0
<b>Total for Fiscal Year 2027</b>							<b>\$5,694</b>						

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Line Item Construction Five Year Plan -- FY2027-2031

Plan Fund Year	Priority	Facility or Unit Name	Project Title	Cong. District	Total Project	Funded to Date	Total	Remaining to be Funded	Future Years of Plan with Funding	Investment Category/Work Classification	Funding Sources for Other Phases	DOI Score	Estimated DM&R Addressed
2028	1	San Marcos FTC	Co-Location Of Service Staff (ES, LE, FAC) at San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center Phase II of II	TX-25	\$5,500	\$1,143	\$4,357	\$0		Modernization and Renewal (New Const.)		55	\$0
2028	2	National Eagle Repository	Replace Building Phase I of II	CO-08	\$15,000	\$0	\$1,337	\$13,663		Modernization and Renewal (Replacement)		70	\$0
<b>Total for Fiscal Year 2028</b>							<b>\$5,694</b>						

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

Line Item Construction Five Year Plan -- FY2027-2031

Plan Fund Year	Priority	Facility or Unit Name	Project Title	Cong. District	Total Project	Funded to Date	Total	Remaining to be Funded	Future Years of Plan with Funding	Investment Category/Work Classification	Funding Sources for Other Phases	DOI Score	Estimated DM&R Addressed
2029	1	Gavins Point NFH	Replace Hatchery Building/Tank Room and Demo Existing Hatchery Building	SD-AL	\$2,800	\$0	\$2,800	\$0		Modernization and Renewal (Replacement)		100	\$2,650
2029	2	Upper Souris NWR	Lake Darling Dam Semi Quantitative Risk Assessment	ND-00	\$450	\$0	\$450	\$0		Maintenance		90	\$0
2029	3	Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge	Quanah Parker Dam Auxiliary Spillway Replacement	OK-04	\$750	\$0	\$750	\$0		Modernization and Renewal (Replacement)		70	\$0
2029	4	Silvio Conte NFWR	Administration/Visitor Facility - (Co-Location at Ft. River) Phase I of II	MA-01	\$5,300	\$0	\$1,694	\$3,606	2031	Modernization and Renewal (New Const.)		70	\$1,162
<b>Total for Fiscal Year 2029</b>							<b>5,694</b>						

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

Line Item Construction Five Year Plan -- FY2027-2031

Plan Fund Year	Priority	Facility or Unit Name	Project Title	Cong. District	Total Project	Funded to Date	Total	Remaining to be Funded	Future Years of Plan with Funding	Investment Category/Work Classification	Funding Sources for Other Phases	DOI Score	Estimated DM&R Addressed
2030	1	National Black-Footed Ferret Conservation Center	Expand Operational and Rearing Facility Infrastructure.	CO-07	\$4,439	\$0	\$4,439	\$0		Modernization and Renewal (New Const.)		70	\$475
2030	2	D.D. Eisenhower NFH	Fish Rearing Infrastructure Upgrades - Phase I of III	VT-AL	\$7,252	\$0	\$1,255	\$5,997	2031	Modernization and Renewal (New Const.)		60	\$800
<b>Total for Fiscal Year 2030</b>							<b>\$5,694</b>						

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

Line Item Construction Five Year Plan -- FY2027-2031

<b>Plan Fund Year</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Facility or Unit Name</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Cong. District</b>	<b>Total Project</b>	<b>Funded to Date</b>	<b>Funding Request</b>	<b>Remaining to be Funded</b>	<b>Future Years of Plan with Funding</b>	<b>Investment Category/Work Classification</b>	<b>Funding Sources for Other Phases</b>	<b>DOI Score</b>	<b>Estimated DM&amp;R Addressed</b>
2031	1	Silvio Conte NFWR	Administration/Visitor Facility - (Co-Location at Ft. River) Phase I of II	MA-01	\$5,300	\$1,694	\$3,606	\$0		Modernization and Renewal (New Const.)		70	\$1,162
2031	2	D.D. Eisenhower NFH	Fish Rearing Infrastructure Upgrades - Phase I of III	VT-AL	\$7,252	\$1,255	\$2,088	\$3,909		Modernization and Renewal (New Const.)		60	\$800
<b>Total for Fiscal Year 2031</b>							<b>\$5,694</b>						

# Land Acquisition

## Appropriations Language

*This account does not require appropriation language due to permanent appropriation authorized by the Great American Outdoors Act, P.L. 116-152 (GAOA). However, Section 200303(c)(1) of GAOA includes a statutory requirement for the Department to submit an allocation of Land and Water Conservation Fund funding to Congress as part of the annual budget process.*

## Authorizing Statutes

*The Fish and Wildlife Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j). Authorizes acquisition of additions to the National Wildlife Refuge System for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources by purchase or exchange of land and water or interests therein.*

*Refuge Recreation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460-460k-4). Authorizes acquisition of areas that are adjacent to or within existing fish and wildlife Conservation Areas administered by the Department of the Interior, and suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreation development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of listed, threatened, or endangered species, or (4) carrying out two or more of the above.*

*Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, as amended (54 U.S.C 200301-200310). Authorizes appropriations to the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire land for National Wildlife Refuges as otherwise authorized by law.*

*National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee). Establishes overall policy guidance, places restrictions on the transfer, exchange, or other disposal of refuge lands, and authorizes the Secretary to accept donations of land.*

*Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1534-1544). Authorizes the acquisition of land, waters, or interests therein for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, including those that are listed as endangered or threatened species, with Land and Water Conservation Fund Act appropriations.*

*Emergency Wetlands Resources Act (P.L. 99-645; 100 Stat. 3582). Authorizes the purchase of wetlands, or interests in wetlands, consistent with the wetlands priority conservation plan established under the Act.*

*Highlands Conservation Act (P.L. 108-421). Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to work in partnership with the Secretary of Agriculture to provide financial assistance to the Highlands States to preserve and protect high priority conservation land in the Highland region.*

*John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9). Permanently authorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund.*

*The Great American Outdoors Act (P.L. 116-152). Authorizes a permanent appropriation of \$900,000,000 per year from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The LWCF funds the four main Federal land acquisition programs (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management) and provides grants to State and local governments to acquire land for recreation and conservation.*

## Summary of Requirements

### Land and Water Conservation Fund Programs for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Net Budget Authority<sup>(1)</sup>

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Subactivity/Program Element	2025 Actual	2026 Enacted	2027 Request	2027 Req vs. 2026 Enacted	2025 Actual FTE	2026 Enacted FTE	2027 Request FTE	2027 v. 2026 FTE
<b>Federal Land Acquisition</b>								
Acquisition Management	18,028	18,028	18,028	-	79	76	76	-
Land Protection Planning	493	493	493	-	3	3	3	-
Exchanges	1,591	1,591	3,091	+1,500	10	10	10	-
Sportsmen and Recreational Access	15,500	15,500	15,500	-	-	-	-	-
Inholdings, Emergencies and Hardships	11,000	14,000	24,040	+10,040	-	-	-	-
Land Acquisition Projects	62,340	49,300	49,300	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Subtotal, Federal Land Acquisition <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>108,952</b>	<b>98,912</b>	<b>110,452</b>	<b>+11,540</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>State and Local Grant Programs</b>								
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund	40,162	40,162	40,162	-	-	-	-	-
Highlands Conservation Act	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Subtotal, State and Local Grant Programs <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>50,162</b>	<b>50,162</b>	<b>50,162</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total, LWCF Account Funding (Net Budget Authority)</b>	<b>159,114</b>	<b>149,074</b>	<b>160,614</b>	<b>+11,540</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>-</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 permanent LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of -5.7% across all programs. After FY 2022, amounts sequestered from LWCF programs become available for obligation ("Pop-Up") in subsequent years.

<sup>(2)</sup> Subtotals may not appear to add correctly due to rounding of sequester adjustments.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**Allocation of Land and Water Conservation Fund FY 2027**  
*Dollars (Net Budget Authority)*

Account/LWCF Category/Activity/Project	State	Amount
<b>Land Acquisition</b>		
<b>Federal Land Acquisition</b>		
Acquisition Management		18,028,000
Land Protection Planning		493,000
Exchanges		3,091,000
Sportsmen and Recreational Access		15,500,000
Inholdings, Emergencies and Hardships		24,039,995
<b>Land Acquisition Projects</b>		
Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area		5,000,000
Dakota Grassland Conservation Area		2,800,000
Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area		2,000,000
Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area		5,000,000
Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge		500,000
Big Boggy National Wildlife Refuge		10,700,000
Bear River Watershed Conservation Area		1,200,000
Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge		500,000
Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge		1,600,000
Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge		6,000,000
Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge		6,000,000
Blackfoot Valley Conservation Area		1,500,000
Aransas National Wildlife Refuge		5,000,000
Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge		500,000
Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area		1,000,000
Land Acquisition Projects, Subtotal		49,300,000
<b>Subtotal, Federal Land Acquisition</b>		<b>110,451,995</b>
<b>State and Local Grant Programs</b>		
Highlands Conservation Act (Public Law 108-421)		10,000,000
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF)		
Species Recovery Land Acquisition		14,162,005
Habitat Conservation Plan Acquisition		26,000,000
CESF Grant Program, Subtotal		40,162,005
<b>Subtotal, State and Local Grant Programs</b>		<b>50,162,005</b>
<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service LWCF Total (Net Budget Authority)</b>		<b>160,614,000</b>

**FY 2027 Federal Land Acquisition Summary Table**

*(Dollars)*

<b>Budget Authority/Activity</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Federal Land Acquisition</b>	
<b>FY 2027 New Budget Authority</b>	<b>111,186,151</b>
FY 2027 Estimated Sequestration Reduction (-5.7%)	-6,337,611
FY 2027 Estimated Pop Up (+5.7% of 2026)	+5,603,455
<b>FY 2027 Net Budget Authority</b>	<b>110,451,995</b>

**FY 2027 State and Local Grant Summary Table**

*(Dollars)*

<b>Budget Authority/Activity</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Highlands Conservation Act (Public Law 108-421)</b>	
<b>FY 2027 New Budget Authority</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>
FY 2027 Estimated Sequestration Reduction (-5.7%)	-570,000
FY 2027 Estimated Pop Up (+5.7% of 2026)	+570,000
<b>FY 2027 Net Budget Authority</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>
 <b>Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund</b>	
<b>FY 2027 New Budget Authority</b>	<b>40,161,907</b>
FY 2027 Estimated Sequestration Reduction (-5.7%)	-2,289,229
FY 2027 Estimated Pop Up (+5.7% of 2026)	+2,289,327
<b>FY 2027 Net Budget Authority</b>	<b>40,162,005</b>

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) is displayed here to show the entirety of LWCF funding provided to the Service. For more information on CESCF grants, please see the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund chapter.

## **Appropriation: Land Acquisition**

### **Program Overview**

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The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to support the protection of Federal public lands and waters – including national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and public lands recreation areas – and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. The LWCF also funds grants to State and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

Through a variety of programs, LWCF supports our nationwide legacy of high-quality recreation and conservation areas. The Fund receives revenue from offshore oil and gas leasing to support outdoor recreation and conservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources across the country. Every state and most counties in the Nation have benefited from the LWCF since its establishment.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) is responsible for administering and implementing these important programs, in concert with the U.S. Forest Service. The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) amended the LWCF Act to make LWCF funding permanent and LWCF funding is provided through a mandatory account. GAOA requires that the President’s annual budget submission to Congress include a proposed allocation of LWCF funding by account, program, and project for consideration as part of the annual budget process. LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of 5.7%. Beginning in FY 2022, the sequestered amount becomes available or “pops up” in the following year. Unless otherwise indicated, amounts referenced in this section reflect the Net Budget Authority that would be available for programs to execute after sequestration adjustments.

The Land Acquisition appropriation includes FWS’s Federal land acquisition program, which acquires fee title lands and conservation easements for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) and National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS). The LWCF also funds two FWS grant programs that provide funding to states for land acquisitions. Highlands Conservation Act grants provide grant funds to states for land acquisitions in the northeast, and Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grants provide funding to states for land acquisitions to help recover listed species (described in the CESCFC chapter).

**Appropriation: Land Acquisition**  
**LWCF Category: Federal Land Acquisition**

*Dollars in Thousands (\$000) - Net Budgetary Authority*

	2025 Actual <sup>1</sup>	2026 Enacted	2027				Change from 2026( +/-)
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfer s(+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
<b>Federal Land Acquisition</b>							
Acquisition Management (\$000)	18,028	18,028	0	0	0	18,028	0
Land Protection Planning (\$000)	493	493	0	0	0	493	0
Exchanges (\$000)	1,591	1,591	0	0	0	3,091	+1,500
Inholdings, Emergencies, and Hardships (\$000)	11,000	14,000	0	0	0	24,040	+10,040
Sportsmen and Recreational Access (\$000)	15,500	15,500	0	0	0	15,500	0
Projects (\$000)	62,340	49,300	0	0	0	49,300	0
<b>Subtotal, Federal Land Acquisition (\$000)</b>	<b>108,952</b>	<b>98,912</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>110,452</b>	<b>+11,540</b>
<i>FTE</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>0</i>

<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.

**Program Overview**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to fulfill a bipartisan commitment to safeguard our natural areas, water resources, and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. In 1972, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) authorized using LWCF funding for the acquisition of land, waters, or interests therein for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, including those that are listed as endangered or threatened species. When acquired in fee title, these lands and waters may provide the public opportunities to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation. FWS purchases the minimum interest in land that is necessary to meet FWS’s conservation mission. Therefore, if conservation easements will meet biological objectives, then typically FWS will pursue those rather than buying the land in fee.

Each new refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System is strategically planned to give migrating birds safe havens on their journeys, provide fish with clean waters, and ensure that our children and grandchildren have wild places to explore. Consideration is given to how an acquisition would support DOI and FWS goals and priorities to increase public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting and fishing, and provide connectivity for wildlife corridors and habitat.

For every project for which the FWS requests LWCF funding, the FWS has an approved Land Protection Plan (LPP) and has gone through the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review

process. The LPP and NEPA processes include opportunities for public input from local communities, businesses, landowners, non-governmental organizations, Tribes, local governments, and other interested parties. Many land acquisition projects reflect ongoing and new collaboration with States, local governments, and other conservation partners and complement local efforts to conserve and restore habitats and expand public outdoor recreation opportunities.

The FWS acquires land and interests in land from willing sellers only.

### Acquisition Management

The funding supports all costs for staff and the administration, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of FWS' Federal land acquisition program in our Headquarters, Regional, and field offices.

### Land Protection Planning

This activity supports National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for land acquisition projects, including land exchanges, as well as development of Land Protection Plans (LPPs).

### Exchanges

Land exchanges provide unique opportunities to work in partnership with State and local governments, Tribes, other Federal agencies, private landowners and organizations, and local and national conservation groups, and are pursued when the exchange provides a net conservation benefit to the FWS unit. Exchanges are a win-win alternative that helps the FWS to meet conservation goals while allowing the FWS to be a good neighbor to local landowners. The FWS is currently in the process of identifying additional land exchange opportunities for fiscal year 2027.

### Potential Land Exchange Projects

State	Potential Exchanges	Acres to be Acquired	Management Costs
Alaska	Alaska Peninsula NWR	3.0	\$10,000
Alaska	Alaska Peninsula NWR and Kodiak NWR	TBD	\$75,000
Alaska	Kodiak NWR	1,920.0	\$100,000
Arizona	Havasupai NWR	6.0	\$10,000
Arizona	Kofa NWR (various)	159.0	\$20,000
Arkansas	Dale Bumpers White River NWR	250.0	\$50,000
California	Bitter Creek NWR	TBD	\$50,000
California	Humboldt NWR	4.0	\$25,000
California	Modoc NWR	4.0	\$25,000
California	Sacramento River NWR	20.0	\$10,000
California	Stone Lakes NWR	1.0	\$20,000
Georgia	Harris Neck NWR	50.0	\$30,000
Hawaii	Hakalau Forest NWR	2,131.0	\$20,000
Hawaii	Hanalei NWR	8.0	\$20,000
Idaho	Minidoka NWR	350.0	\$20,000
Indiana	Indiana FSA	1.0	\$10,000
Iowa & Wisconsin	Upper Mississippi River NWR	36.0	\$11,000

<b>State</b>	<b>Potential Exchanges</b>	<b>Acres to be Acquired</b>	<b>Management Costs</b>
Louisiana	Laccasine/Sabine NWRs	1,900.0	\$30,000
Minnesota	Beltrami WMA (LUP)	544.0	\$20,000
Minnesota	Big Stone County WPA (2)	13.0	\$20,000
Minnesota	Glacial Ridge NWR	200.0	\$15,000
Minnesota	Grant County WPA	3.0	\$15,000
Minnesota	Morrison County FSA	1.0	\$15,000
Minnesota	Pope County WPA	6.0	\$15,000
Montana	Various Montana WPAs and WMDs	40.0	\$50,000
New Jersey	EB Forsythe NWR	26.0	\$35,000
New Mexico	Valle de Oro NWR	212	\$40,000
North Dakota	Various North Dakota WPA's and WMD's	2,500.0	\$500,000
Oregon	Bandon Marsh NWR	1.0	\$10,000
Oregon	Cold Springs NWR	14.0	\$40,000
Oregon	Tualatin River NWR	4.1	\$20,000
South Dakota	Various South Dakota WPA's & WMD's	2,500.0	\$500,000
Texas	Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR (various)	714.5	\$100,000
Additional Opportunities To Be Determined	Various	TBD	\$1,160,000
<b>Total Exchange Acres and Management Costs</b>		<b>13,622</b>	<b>\$3,091,000</b>

### **Inholdings, Emergencies, and Hardships**

FWS uses funding in this activity to support purchases and exchanges of lands and easements from willing sellers for three categories: inholdings, emergencies, and hardships. These acquisition opportunities arise in between appropriations cycles and are generally smaller or cannot wait until the next appropriations cycle.

#### *Use of Residual LWCF Funds*

Federal land acquisition projects sometimes have small amounts of funds remaining after land has been acquired that are insufficient to acquire additional land. FWS reallocates residual discretionary line-item project funds of less than \$50,000 to the Inholdings, Emergencies, and Hardships line-item to be used to protect other lands that do not have project funding. This shift enables the FWS to acquire valuable wildlife habitat within approved refuge acquisition boundaries that becomes available for acquisition between appropriations cycles.

### **Recreational Access**

This activity provides funding for acquisition of land to conserve important wildlife habitats that provide public recreational opportunities. Refuges that have willing sellers may request funds to acquire lands to provide public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

### **Projects**

This activity funds individual land acquisition projects. Each year, the FWS acquires land or interests in land, such as conservation easements, using the LWCF. The acquired lands provide habitat for wildlife and enhance FWS management capability, contributing to achievement of refuge conservation objectives and the purposes for which the unit was established. Fee title acquisitions also generate economic benefits for local communities and provide the public with opportunities to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and enjoy environmental education and interpretation. Conservation easements are an important tool to prevent habitat fragmentation and protect wildlife corridors while allowing ranching, farming, and forest operations to continue, thereby promoting public-private partnerships to conserve, manage and restore fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats. Some conservation easements include public recreational access.

Consistent with Congressional direction, the FWS submits the following Federal land acquisition projects as part of the 2027 Budget process. Detailed final project data sheets for each identified project are included below and will be made available on the Department's LWCF website:

<https://www.doi.gov/lwcf>.

The projects listed below are listed in priority order and have identified willing sellers. The Department will keep Congress informed should the circumstances of a specific project change during the 2027 Budget process.

The Federal Land Acquisition project funding amounts are shown in Net Budget Authority, the amount needed to execute proposed activities after sequester reductions and pop-up adjustments.

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The 2027 allocation for Federal Land Acquisition is \$110,452,000 and 89 FTEs, a change of +\$11,540,000 and +0 FTEs from the 2026 enacted level.

#### **Exchanges for FY 2027 (+\$1,500,000/ +0 FTE)**

The FWS is requesting this additional funding to facilitate more timely execution of land exchanges by minimizing capacity constraints that currently exist to conduct due diligence.

#### **Inholdings, Emergencies and Hardships for FY 2027 (+\$10,040,000/ +0 FTE)**

The FWS is requesting this additional funding for acquisition opportunities within approved refuge acquisition boundaries to purchase lands that connect with private or State conserved lands, to create larger contiguous blocks of protected wildlife habitat, to expand public recreational opportunities and for management efficiencies.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**FY 2027 LWCF Land Acquisition Requested Project List**  
*(Dollars)*

<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	FL	5,000	833
2	Dakota Grassland Conservation Area	SD, ND	2,800	1,647
3	Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area	SD, ND	2,000	952
4	Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area	FL	5,000	714
5	Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge	IL, MO	500	500
6	Big Boggy National Wildlife Refuge	TX	10,700	2,042
7	Bear River Watershed Conservation Area	ID, UT, WY	1,200	840
8	Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge	IN	500	150
9	Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge	TX	1,600	80
10	Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge	LA	6,000	2,899
11	Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge	GA	6,000	2,000
12	Blackfoot Valley Conservation Area	MT	1,500	1,763
13	Aransas National Wildlife Refuge	TX	5,000	1,687
14	Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge	NJ	500	332
15	Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area	KS	1,000	333
	<b>FY 2027 Requested Project List</b>		<b>49,300</b>	<b>17,165</b>

(1) 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:** 2027

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**Project / Unit:** Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area

**Priority:** 1

**State(s):** FL

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

**Location:**

Spans 12 counties in Southwest Florida including Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk, and Sarasota Counties.

**Project Estimates**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	7	\$0
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	799,160	7,991,600,000

**Project Description:**

The Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area is a collaborative effort driven by a network of partners to conserve wildlife corridors from Southwest Florida into the state's northern regions. This effort benefits many species of native plants and wildlife, including over 100 federally- and state-listed species such as the Everglade snail kite, and Florida panther. Protection and management actions would support Florida's family farms and ranches, improve water quality, quantity, and water storage within the Greater Everglades. As in other Conservation Areas, the FWS's focus is on conserving important wildlife habitat through voluntary conservation easements.

**Purpose / Need:**

The FWS's conservation easement program facilitates public-private partnerships and reduces conflicts between landowners and listed species by offering a financial incentive to maintain important wildlife habitat while protecting Florida's cattle ranching heritage. This phased easement acquisition will conserve wetland and upland habitats that support migratory birds, listed species, and regionally important wildlife and plant communities, while helping to connect priority wildlife corridors. Since landowners continue management of the land under the easement, the FWS incurs minimal management costs.

**Cooperator(s):**

Conservation Area partners include 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 Land, Ducks Unlimited, USDA - Natural Resources

Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, 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>	\$1,000	\$2,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include the posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include monitoring easements and managing habitats, including prescribed burns.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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

**Priority:** 2

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

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

**Location:**

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

**Project Estimates**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>1,647</b>	<b>\$2,800,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	114,036	\$61,106,442
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	1,824,317	\$1,737,323,184

**Project Description:**

The Prairie Pothole Region—spanning parts of the Dakotas, Montana, Iowa, and Minnesota—is a vital grassland-wetland ecosystem that supports over half of North America’s breeding waterfowl. The Dakota Grassland Conservation Area helps protect the most important waterfowl breeding habitat within this landscape, primarily through the acquisition of voluntary grassland conservation easements. These easements preserve critical grassland nesting areas near prairie potholes—many supporting up to 100 duck pairs per square mile—directly supporting the North American Waterfowl Management Plan goals. Since landowners continue management of the land under these easements, the FWS incurs minimal management costs.

**Purpose / Need:**

With over 700 willing seller landowners awaiting easement offers, the Conservation Area reflects strong demand, high biological value, and cost-effective conservation through landowner partnerships. These 13 grassland conservation easements span a broad geographic area benefiting multiple watersheds and migratory corridors identified by North Dakota and South Dakota, while enhancing recreational opportunities and supporting local economies through the conservation of waterfowl, game birds, and big game.

**Cooperator(s):**

Conservation Area partners include The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Audubon Great Plains, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, Pheasants Forever, and Prairie Pothole Joint Venture.

## Operations & Maintenance

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

### Describe O&M:

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

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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

**Priority:** 3

**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**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	80,535	\$25,048,565
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	108,513	\$82,483,381

**Project Description:**

Established in 2000, the Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area aims to conserve tallgrass prairie in southeastern North Dakota and eastern South Dakota through the acquisition of voluntary grassland conservation easements. This diverse ecosystem supports over 147 breeding bird species, including declining grassland birds, and also boasts waterfowl densities exceeding 100 pairs per square mile—some of the highest duck production habitat in the nation. Since landowners continue management of the land under these easements, the FWS incurs minimal management costs.

**Purpose / Need:**

With over 200 willing seller landowners expressing interest, the project shows strong biological value and transactional readiness. These six grassland conservation easement acquisitions will protect important breeding habitat for grassland birds, waterfowl, and other wildlife, all while supporting ranching and other traditional working operations. These easements contribute to expanding recreational opportunities locally and nationally by supporting populations of migratory waterfowl, game birds, and big game.

**Cooperator(s):**

Wildlife Management Area partners include the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, Audubon Great Plains, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, and Pheasants Forever.

**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:**

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

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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**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**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	13,210	\$40,367,313
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	136,076	\$398,122,833

**Project Description:**

Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area protects the headwaters of the Greater Everglades ecosystem, conserving diverse wetland and upland habitats in the Kissimmee River Basin. These habitats support migratory birds, more than 150 federally- and state-listed species, and imperiled wildlife like the Florida panther. Through voluntary easements, FWS partners with landowners to preserve habitat and Florida’s ranching heritage, while minimizing federal management costs.

**Purpose / Need:**

Phased acquisition of this voluntary conservation easement from a willing seller will protect diverse habitats—seasonally wet grasslands, longleaf pine savannas, sandhill, scrub, and forested wetlands—while enhancing habitat connectivity and resilience in the Greater Everglades ecosystem. Acquisition will help preserve Florida’s working rural landscape, promote active land management, support listed species, and expand public-private partnerships for long-term habitat conservation.

**Cooperator(s):**

Refuge and Conservation Area partners include 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, Ducks Unlimited, USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service, and The Nature Conservancy. FWS is a partner of the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape.

## Operations & Maintenance

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$2,000	\$4,000

### Describe O&M:

Start-up costs include the posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include monitoring easements and managing habitats, including prescribed burns.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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

**Priority:** 5

**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 2027</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	8,404	\$3,042,400
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	110,514	\$271,100,016

**Project Description:**

The Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge, established in 2000 following the 1993 flood, lies in the free-flowing section of the river below the Missouri confluence. It features floodplain hardwood forests, wetlands, and open water, supporting native fish during high water and creating a corridor of vital habitat for migratory birds and wildlife. Designated an Important Bird Area in 2008, the Refuge offers public opportunities for wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing.

**Purpose / Need:**

Acquiring land from willing sellers in Dogtooth Bend will help restore natural floodplain functions, benefiting species like pallid sturgeon, least tern, and native mussels. It will also improve water quality, floodwater storage, and habitat for migratory waterfowl. Phased acquisition of these two tracts will enable the FWS expand public access and recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation, while reducing habitat fragmentation in a key migratory flyway.

**Cooperator(s):**

Partners supporting FY27 acquisitions include Ducks Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy. Refuge partners further include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Refuge also participates in the Middle Mississippi River Partnership—a collaboration of 22 federal, state, academic, and nonprofit organizations working together since 2004 to restore and enhance 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:**

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

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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**Project / Unit:** Big Boggy National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 6

**State(s):** TX

**Congressional District(s):** TX-22, TX-27

**Location:**

Matagorda and Jackson Counties.

**Project Estimates**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>2,042</b>	<b>\$10,700,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	4,526	\$2,529,860
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	48,432	\$57,005,442

**Project Description:**

Big Boggy National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1983 to protect saline and intermediate marsh habitat. The Refuge is comprised of salt marshlands and coastal prairies, which support migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading and waterbirds, and native resident wildlife species dependent on these habitats. Aside from being a haven for wildlife, the Refuge benefits public recreation, offering seasonal waterfowl hunting and fishing access on Boggy Creek.

**Purpose / Need:**

This is part of a phased acquisition to conserve coastal prairie and improve connectivity among existing Refuge System lands in Matagorda County. This acquisition from a willing seller is adjacent to existing refuge lands within San Bernard NWR and would protect inland habitats from erosion and damage from tropical storms and increase the resiliency of the Refuge and its neighboring communities. Acquisition will allow FWS to expand public waterfowl hunting opportunities.

**Cooperator(s):**

Refuge partners include the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

**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>	\$1,250	\$750

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include posting of boundary signs, prescribed fire, and vegetation management. Annual costs include habitat management and maintenance.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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

**Priority:** 7

**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 2027</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	7,809	\$8,595,940
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	911,351	\$898,396,374

**Project Description:**

The Bear River Watershed Conservation Area spans parts of Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming, conserving wetlands, riparian corridors, and sagebrush ecosystems through the use of voluntary conservation easements. The FWS works with private landowners to conserve farm and ranch lands that include these vital wildlife habitats. Wetlands and riparian areas provide key stopover and nesting sites for millions of migratory birds in the Pacific and Central Flyways, and the watershed serves as a critical corridor linking the northern and southern Rockies and Greater Yellowstone ecosystems for big game species. Easement acquisitions enhance connectivity among refuges and protected lands that support over 270 species, including greater sage-grouse and Bonneville cutthroat trout.

**Purpose / Need:**

Featuring a mix of aquatic, wetland, riparian, and upland habitats, these two voluntary conservation easements from willing sellers will permanently protect the land's ecological integrity while allowing traditional agricultural practices to continue. The easements will safeguard water quality and quantity, maintain wildlife corridors and connectivity, and provide food, cover, and space for native fish and

wildlife. By preserving healthy habitat for diverse species and supporting migratory corridors, these protections ensure long-term conservation benefits across the landscape.

**Cooperator(s):**

Refuge and Conservation Area partners include The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, Western Rivers Conservancy, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust, and PacifiCorp.

**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:** 2027

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

**Priority:** 8

**State(s):** IN

**Congressional District(s):** IN-08

**Location:**

Gibson and Pike Counties.

**Project Estimates**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	12,657	\$14,405,358
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	11,649	\$37,380,110

**Project Description:**

Established in 1994, Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge protects one of Indiana’s last intact floodplain forests and helps improve Patoka River water quality. Spanning 30 miles of river corridor, it provides vital habitat for migratory birds, fish, and listed species like the Indiana bat and whooping crane. Located near major metro areas, the Refuge offers public recreation such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography.

**Purpose / Need:**

Featuring floodplain forests, restored wetlands, and a half-mile of river frontage, the three tracts will connect existing Refuge lands and eliminate flood-prone private inholdings. These acquisitions from willing sellers will enhance public access and recreation opportunities, supporting hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation across diverse habitats. These acquisitions will also advance Refuge priorities by reducing fragmentation, enhancing connectivity within the riverine system, and strengthening management efficiency through partnerships.

**Cooperator(s):**

Partners supporting FY27 acquisitions include Ducks Unlimited, Friends of Patoka Refuge, and Indiana Department of Transportation. Refuge partners further include Indiana Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, Sycamore Land Trust, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Duke Energy, Evansville Chapter of the Audubon Society, and USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service.

## 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:**

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

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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**Project / Unit:** Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 9

**State(s):** TX

**Congressional District(s):** TX-10

**Location:**

60 miles west of Houston, Texas in Austin and Colorado Counties.

**Project Estimates**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>\$1,600,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	10,541	\$6,459,530
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	19,379	\$387,584,000

**Project Description:**

Established in 1972, Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge protects one of the last populations of the Attwater’s prairie-chicken, one of the most endangered birds in North America. The Refuge focuses on habitat restoration and offers wildlife viewing, photography, and environmental education, partnering with local and Houston-area schools. As one of only two places where the Attwater’s prairie-chicken survives, it draws global visitors. While not currently open to hunting, upland game opportunities are under review.

**Purpose / Need:**

These two acquisitions from willing sellers would strengthen habitat connectivity and advance recovery goals for the endangered Attwater’s prairie-chicken, supporting the Refuge’s conservation mission. Acquisition of these tracts would improve habitat management, lower operational costs, and enhance access for restoration efforts such as prescribed fire. Acquisition would provide opportunities to expand public recreation, hunting, and grazing, while supporting local ranching and preserving critical prairie ecosystems.

**Cooperator(s):**

Refuge partners include the Coastal Prairie Initiative and The Nature 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>	\$650	\$3,000

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs will include posting boundary signs and realigning fences. Annual costs include habitat management activities such as grazing and prescribed fire.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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**Project / Unit:** Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 10

**State(s):** LA

**Congressional District(s):** LA-4, LA-05

**Location:**

Morehouse and Union Parishes.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>2,899</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	54,243	\$39,660,162
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	26,323	\$54,479,600

**Project Description:**

Established in 1978, Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge conserves wetlands and migratory bird habitat along 18 miles of the Ouachita River. Its cypress swamps, bottomland hardwoods, and upland forests support diverse wildlife, including alligators, bald eagles, Louisiana black bears, Rafinesque’s big-eared bats, and the threatened red-cockaded woodpecker. The Refuge offers public recreation such as birding, fishing, boating, hunting, and wildlife observation.

**Purpose / Need:**

Phased acquisition of this bottomland hardwood tract, which spans nearly the entire eastern boundary of the Refuge, from a willing seller will provide public access to roughly 7,000 acres of existing Refuge lands that are largely inaccessible today as they are bounded on one side by the Ouachita River and on the other side by this proposed acquisition property. Acquisition will significantly enhance recreational opportunities— including hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation—and strengthen connectivity with the nearby Felsenthal NWR to support cross-refuge management and operational efficiency.

**Cooperator(s):**

Partners supporting the proposed FY27 acquisition, and cooperating more broadly at the refuge scale, include The Conservation Fund and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

**Operations & Maintenance**

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

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up costs include posting of boundary signs. Annual costs would include habitat management and maintenance.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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

**Priority:** 11

**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**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	406,936	\$5,625,271
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	118,779	\$235,978,068

**Project Description:**

Established in 1937, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge protects the unique Okefenokee Swamp and supports diverse wildlife, including threatened species like the red-cockaded woodpecker and indigo snake. It is one of the world’s largest intact freshwater ecosystems, recognized as a Wetland of International Importance and nominated as a World Heritage Site. The Refuge offers public recreation such as canoeing, hiking, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

**Purpose / Need:**

This phased acquisition from a willing seller is along the Refuge’s western boundary. The tract connects to State Highway 177, which will create a natural firebreak and improve protection for nearby private lands. Restoring slash pine to longleaf pine will enhance fire resilience and provide habitat for threatened species. The tract expands public access for hunting, fishing, and recreation—including to currently landlocked areas—and offers a site for a new boat ramp on the Suwannee River. It also supports public-private conservation through the Greater Okefenokee Association of Landowners.

**Cooperator(s):**

Partners supporting the proposed FY27 acquisition, and cooperating more broadly at the refuge scale, include The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Okefenokee-Osceola Longleaf Initiative, the Muscogee Nation, and the Greater Okefenokee Association of Landowners.

## Operations & Maintenance

<b>Savings/Cost</b>	<b>Start-up</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$440,000	\$0
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$8,000	\$24,000

### **Describe O&M:**

Start-up savings are the result of the land being converted from commercial slash pine to longleaf pine by the landowner before being acquired by the FWS. Start-up costs include posting of boundary signs and installation of firebreaks. Annual costs include maintenance and habitat management.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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

**Priority:** 12

**State(s):** MT

**Congressional District(s):** MT-01, MT-02

**Location:**

Missoula, Powell, and Lewis and Clark Counties.

**Project Estimates**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>1,763</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	63,295	\$27,355,261
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	34,942	\$29,729,047

**Project Description:**

The Blackfoot Valley Conservation Area, established in 1997, uses conservation easements to protect one of the most intact, low-elevation river valley ecosystems in western Montana. The watershed supports over 250 bird species, 63 mammals, and multiple listed species such as grizzly bear and bull trout. Since landowners continue management of the land under these easements, the FWS incurs minimal management costs.

**Purpose / Need:**

These two voluntary conservation easements from willing sellers will strengthen connectivity with 13,000 acres of easements and nearby public lands. It supports Montana's State Wildlife Action Plan by protecting key migration corridors and winter range for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn, while enhancing hunting and fishing opportunities. It also promotes active rangeland management, public-private partnerships, and habitat conservation for listed species.

**Cooperator(s):**

Conservation Area partners include The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, 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>	\$0	\$5,000

**Describe O&M:**

Annual costs include easement monitoring and compliance.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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

**Priority:** 13

**State(s):** TX

**Congressional District(s):** TX-22, TX-27

**Location:**

Aransas, Calhoun, Goliad, Jackson, Matagorda, Refugio, San Patricio, and Victoria Counties.

**Project Estimates**

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>1,687</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	115,324	\$17,166,817
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	93,229	\$276,314,730

**Project Description:**

Established in 1937 on the south Texas coast, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge conserves vital marsh, prairie, and pond habitats for waterfowl, waterbirds, and other resident and migratory species. The Refuge became central to whooping crane recovery efforts in 1941 and now supports over 400 bird species, 39 mammals, and 100 reptiles and amphibians. The acquisition area provides habitat for several federally listed species, including the whooping crane and piping plover. The Refuge offers public recreation, including wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, and beachcombing.

**Purpose / Need:**

This is part of a multi-phase acquisition of coastal prairie from a willing seller. It provides high-quality habitat for waterfowl, waterbirds, and federally listed species, supporting the refuge's conservation mission. Adjacent to the State's Powderhorn Wildlife Management Area, it enhances landscape connectivity and helps buffer inland areas from erosion and storm impacts.

**Cooperator(s):**

Refuge partners include The Conservation Fund, Friends of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, FarWide Conservation Trust, and International Crane Foundation.

**Operations & Maintenance**

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Savings:</b>	\$110,500	\$110,500
<b>Estimated O&amp;M Costs:</b>	\$7,500	\$4,500

**Describe O&M:**

Start-up and annual saving costs are the result of using cooperative farming and grazing as management tools on this tract. Start-up costs include posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include habitat management and maintenance.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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**Project / Unit:** Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

**Priority:** 14

**State(s):** NJ

**Congressional District(s):** NJ-02, NJ-03, NJ-04

**Location:**

Spans 50 miles along coastal New Jersey from Barnegat Bay in Brick Township to Reeds Bay, across Atlantic, Burlington, and Ocean Counties.

**Project Estimates**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	48,122	\$53,413,269
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	23,870	\$35,948,830

**Project Description:**

Established in 1984, Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge protects tidal wetlands and shallow bays that serve as vital habitat for migratory waterbirds. Situated along one of the Atlantic Flyway's most active flight paths, the Refuge is a critical stopover during seasonal bird migrations and offers world class opportunities for birding and wildlife photography. The Refuge offers public hunting and fishing opportunities, in addition to wildlife observation and photography, and routinely sees over 400,000 visits each year.

**Purpose / Need:**

These fee title acquisitions from willing sellers will protect habitat for migratory waterbirds and expand public recreational opportunities including hunting and fishing, as well as hiking, boating, and bird watching. These six tracts will support important federal- and state-listed species including osprey, herons, and egrets, and also benefit the federally listed piping plover and red knot, as well as the saltmarsh sparrow, as they take advantage of these stops along their migration routes.

**Cooperator(s):**

Partners supporting the proposed FY27 acquisitions, and cooperating more broadly at the refuge scale, include Trust for Public Land and Save Barnegat Bay.

**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:**

Startup costs include initial restoration and the posting of boundary signs. Annual costs include habitat management and maintenance.

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

**Fiscal Year:** 2027

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**Project / Unit:** Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area

**Priority:** 15

**State(s):** KS

**Congressional District(s):** KS-1, KS-2, KS-4

**Location:**

The Flint Hills of eastern Kansas run north-south in a long, narrow band and include portions of 21 counties.

**Project Estimates**

<b>Land/Cost</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Estimate for FY 2027</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>Acquired to Date</b>	11,842	\$4,528,350
<b>Remaining to be Acquired</b>	1,087,825	\$3,261,843,718

**Project Description:**

Tallgrass prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States, with less than 4 percent of the original acreage remaining. The purpose of the Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area to help maintain the integrity of tallgrass prairie wildlife habitat, stream water quality, and the rich agricultural heritage of the Flint Hills through voluntary conservation easements. These easements will protect habitat for more than 100 species of grassland birds and 500 plant species and ensure the region's sustainable ranching culture--which directly supports conservation of the tallgrass prairie--continues. Since landowners continue management of the land under the easements, FWS incurs minimal management costs.

**Purpose / Need:**

Funding will complete the phased acquisition of a voluntary conservation easement from a willing seller. The acquisition will protect tallgrass prairie while allowing traditional ranching to continue, and also connect key migration corridors, foster public-private partnerships, and support habitat conservation for listed species. It will advance landscape-scale conservation for grassland and migratory birds such as Henslow's sparrow, short-eared owl, and Bell's vireo. Additionally, it will protect prairie streams critical to the endangered Topeka shiner, whose populations have declined by over 80%.

**Cooperator(s):**

Conservation Area partners include The Nature Conservancy and The Conservation Fund.

## Operations & Maintenance

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

### Describe O&M:

Annual costs include easement monitoring and enforcement.

**Appropriation: Land Acquisition**

**LWCF Category: State and Local Grant Programs**

**Activity: Highlands Conservation Act**

LWCF Category/ Budget Activity	2025 Actual	2026 Enacted	2027				Change from 2026 (+/-)	
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request		
<b>Grants to States</b>								
Highlands Conservation Act	(\$000)	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	10,000	0
	FTE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*All FY 2025, 2026, and 2027 LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of -5.7% which by law, is applied during the year of execution uniformly across all programs.*

**Program Overview**

The Highlands Conservation Act (P.L. 108-421, 2004, 118 Stat. 2375, as amended through P.L. 117-328, 2022) (HCA) authorizes a grant program in four States (Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania) to conserve State Agency land conservation priorities and protect natural resources in the Highlands Region, a nationally-important landscape distinguished by Appalachian ridges, hills, and plateaus that provides outdoor recreational opportunities for millions of people living in and visiting the Northeast. Conservation land acquired under the program may only be held by a State Conservation Agency, a County, or a Municipality.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency for administering [the HCA Grant Program](#), and works in partnership with State Conservation Agencies, the counties and municipalities of the Highlands Region, and the U.S. Forest Service. Since passage of the HCA in 2004, more than 20,000 acres of state-priority lands have been protected under the program. Projects support key conservation objectives outlined in the HCA such as protecting high priority water, forest, wildlife, agriculture, and recreational resources.

**Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for Highlands is \$10,000,000 and 0 FTE, equal to the FY 2026 Enacted.

# Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund

## Authorizing Statutes

*Endangered Species Act of 1973*, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Prohibits the import, export, or taking of fish and wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species; provides for adding species to and removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species, and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery; provides for interagency cooperation to avoid take of listed species and for issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities; and implements the provisions of the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna* (CITES).

*Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965*, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601). Authorizes appropriations to the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire land for national wildlife refuges as otherwise authorized by law.

*Great American Outdoors Act* (54 U.S.C. 2003). Establishes the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund to support deferred maintenance projects on Federal lands; requires deposits equal to 50% of all Federal revenues from the development of oil, gas, coal, or alternative or renewable energy on Federal lands and waters for fiscal years 2021-2025; and makes funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) permanent.

**Appropriation: Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund**

**Activity: Land Acquisition (Permanent)**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Land Acquisition</b>											
Species Recovery Land Acquisition	14,151	-	14,162	-	-	-	-	-	14,162	-	-
HCP Land Acquisition Grants to States	25,984	-	26,001	-	-	-	-1	-	26,000	-	-1
<b>Subtotal, Land Acquisition</b>	<b>40,135</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>40,163</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>40,162</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-1</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	-2,288	-	-2,289	-	-	-	-	-	-2,289	-	-
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	2,315	-	2,288	-	-	-	+1	-	2,289	-	+1
<b>Total, Land Acquisition</b>	<b>40,162</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>40,162</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>40,162</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**Activity: Grants and Administration (Discretionary)**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Grants and Administration</b>											
Conservation Grants	13,300	-	11,930	-	-	-	-11,930	-	-	-	-11,930
HCP Assistance Grants	7,000	-	7,680	-	-	-	-7,680	-	-	-	-7,680
Administration	2,700	7	2,592	7	-	-	-2,592	-7	-	-	-2,592
<b>Total, Grants and Administration</b>	<b>23,000</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22,202</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-22,202</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-22,202</b>

**Activity: Payment to Special Fund Unavailable Receipt (Permanent)<sup>1</sup>**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Total, Payment to Special Fund Unavailable Receipt</b>	<b>89,895</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>87,694</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+5,046</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>92,740</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+5,046</b>

<sup>1</sup> Amounts shown reflect an annual deposit of an amount equal to 5 percent of total Federal Aid/Sport Fish and Lacey Act violation collections above \$500,000 into this Special Fund. The Special Fund amounts are not available in the fiscal year in which they are collected but are available for subsequent appropriation to the CESCOF.

## **Program Overview**

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The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF; Section 6 of the ESA), administered by the Service's Ecological Services program, provides grant funding to States and territories for conservation of listed and at-risk species and habitats on non-Federal lands, including habitat acquisition, conservation planning, habitat restoration, status surveys, captive propagation, and reintroduction, research, and education.

Land acquisition grants address land-based threats by funding land purchases to preserve key habitats. Conservation Planning Assistance grants assist in abating threats by protecting habitat and preventing the decline of sensitive species. The plans and agreements funded through these grants are pro-active landscape-level planning instruments that balance non-Federal land development objectives with species conservation.

In order to receive funds under the CESCF program, States and territories must contribute 25 percent of the estimated costs of approved projects, or 10 percent when two or more States or Territories implement a joint project. The balance of the estimated cost is reimbursed through these grants. To ensure that States and territories are able to effectively carry out endangered species conservation through this program, a State or territory must enter into a cooperative agreement with the Service to receive grants. All 50 States currently have cooperative agreements for animals, and 44 States have cooperative agreements for plants. All but one of the territories have cooperative agreements for both animals and plants.

### **Recovery Land Acquisition Grants (LWCF Permanent Funding)**

Loss of habitat is the primary threat to most listed species. Land acquisition is an efficient means of safeguarding habitats essential for recovery of listed species from land use changes that impair or destroy key habitat values. This program receives permanent LWCF funding.

### **Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants (LWCF Permanent Funding)**

HCP Land Acquisition Grants are used by States and non-Federal entities to acquire habitats from willing sellers and to complement, not replace, the mitigation responsibilities of HCP permittees. States and territories receive grants for land acquisitions associated with approved HCPs because of their authorities and close working relationships with local governments and private landowners. This program receives permanent LWCF funding.

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The budget does not request discretionary funding for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund because it is duplicative of permanent funding that the program receives from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

# North American Wetlands Conservation Fund

## **Appropriations Language**

*For expenses necessary to carry out the provisions of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4401 et seq.), \$10,000,000, to remain available until expended.*

## **Authorizing Statutes**

The *North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989* (16 U.S.C. 4401-4414) authorizes appropriations to be used to encourage partnerships among public agencies and other interests to protect, enhance, restore, and manage wetland ecosystems and other habitats for migratory birds and other fish and wildlife; to maintain current or improved distributions of migratory bird populations; and to sustain an abundance of waterfowl and other migratory birds consistent with goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and international obligations. Section 4406 of the Act authorizes fines, penalties, and forfeitures from violations of the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* to be made available for wetlands conservation projects. Section 4407 authorizes interest on excise taxes from the sale of hunting equipment to be deposited and used for wetlands conservation grants and costs for administering this grant program. Such amounts have been permanently appropriated as provided in P.L. 103-138.

The *Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act*, (16 U.S.C. 3951-3956) establishes the National Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Program within the Sport Fish Restoration Account for projects authorized by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act in coastal States.

The *Wallop-Breaux Amendment* to the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program established the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, (26 U.S.C. 9504) and authorizes appropriations from the Sport Fish Restoration Account to carry out the *Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act*.

The *Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act* (P.L. 119-40) amended the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669(b)(2)(C)) to extend to 2033 the availability of interest earned on obligations held in the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Fund (i.e., the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund) to carry out approved wetlands conservation projects.

## North American Wetlands Conservation Fund

<b>Activity: North American Wetlands Conservation Fund - Discretionary</b>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Total, North American Wetlands Conservation Fund - Discretionary</b>	49,000	8	49,000	8	-	-	-39,000	-	10,000	8	-39,000

<b>Activity: North American Wetlands Conservation Fund - MBTA Fines (Permanent)</b>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, North American Wetlands Conservation Fund - MBTA Fines</b>	147	-	150	1	-	-	-	-	150	1	-
<i>Sequestration</i>	-8	-	-9	-	-	-	-	-	-9	-	-
<b>Total, North American Wetlands Conservation Fund - MBTA Fines</b>	139	-	141	1	-	-	-	-	141	1	-

*Activity: North American Wetlands Conservation Fund - Discretionary*

<b>Summary of 2027 Program Changes for North American Wetlands Conservation Fund - Discretionary</b>		
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>		
<b>Program Changes</b>	<b>2027 Request Change</b>	<b>FTE Change</b>
<i>NAWCA</i>	<i>-39,000</i>	<i>+0</i>
<b>TOTAL Program Changes</b>	<b>-39,000</b>	<b>+0</b>

**Program Overview**

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) contributes to wetland conservation in the U.S. As the primary Federal grant program dedicated to preserving wetland habitats for migratory birds, NAWCA has engaged in over 3,400 projects benefiting 35 million acres of wetlands, collaborating with 7,100 partners in all 50 States and territories.

NAWCA grants support various initiatives that protect habitat for wetland-dependent birds and wildlife. These projects enhance flood control, recharge groundwater, and improve local water quality while increasing recreational opportunities like hunting and bird watching. Since its inception, NAWCA has fostered many public-private partnerships that effectively leverage funding to maintain wetland health and integrity, often exceeding the required non-federal matching ratio.

**Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

The 2027 budget request for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund is \$10,000,000 and 8 FTE, a program change of -\$39,000,000 and -0 FTE from the 2026 Enacted.

Mandatory Receipts – Receipts are derived from court-imposed fines for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and vary from year to year. The FY 2027 estimate is \$141,450 for this account.

**NAWCA – Discretionary (-\$39,000,000/ -0 FTE)** – Funding will be allocated across Standard and Small Grants to maximize conservation benefits while supporting Administration priorities like land management, recreation access, and resource stewardship.

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# Multinational Species Conservation Fund

## Authorizing Statutes

The *African Elephant Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4201-4203, 4211-4214, 4221-4225, 4241-4246, 1538) authorizes funding for approved projects that enhance compliance with CITES, conservation, management and protection of African elephants and their habitats, and combating ivory trafficking. The Act authorizes prohibitions against the sale, importation, and exportation of illegally obtained ivory derived from African elephants. The Act also authorizes three percent or \$100,000, whichever is greater, to pay necessary administrative expenses. Authorized through FY2028.

The *Asian Elephant Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 4261-4266, 1538) authorizes financial assistance for the conservation and protection of wild Asian elephants and their habitats. The Act also authorizes three percent or \$100,000, whichever is greater, to pay necessary administrative expenses. Authorized through FY2028.

The *Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 5301-5306, 1538) authorizes funding to assist in the conservation of tigers in Asia and rhinoceroses in Asia and Africa, in combating trafficking of rhinoceros and tiger parts, and in strengthening compliance with CITES. The Act prohibits the sale, importation, and exportation of products derived from any species of rhinoceros or tiger. The Act also authorizes three percent or \$100,000, whichever is greater, to pay necessary administrative expenses. Authorized through FY2028.

The *Great Ape Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 6301-6305, 1538) authorizes financial assistance for the conservation of great apes within their ranges in Africa and Asia. The Act also authorizes three percent or \$150,000, whichever is greater, to pay necessary administrative expenses. Authorized through FY2028.

The *Marine Turtle Conservation Act* (16 U.S.C. 6601-6607) authorizes financial assistance for the conservation of marine turtles, freshwater turtles, tortoises, and the habitats of marine turtles, freshwater turtles, and tortoises in foreign countries and territories of the United States. The Act also authorizes five percent or \$150,000, whichever is greater, to pay necessary administrative expenses. Authorized through FY2028.

The *Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act* (39 U.S.C. 416), as amended, requires the United States Postal Service to issue and sell the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp. As of FY 2022, the U.S. Postal Service is required to sell all remaining copies of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund Semipostal Stamp, as authorized under the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-241) and reauthorized in the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-127). The Act directs the proceeds to be divided equally among the existing Multinational Species Conservation Funds and administered by the Service. By law, the proceeds cannot affect or influence the disposition of discretionary appropriations.

**Appropriation: Multinational Species Conservation Fund**

<b>Activity: African Elephant Conservation Fund</b>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
<b>Total, African Elephant Conservation Fund</b>	4,682	2	4,796	2	-	-	-4,796	-2	-	-	-4,796

<b>Activity: Asian Elephant Conservation Fund</b>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
<b>Total, Asian Elephant Conservation Fund</b>	2,945	-	3,017	-	-	-	-3,017	-	-	-	-3,017

### Activity: Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Budget Authority    FTE		Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)			
<b>Total, Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund</b>	6,236	2	6,388	2	-	-	-6,388	-2	-	-	-6,388

### Activity: Great Ape Conservation Fund

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Budget Authority    FTE		Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)			
<b>Total, Great Ape Conservation Fund</b>	3,711	-	3,802	-	-	-	-3,802	-	-	-	-3,802

### Activity: Marine Turtle Conservation Fund

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Budget Authority    FTE		Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)			
<b>Total, Marine Turtle Conservation Fund</b>	2,926	-	2,997	-	-	-	-2,997	-	-	-	-2,997

### **Program Mission**

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To conserve foreign species by providing technical and financial assistance to non-governmental organizations and international and foreign-led programs that support healthy and sustainable populations of elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, apes, tortoises, marine turtles, and freshwater turtles and tortoises.

### **Program Overview**

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The Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCFs) spend American tax dollars on foreign species in different countries rather than focusing limited resources on America's native endangered species. As a responsible steward of hard-earned American taxes, the Administration is prioritizing conservation work that benefits America's iconic species.

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The budget does not request funding for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, reserving funding for domestic species.

# Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund

## **Authorizing Statute**

The *Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act of 2006*, (16 U.S.C. 6101-6109) authorizes a competitive grant program for the conservation of Neotropical migratory birds throughout the entire Western hemisphere.

## Activity: Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Total, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund</b>	5,000	1	5,000	1	-	-	-5,000	-1	-	-	-5,000

### Program Overview

*The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA or the Act) authorizes grants for the conservation of neotropical migratory birds in the United States, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean, with 75 percent of the amounts made available to be expended on projects outside the United States. Neotropical migratory birds, as defined by the Act, are birds that spend their winters in Latin America and the Caribbean and breed in the United States and Canada.*

### Justification of 2027 Program Changes

The budget does not request funding for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, reserving limited resources for domestic species

# State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program

## Authorizing Statutes

*The Endangered Species Act (ESA)* (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544) prohibits the import, export, or taking of fish and wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species; provides for adding species to or removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species, and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery; provides for interagency cooperation to avoid take of listed species and for issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities; provides for cooperation with States, including authorization of financial assistance; and implements the provisions of the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)*.

*The Fish and Wildlife Act* (16 U.S.C. 742(a)-742j) establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take steps required for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of fisheries resources and wildlife resources through research, acquisition of refuge lands, development of existing facilities, and other means.

*The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act* (16 U.S.C. 661-666(e)) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance to, and cooperate with, Federal, State, and public or private agencies and organizations in the development, protection, rearing, and stocking of all species of wildlife, resources thereof, and their habitats, in controlling losses of the same from disease or other causes, in minimizing damages from overabundant species, and in providing public shooting and fishing areas, including easements across public lands for access thereto.

**Appropriation: State and Tribal Wildlife Grants**

**Activity: State Wildlife Grants (Formula)<sup>1</sup>**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
<b>Total, State Wildlife Grants (Formula)</b>	<b>59,000</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>19</b>	-	-	-60,000	-19	-	-	-60,000

<sup>1</sup> Table does not include supplemental funding.

**Activity: State Wildlife Grants (Competitive)<sup>1</sup>**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
<b>Total, State Wildlife Grants (Competitive)</b>	<b>7,284</b>	-	<b>7,612</b>	-	-	-	-7,612	-	-	-	-7,612

<sup>1</sup> Table does not include supplemental funding.

**Activity: Tribal Wildlife Grants<sup>1</sup>**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
<b>Total, Tribal Wildlife Grants</b>	<b>6,100</b>	-	<b>6,200</b>	-	-	-	-6,200	-	-	-	-6,200

<sup>1</sup> Table does not include supplemental funding.

### **Program Overview**

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The State and Tribal Wildlife Grant (STWG) Program provides Federal grant funds to fish and wildlife agencies of the States, Territories, and the District of Columbia (States), and to Federally-recognized Tribes, to plan and implement conservation for fish, wildlife, and their habitats. The State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program's apportionment formula and the Tribal Wildlife Grants (TWG) Program were first established in the *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* for FY 2002 (Public Law 107-63).

### **Justification of 2027 Program Changes**

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The budget does not request funding for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants. The budget eliminates grants to States and Tribes that come with strings attached on the types of species they should conserve.

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# Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration

## Appropriations Language

The Wildlife Restoration Account does not require authorization through annual appropriations because there is permanent authority, established September 6, 1950 (64 Stat. 693), to use the receipts in the account in the fiscal year following their collection.

## Authorizing Statutes

*The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937*, now referred to as *The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act*, as amended (16 U.S.C. 669-669k) provides Federal assistance to the 50 States, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (States) for projects to restore, enhance, and manage wildlife resources, and to conduct State hunter education programs. The Act authorizes the collection of receipts for appropriation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for use in the fiscal year following collection. Funds not used by the States within two years revert to the Service for carrying out the provisions of the *Migratory Bird Conservation Act*. The *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* also requires the Secretary of the Treasury to invest the portion of the fund not required for current year spending in interest-bearing obligations. The interest must be used for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant program (16 U.S.C. 669b(b)(2)).

The *Appropriations Act of August 31, 1951* (P.L. 82-136, 64 Stat. 693) authorized receipts from excise taxes on selected hunting and sporting equipment to be deposited in the Wildlife Restoration Account as a permanent, indefinite appropriation. Receipts and interest distributed to the Wildlife Restoration Account were made available for use by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the fiscal year following collection.

The *Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-408) amends the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide funding under the Multistate Conservation Grant Program for wildlife and sport fish restoration projects identified as priority projects by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. These high priority projects address problems affecting States on a regional or national basis. It also authorizes a Bow Hunter Education and Safety Program that provides grants to States.

The *North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989* (16 U.S.C. 4407) amends the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* and requires the Secretary of the Treasury to invest the portion of the Wildlife Restoration Account not required for current year spending in interest-bearing obligations to be available for States to implement wetlands conservation projects.

The *Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act of 2019* (P.L. 116-17) amends the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669) to define a public target range and offers States alternatives for funding specific activities related to public target ranges under the Basic Hunter Education subprogram (BHE), the Enhanced Hunter Education Program (EHE), and the Wildlife Restoration Program (WR).

The *Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act of 2019* (P.L. 116-94) amends the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669) to make hunter recruitment and recreational-shooter recruitment (as defined at 16 U.S.C. 669(a)(3)) an eligible activity with funds from both the Basic Hunter Education subaccount (5221) and the Enhanced Hunter Education subaccount (5230). It also removed the prohibition of public relations, and the requirement that the operation and maintenance of public target ranges using Basic Hunter Education funds be tied to a hunter safety program.

The *America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act* (P.L. 116-188) included a provision that amended the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669) to allow the use of the value of any land owned by a Land Grant University as a source of in-kind match for cost-sharing requirements under the Act.

The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) included a provision that amended the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669c(a)) to adjust the amounts available for administrative expenses for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Department of Labor for FY 2023 and future years, and allowed administrative expenses to include personnel costs of employees working on a part-time basis.

The *Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act* (P.L. 119-40) amended the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 669(b)(2)(C)) to extend the availability of interest earned on obligations held in the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Fund (i.e., the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund) to carry out approved wetlands conservation projects to 2033.

**Appropriation: Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration**

**Activity: Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Payments to States (Permanent)**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request					Change from 2026 Enacted	
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority		FTE
<b>Subtotal, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Payments to States</b>	<b>900,688</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>828,814</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+58,929</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>887,743</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+58,929</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	<i>-51,339</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-47,242</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-3,359</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-50,601</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-3,359</i>
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	<i>55,103</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>51,339</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-4,097</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>47,242</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-4,097</i>
<b>Total, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Payments to States</b>	<b>904,452</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>832,911</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+51,473</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>884,384</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+51,473</b>

**Activity: Section 10 Hunter Education (Permanent)**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request					Change from 2026 Enacted	
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority		FTE
<b>Subtotal, Section 10 Hunter Education</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	<i>-456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	<i>456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<b>Total, Section 10 Hunter Education</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>

### Activity: Multi-State Conservation Grant Program (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, Multi-State Conservation Grant Program</b>	<b>8,000</b>	-	<b>8,000</b>	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8,000</b>	-	-
<i>Sequestration</i>	-456	-	-456	-	-	-	-	-	-456	-	-
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	456	-	456	-	-	-	-	-	456	-	-
<b>Total, Multi-State Conservation Grant Program</b>	<b>8,000</b>	-	<b>8,000</b>	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8,000</b>	-	-

### Activity: Administration (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, Administration</b>	<b>15,408</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>15,870</b>	<b>40</b>	-	-	+387	-	<b>16,257</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>+387</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	-878	-	-905	-	-	-	-22	-	-927	-	-22
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	858	-	878	-	-	-	+27	-	905	-	+27
<b>Total, Administration</b>	<b>15,388</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>15,843</b>	<b>40</b>	-	-	+392	-	<b>16,235</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>+392</b>

## Activity: NAWCF (interest used for grants) (Permanent)

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
<b>Subtotal, NAWCF (interest used for grants)</b>	<b>96,110</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>99,609</b>	<b>5</b>	-	-	<b>+3,331</b>	-	<b>102,940</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>+3,331</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	-5,479	-	-5,678	-	-	-	-190	-	-5,868	-	-190
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	6,080	-	5,479	-	-	-	+199	-	5,678	-	+199
<b>Total, NAWCF (interest used for grants)</b>	<b>96,711</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>99,410</b>	<b>5</b>	-	-	<b>+3,340</b>	-	<b>102,750</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>+3,340</b>

## **Program Description**

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In 1937, Congress passed the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, authorizing the appropriation of funds from an existing excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition to the Secretary of the Interior for apportionment to States on a formula basis. It provided a much-needed, stable source of funding for wildlife conservation programs across the country. Its supporters - industry, sportspeople, and hunters – accepted a permanent tax with the understanding that funds would be used in partnership with States to ensure the sustainability of wildlife resources.

The accompanying grant programs that are statutorily administered by the Service, including the Section 4(c) Hunter Education and Safety Program (Basic Hunter Education) and the Section 10 Enhanced Firearm and Bow Hunter Education and Safety Program (Enhanced Hunter Education), remain key components of the Nation’s cooperative conservation efforts for wildlife and their habitats. Through these programs, the Service helps create and maintain strong conservation stewardship, supporting local communities in sustainably managing natural resources.

Since 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program has contributed over \$17.7 billion in unadjusted actual dollars to restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild bird and mammal populations, acquire and manage wildlife habitats, provide public uses that benefit from wildlife resources, educate hunters on conservation ethics and safety, and construct, operate, and manage recreational firearm shooting and archery ranges.

Wildlife Restoration funding delivers measurable results:

- Operation and maintenance of more than 850 public target shooting ranges for archery and firearms, promoting safe and accessible shooting sports.
- Management of over 36 million acres across 2,000 state wildlife management areas, providing habitat for game and non-game species.
- Hunter education for more than 700,000 people annually, fostering safe, ethical hunting practices.
- 381 grants dedicated to recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters and recreational shooters, sustaining participation and conservation funding for future generations.

Additional data on Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration apportionments to States is available at:

<https://www.fws.gov/program/wildlife-restoration>

The Service’s *2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* estimated 14.4 million people aged 16 years old and older enjoyed hunting. They hunted 241 million days and took 165 million trips. Hunting expenditures totaled \$45.2 billion, which is important to the U.S. economy. Recreational target shooters are estimated to be over 47 million participants, and archery participants 19.2 million. More National Survey data and addendum reports can be viewed here:

<https://www.fws.gov/program/national-survey-fishing-hunting-and-wildlife-associated-recreation-fhwar>

The core value of the program is a cooperative partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and State agencies, hunters, archers, recreational shooters, and industry that provides significant benefits

to the public and our country's natural resources. Grant programs funded by the Wildlife Restoration program include:

**Traditional Wildlife Restoration (WR)** authorizes using funds under 16 U.S.C. 669c(b) and provides Federal grant funding to the 50 States as well as the Commonwealths and Territories (not the District of Columbia) for: the selection, restoration, rehabilitation, and improvement of wildlife habitat; wildlife management research; wildlife population surveys and inventories; land acquisition; coordinating, developing, operating, and maintaining facilities, acquiring land for, expanding, or constructing public target ranges; provisions for public use of wildlife resources, and public relations activities in support of the previously listed activities.

**The Basic Hunter Education and Safety Subprogram (BHE)** authorizes using funds under 16 U.S.C. 669c(c) for activities under 16 U.S.C. 669g(b) to: provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and archery equipment, hunter responsibilities, ethics, and survival; construction, operation, and maintenance of public target ranges (used for hunter education or recreational shooting); recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters and recreational shooters; basic wildlife management and identification; and public relations that supports hunter recruitment and recreational-shooter recruitment, as defined at 16 U.S.C. 669(a)(3), as long as the public relations activities are necessary and reasonable for the performance of the award. Basic Hunter Education and Safety Programs include developing and implementing a programmed course of instruction that helps achieve the State's hunter safety training goals and objectives.

**The Enhanced Hunter Education and Safety Program (EHE)** provides funding to the 50 States, as well as the Commonwealths and Territories (not the District of Columbia), to: enhance programs for hunter education, hunter development, and firearm and archery safety including hunter development programs to introduce individuals to and recruit them to take part in hunting, bow hunting, target shooting, or archery; enhance interstate coordination of hunter education, and firearm and archery range programs; enhance programs for education, safety, or development of bow hunters and archers; enhance construction and development of firearm and archery ranges; update safety features of firearm and archery ranges; enhance activities for hunter and recreational shooter recruitment, retention, and reactivation; and public relations activities as covered under the definition of hunter recruitment and recreational-shooter recruitment and defined at 16 U.S.C. 669(a)(3).

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the Service work cooperatively together to manage the **Traditional Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP)**. The Service ultimately awards and manages the grants, while AFWA administers the grant application process, providing oversight, coordination, and guidance for the program as established by the *Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-408). These high-priority projects address problems affecting States on a regional or national basis. Project types include biological research/training, species population status, outreach, data collection regarding angler participation, aquatic education, economic value of fishing and hunting programs, and regional or multistate habitat needs assessments.

In addition to the Traditional MSCGP, President Trump signed the *Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act* (P.L. 116-94) into law on December 20, 2019. This law, among other measures, created a new “**R3 Multistate Conservation Grant Program**” that makes up to an additional \$5 million available for projects that address hunter and recreational shooter recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) as well as projects that promote a national R3 program, including related communication and outreach activities. The Service previously referred to this program as the “Modern MSCGP.”

Examples of recent Wildlife Restoration program projects across the United States include:

### **Public Shooting Range Development in Idaho**

Wildlife Restoration funds helped Idaho expand Black's Creek Public Shooting Range, adding berms, roofs, and ADA-compliant facilities. The range now accommodates over 14,000 visitors annually, offers 36 covered shooting benches and a 500-meter silhouette range, and hosts hunter education programs in a new 4,000-square-foot training center with capacity for 130 students.

### **Cooperative Waterfowl Conservation in Texas and along the Gulf Coast**

Wildlife Restoration funds have long supported one of North America's largest bird conservation efforts: waterfowl management. In Texas, these funds enable annual banding of thousands of ducks and geese, aerial surveys, and wetland habitat restoration along the Gulf Coast, critical for millions of migratory birds in the Central Flyway. Nationwide, more than 20 million ducks, geese, and swans have been banded since 1960, and Texas contributes significantly to this effort. These projects also secure and manage thousands of acres of wetlands, sustaining hunting traditions and providing habitat for species like mottled ducks and pintails.

### **Bighorn Sheep Recovery in Nevada**

Wildlife Restoration funds have been pivotal in bringing bighorn sheep back from the brink in Nevada. Decades of Pittman-Robertson investments supported translocation of herds, disease management, and habitat restoration across rugged mountain ranges. These efforts helped Nevada's bighorn sheep population rebound from fewer than 3,000 animals in the 1960s to more than 12,000 today, making it one of the greatest big game recovery stories in the West. Projects funded through Wildlife Restoration also include water development in arid habitats, GPS collar studies to track herd health and movements, and partnerships with sportsmen's groups to sustain hunting opportunities and wildlife viewing.

### **Elk Restoration in Kentucky**

Wildlife Restoration funds enabled the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to reintroduce elk, an iconic species whose bugle inspires hunters and wildlife watchers alike and stands as a symbol of conservation success, after more than 150 years of absence. Pittman-Robertson dollars supported the translocation of over 1,500 elk from western states to reclaimed coalfields in eastern Kentucky, along with habitat improvements, disease monitoring, and research. Today, Kentucky boasts the largest elk herd east of the Mississippi, estimated at more than 11,000 animals, providing regulated hunting opportunities, wildlife viewing, and millions in annual economic benefits for local communities. Kentucky is one of four eastern states, along with Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, that have

successfully restored elk populations in recent decades, demonstrating how Wildlife Restoration investments sustain hunting traditions and strengthen conservation partnerships.

### **Hunter Education and R3 Initiatives in Virginia**

Wildlife Restoration funds through the Multistate Conservation Grant Program support state-level efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and shooters. In Virginia, the Department of Wildlife Resources has integrated R3 strategies into its operations, offering youth and apprentice licenses, mentored hunting weekends, and online licensing systems to remove barriers to participation. The state also funds programs like National Archery in the Schools, reaching thousands of students annually and hosting hunter education courses that certify over 15,000 new hunters each year.

### **Budget Estimate**

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The FY 2027 budget estimate for the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program is \$1,019,369,000 and 46 FTE. The estimate is based on current law projections provided by the Department of the Treasury's Office of Tax Analysis.

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF PITTMAN-ROBERTSON  
WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026\***

	<b>WILDLIFE</b>	<b>HUNTER EDUCATION</b>		
	<b>FUNDS-5220</b>	<b>SEC 4(c) FUNDS-5210</b>	<b>ENHANCED FUNDS-5230</b>	
<b><u>STATE</u></b>	<b><u>CFDA: 15.611</u></b>	<b><u>CFDA: 15.611</u></b>	<b><u>CFDA: 15.626</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>
ALABAMA	\$15,526,959	\$3,481,459	\$179,551	\$19,187,969
ALASKA	\$33,889,656	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$35,520,833
AMERICAN SAMOA	\$1,129,655	\$258,530	\$13,333	\$1,401,518
ARIZONA	\$18,199,228	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$23,092,759
ARKANSAS	\$12,331,921	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$13,963,098
CALIFORNIA	\$21,875,814	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$26,769,345
COLORADO	\$18,678,473	\$4,000,763	\$206,334	\$22,885,570
CONNECTICUT	\$3,388,966	\$2,498,656	\$128,865	\$6,016,487
DELAWARE	\$3,388,966	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$5,020,143
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FLORIDA	\$11,568,296	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$16,461,827
GEORGIA	\$22,737,692	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$27,631,223
GUAM	\$1,129,655	\$258,530	\$13,333	\$1,401,518
HAWAII	\$3,388,966	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$5,020,143
IDAHO	\$14,928,329	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$16,559,506
ILLINOIS	\$11,674,717	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$16,568,248
INDIANA	\$8,940,472	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$13,834,003
IOWA	\$10,460,317	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$12,091,494
KANSAS	\$14,414,735	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$16,045,912
KENTUCKY	\$10,663,892	\$3,122,217	\$161,024	\$13,947,133
LOUISIANA	\$14,185,330	\$3,227,486	\$166,454	\$17,579,270
MAINE	\$7,720,746	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$9,351,923
MARYLAND	\$3,388,966	\$4,280,366	\$220,755	\$7,890,087
MASSACHUSETTS	\$3,388,966	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$8,282,497
MICHIGAN	\$18,982,957	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$23,876,488
MINNESOTA	\$19,607,456	\$3,954,187	\$203,932	\$23,765,575
MISSISSIPPI	\$10,544,676	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$12,175,853
MISSOURI	\$17,932,403	\$4,264,902	\$219,958	\$22,417,263
MONTANA	\$20,278,862	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$21,910,039
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	\$1,129,655	\$258,530	\$13,333	\$1,401,518
NEBRASKA	\$13,581,942	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$15,213,119

\*This table includes reverted funds from prior years.

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF PITTMAN-ROBERTSON  
WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026\***

	<b>WILDLIFE</b>	<b>HUNTER EDUCATION</b>		
	<b>FUNDS-5220</b>	<b>SEC 4(c) FUNDS-5210</b>	<b>ENHANCED FUNDS-5230</b>	
<b><u>STATE</u></b>	<b><u>CFDA: 15.611</u></b>	<b><u>CFDA: 15.611</u></b>	<b><u>CFDA: 15.626</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>
NEVADA	\$13,951,784	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$15,582,961
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$3,388,966	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$5,020,143
NEW JERSEY	\$3,388,966	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$8,282,497
NEW MEXICO	\$16,106,451	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$17,737,628
NEW YORK	\$15,989,610	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$20,883,141
NORTH CAROLINA	\$17,337,677	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$22,231,208
NORTH DAKOTA	\$10,486,383	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$12,117,560
OHIO	\$11,653,138	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$16,546,669
OKLAHOMA	\$14,604,778	\$2,743,544	\$141,495	\$17,489,817
OREGON	\$16,955,620	\$2,936,109	\$151,426	\$20,043,155
PENNSYLVANIA	\$25,655,149	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$30,548,680
PUERTO RICO	\$3,388,966	\$258,530	\$13,333	\$3,660,829
RHODE ISLAND	\$3,388,966	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$5,020,143
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$7,321,774	\$3,546,692	\$182,918	\$11,051,384
SOUTH DAKOTA	\$12,669,891	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$14,301,068
TENNESSEE	\$19,315,065	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$24,208,596
TEXAS	\$33,889,656	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$38,783,187
UTAH	\$14,706,415	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$16,337,592
VERMONT	\$3,388,966	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$5,020,143
VIRGIN ISLANDS	\$1,129,655	\$258,530	\$13,333	\$1,401,518
VIRGINIA	\$9,399,519	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$14,293,050
WASHINGTON	\$10,528,116	\$4,653,531	\$240,000	\$15,421,647
WEST VIRGINIA	\$8,191,835	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$9,823,012
WISCONSIN	\$19,140,174	\$4,083,915	\$210,623	\$23,434,712
WYOMING	\$12,756,940	\$1,551,177	\$80,000	\$14,388,117
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$677,793,128</b>	<b>\$155,117,690</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>	<b>\$840,910,818</b>

\*This table includes reverted funds from prior years.

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF PITTMAN-ROBERTSON  
WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027**

	<b>WILDLIFE</b>	<b>HUNTER EDUCATION</b>		
	<b>FUNDS-5220</b>	<b>SEC 4(c) FUNDS-5210</b>	<b>ENHANCED FUNDS-5230</b>	
<b><u>STATE</u></b>	<b><u>CFDA:</u> 15.611</b>	<b><u>CFDA:</u> 15.611</b>	<b><u>CFDA:</u> 15.626</b>	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>
ALABAMA	\$16,546,684	\$3,637,658	\$179,551	\$20,363,893
ALASKA	\$36,115,342	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$37,816,114
AMERICAN SAMOA	\$1,203,845	\$270,129	\$13,333	\$1,487,307
ARIZONA	\$19,394,453	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$24,496,768
ARKANSAS	\$13,141,814	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$14,842,586
CALIFORNIA	\$23,312,496	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$28,414,811
COLORADO	\$19,905,172	\$4,180,261	\$206,334	\$24,291,767
CONNECTICUT	\$3,611,534	\$2,610,761	\$128,865	\$6,351,160
DELAWARE	\$3,611,534	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$5,312,306
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FLORIDA	\$12,328,038	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$17,430,353
GEORGIA	\$24,230,979	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$29,333,294
GUAM	\$1,203,845	\$270,129	\$13,333	\$1,487,307
HAWAII	\$3,611,534	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$5,312,306
IDAHO	\$15,908,739	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$17,609,511
ILLINOIS	\$12,441,448	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$17,543,763
INDIANA	\$9,527,633	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$14,629,948
IOWA	\$11,147,292	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$12,848,064
KANSAS	\$15,361,415	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$17,062,187
KENTUCKY	\$11,364,238	\$3,262,297	\$161,024	\$14,787,559
LOUISIANA	\$15,116,944	\$3,372,291	\$166,454	\$18,655,689
MAINE	\$8,227,802	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$9,928,574
MARYLAND	\$3,611,534	\$4,472,409	\$220,755	\$8,304,698
MASSACHUSETTS	\$3,611,534	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$8,713,849
MICHIGAN	\$20,229,653	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$25,331,968
MINNESOTA	\$20,895,165	\$4,131,594	\$203,932	\$25,230,691
MISSISSIPPI	\$11,237,192	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$12,937,964
MISSOURI	\$19,110,105	\$4,456,255	\$219,958	\$23,786,318
MONTANA	\$21,610,666	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$23,311,438
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	\$1,203,845	\$270,129	\$13,333	\$1,487,307
NEBRASKA	\$14,473,929	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$16,174,701
NEVADA	\$14,868,061	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$16,568,833

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT OF PITTMAN-ROBERTSON  
WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027**

	<b>WILDLIFE</b>	<b>HUNTER EDUCATION</b>		
	<b>FUNDS-5220</b>	<b>SEC 4(c) FUNDS-5210</b>	<b>ENHANCED FUNDS-5230</b>	
<b><u>STATE</u></b>	<b><u>CFDA:</u> <b>15.611</b></b>	<b><u>CFDA:</u> <b>15.611</b></b>	<b><u>CFDA:</u> <b>15.626</b></b>	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$3,611,534	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$5,312,306
NEW JERSEY	\$3,611,534	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$8,713,849
NEW MEXICO	\$17,164,234	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$18,865,006
NEW YORK	\$17,039,719	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$22,142,034
NORTH CAROLINA	\$18,476,320	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$23,578,635
NORTH DAKOTA	\$11,175,071	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$12,875,843
OHIO	\$12,418,452	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$17,520,767
OKLAHOMA	\$15,563,939	\$2,866,636	\$141,495	\$18,572,070
OREGON	\$18,069,172	\$3,067,843	\$151,426	\$21,288,441
PENNSYLVANIA	\$27,340,038	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$32,442,353
PUERTO RICO	\$3,611,534	\$270,129	\$13,333	\$3,894,996
RHODE ISLAND	\$3,611,534	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$5,312,306
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$7,802,628	\$3,705,821	\$182,918	\$11,691,367
SOUTH DAKOTA	\$13,501,979	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$15,202,751
TENNESSEE	\$20,583,571	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$25,685,886
TEXAS	\$36,115,342	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$41,217,657
UTAH	\$15,672,251	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$17,373,023
VERMONT	\$3,611,534	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$5,312,306
VIRGIN ISLANDS	\$1,203,845	\$270,129	\$13,333	\$1,487,307
VIRGINIA	\$10,016,828	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$15,119,143
WASHINGTON	\$11,219,546	\$4,862,315	\$240,000	\$16,321,861
WEST VIRGINIA	\$8,729,830	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$10,430,602
WISCONSIN	\$20,397,195	\$4,267,148	\$210,623	\$24,874,966
WYOMING	\$13,594,748	\$1,620,772	\$80,000	\$15,295,520
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$722,306,843</b>	<b>\$162,077,186</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>	<b>\$892,384,029</b>

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# Dingell-Johnson

## Sport Fish Restoration

### Appropriation Language

The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration account does not require authorization through annual appropriations because there is permanent authority, established August 31, 1951 (65 Stat. 262), to use the receipts deposited into the Trust Fund in the fiscal year following their collection.

### Applicable Statutes

The *Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950*, now referred to as the *Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 777 et seq.), as amended by the *Deficit Reduction and Control Act of 1984* (P.L. 98-369), the *Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Act of 1987* (P.L. 100-17), the *Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1987* (P.L. 100-448), the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (P.L. 105-178), the *Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-408), the *Surface Transportation Act of 2003* (P.L. 108-88), SAFETEA-LU, and the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58), which expires in Fiscal Year FY 2026, authorizes assistance to the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (States) to carry out projects to restore, enhance, and manage sport fishery resources. In addition to enhancing sport fish and their habitats, these acts allow for the development and maintenance of boating access facilities and aquatic education programs.

The *Appropriations Act of August 31, 1951* (P.L. 82-136, 65 Stat. 262) authorizes receipts from excise taxes on fishing equipment to be deposited into the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, established as a permanent, indefinite appropriation. Receipts and interest distributed to the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund are available for use and distribution by the Service to States in the fiscal year following collection.

The *Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act of 1990* (16 U.S.C. 3951 et. seq.) provides funds for three Federal grant programs for the acquisition, restoration, management, and enhancement of coastal wetlands in coastal States. A coastal State means a State of the United States, bordering on the Atlantic, Pacific, or Arctic Oceans, the Gulf of Mexico, Long Island Sound, or one or more of the Great Lakes, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the trust territories of the Pacific Islands. The Service administers two of the three grant programs this Act provides funding for, including the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program and the North American Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. The latter program receives funds from other sources, as well as from the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Program. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers administers the third grant program that receives funding from this Act. The Act also requires the Service to update and digitize wetlands maps in Texas and assess the status, condition, and trends of

wetlands in Texas, and provides permanent authorization for coastal wetlands conservation grants and North American Wetlands Conservation projects. The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) authorizes funding for the *Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act* through FY 2026.

The *Clean Vessel Act of 1992* (16 U.S.C. 777c) Section 5604 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide grants to the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of sewage pumpout stations and dump stations, as well as for educational programs designed to inform boaters about the importance of proper disposal of their onboard sewage. Section 5604 also amended the *Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act* to provide for the transfer of funds out of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund for use by the Secretary of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard) to fund State recreational boating safety programs. The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) authorizes funding for the *Clean Vessel Act of 1992* and boating infrastructure improvement through FY 2026.

The *Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998* (16 U.S.C. 777c-777g) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to develop national outreach plans to promote safe fishing and boating, and to promote conservation of aquatic resources through grants and contracts with States and private entities. The Act contains provisions for transferring funds to the U.S. Coast Guard for State recreational boating safety programs. In addition, it authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide funds to the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to construct, renovate, and maintain mooring facilities with features for transient boaters in vessels 26 feet or more in length, and to produce and distribute information and educational materials under the Boating Infrastructure grant program. The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) authorizes funding for boating infrastructure improvement through FY 2026.

The *Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-408) amends the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. It authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide funding under the Multistate Conservation grant program for wildlife and sport fish restoration projects identified as priority projects by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. These high priority projects address problems affecting States on a regional or national basis. It also provides \$200,000 each to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission; and \$400,000 to the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. The Act provides 12 allowable cost categories for administration of the Act.

The *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users of August 10, 2005* (P.L. 109-59) made several changes to the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. This Act changed the distribution of Sport Fish Restoration receipts from amounts primarily specified in law to a percentage-based distribution. The Act extended program authorizations for the Clean Vessel Act

program, the Boating Infrastructure grant program, and the National Outreach and Communications program through FY 2009, and it extended the authority to use Sport Fish Restoration receipts for the U.S. Coast Guard's State Recreational Boating Safety Program through FY 2009. The Act authorized the expenditure of remaining balances in the old Boat Safety Account through FY 2010, for Sport Fish Restoration and State recreational boating safety programs and redirected 4.8 cents per gallon of certain fuels from the general account of the Treasury to the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) changes several sections of the *Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act*. It amends Section 4 of the *Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act* (16 U.S.C. 777c), changing the amount of administrative funding and allowable expenses, and extending authorizations for Sport Fish Restoration; *Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act*; Boating Infrastructure Improvement; and the National Outreach and Communications program through FY 2026. It also amends Section 9(a) [16 U.S.C. 777h(a)] for administrative activities and Section 14(e) [16 U.S.C. 777m(e)] to instruct the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (Council) to study the impact of derelict vessels and identify recyclable solutions for recreational vessels.

### Activity: Sport Fish Restoration Payments to States (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, Sport Fish Restoration Payments to States</b>	414,626	-	440,300	-	-	-	+4,200	-	444,500	-	+4,200
<i>Sequestration</i>	-23,634	-	-25,097	-	-	-	-239	-	-25,336	-	-239
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	21,244	-	23,634	-	-	-	+1,463	-	25,097	-	+1,463
<b>Total, Sport Fish Restoration Payments to States</b>	412,236	-	438,837	-	-	-	+5,424	-	444,261	-	+5,424

### Activity: Administration (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, Administration</b>	15,407	54	15,870	36	-	-	+387	-	16,257	36	+387
<i>Sequestration</i>	-878	-	-904	-	-	-	-23	-	-927	-	-23
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	858	-	878	-	-	-	+26	-	904	-	+26
<b>Total, Administration</b>	15,387	54	15,844	36	-	-	+390	-	16,234	36	+390

### Activity: Clean Vessel Act Grants (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, Clean Vessel Act Grants</b>	<b>14,398</b>	-	<b>15,283</b>	-	-	-	<b>+145</b>	-	<b>15,428</b>	-	<b>+145</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	-820	-	-871	-	-	-	-9	-	-880	-	-9
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	738	-	820	-	-	-	+51	-	871	-	+51
<b>Total, Clean Vessel Act Grants</b>	<b>14,316</b>	-	<b>15,232</b>	-	-	-	<b>+187</b>	-	<b>15,419</b>	-	<b>+187</b>

### Activity: Boating Infrastructure Grants (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, Boating Infrastructure Grants</b>	<b>14,399</b>	-	<b>15,283</b>	-	-	-	<b>+145</b>	-	<b>15,428</b>	-	<b>+145</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	-821	-	-871	-	-	-	-9	-	-880	-	-9
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	738	-	821	-	-	-	+50	-	871	-	+50
<b>Total, Boating Infrastructure Grants</b>	<b>14,316</b>	-	<b>15,233</b>	-	-	-	<b>+186</b>	-	<b>15,419</b>	-	<b>+186</b>

### Activity: National Outreach (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, National Outreach</b>	<b>14,398</b>	-	<b>15,283</b>	-	-	-	+145	-	<b>15,428</b>	-	<b>+145</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	-821	-	-871	-	-	-	-8	-	-879	-	-8
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	739	-	821	-	-	-	+50	-	871	-	+50
<b>Total, National Outreach</b>	<b>14,316</b>	-	<b>15,233</b>	-	-	-	<b>+187</b>	-	<b>15,420</b>	-	<b>+187</b>

### Activity: Multi-State Conservation Grants (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, Multi-State Conservation Grants</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<i>1</i>	<b>3,000</b>	<i>1</i>	-	-	-	-	<b>3,000</b>	<i>1</i>	-
<i>Sequestration</i>	-171	-	-171	-	-	-	-	-	-171	-	-
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	171	-	171	-	-	-	-	-	171	-	-
<b>Total, Multi-State Conservation Grants</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<i>1</i>	<b>3,000</b>	<i>1</i>	-	-	-	-	<b>3,000</b>	<i>1</i>	-

### Activity: Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Change from 2026 Enacted		
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)			
<b>Subtotal, Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants</b>	<b>20,164</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21,404</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	+202	-	<b>21,606</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>+202</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	-1,149	-	-1,220	-	-	-	-11	-	-1,231	-	-11
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	1,034	-	1,149	-	-	-	+71	-	1,220	-	+71
<b>Total, Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants</b>	<b>20,049</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21,333</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	+262	-	<b>21,595</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>+262</b>

### Activity: Fishery Commissions (Permanent)

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Change from 2026 Enacted		
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)			
<b>Subtotal, Fishery Commissions</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>800</b>	<b>1</b>	-
<i>Sequestration</i>	-46	-	-46	-	-	-	-	-	-46	-	-
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	46	-	46	-	-	-	-	-	46	-	-
<b>Total, Fishery Commissions</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>800</b>	<b>1</b>	-

**Activity: Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (Permanent)**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>400</b>	<b>1</b>	-
<i>Sequestration</i>	-23	-	-23	-	-	-	-	-	-23	-	-
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	23	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	23	-	-
<b>Total, Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>400</b>	<b>1</b>	-

**Activity: North American Wetlands Conservation Grants (Permanent)**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	FTE Changes (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Subtotal, North American Wetlands Conservation Grants</b>	<b>20,164</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21,403</b>	<b>2</b>	-	-	+203	-	<b>21,606</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>+203</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	-1,149	-	-1,220	-	-	-	-11	-	-1,231	-	-11
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	1,034	-	1,149	-	-	-	+71	-	1,220	-	+71
<b>Total, North American Wetlands Conservation Grants</b>	<b>20,049</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21,332</b>	<b>2</b>	-	-	<b>+263</b>	-	<b>21,595</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>+263</b>

## **Program Description**

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In 1950, Congress passed the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act, creating a permanent, dedicated funding source for fisheries conservation. Through later amendments, the funding expanded to support boating access and aquatic resources education, as well as coastal wetland conservation and multi-State conservation grants, among other grant activities and priorities, through taxes and import duties collected from the sale of recreational fishing equipment and boats, motorboat fuel taxes, and other revenues. This landmark legislation established a cooperative partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State fish and wildlife agencies, anglers, boaters, and industry to ensure sustainable sport fisheries and recreational boating opportunities nationwide.

Since its inception, the Sport Fish Restoration Program (SFR) has provided more than \$12.1 billion in actual dollars to States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories. These funds have been critical to restoring and managing sport fish populations, improving aquatic habitats, and expanding public access to waterways. Today, SFR is recognized globally as the most successful fisheries management funding program in the world.

The Office of Conservation Investment administers SFR and the programs funded through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. They award Federal grants to partnering State and territorial fish and wildlife agencies, enabling opportunities for fishing and boating nationwide. This includes funding over 9,000 public fishing access launches across the country, ensuring access for millions of anglers and boaters.

Sport Fish Restoration funding delivers measurable results:

- Over 9,000 public fishing access sites funded nationwide
- More than 320 State fish hatcheries supported, stocking over 1 billion fish annually
- Hundreds of aquatic education programs reaching 850,000 participants each year
- Millions of dollars invested annually in boating infrastructure and coastal habitat restoration.

Additional data on Sport Fish Restoration apportionments to States is available at:

<https://www.fws.gov/program/sport-fish-restoration>

The economic impacts of boating and sport fishing in the United States are considerable. According to the *2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, 39.9 million U.S. residents 16 years old and older enjoyed a variety of fishing opportunities in 2022. Throughout the U.S., anglers fished 785 million days and took 463 million fishing trips, spending \$99.4 billion in fishing-related expenses during the year, which is important to the U.S. economy. More National Survey data and addendum reports can be viewed here: <https://www.fws.gov/program/national-survey-fishing-hunting-and-wildlife-associated-recreation-fhwar>

All grant programs funded by SFR, except the Multistate Conservation grant program (MSCGP), leverage the Federal funds by requiring a minimum of a 25 percent cost share. The MSCGP does not require any cost share. The core value of the program is a cooperative partnership of the Service and State agencies, anglers, boaters, and industries, which provides significant benefits to the public and our Nation's natural resources.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the Service work cooperatively to manage the **MSCGP**. The Service ultimately awards and manages the grants, while AFWA manages the grant application process, providing oversight, coordination, and guidance for the program as established by the *Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-408). These high-priority projects address problems affecting States on a regional or national basis. Project types include biological research/training, species population status assessment, outreach, data collection regarding angler participation, aquatic education, research on the economic value of fishing, and regional or multistate habitat needs assessments.

The **Clean Vessel Act** grant program is a nationally competitive program for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of recreational boat sewage pumpout stations and dump stations, as well as for educational programs designed to inform boaters about the importance of proper disposal of their onboard sewage. -

The **Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)** is a nationally competitive program that provides funding to construct, renovate, and maintain mooring facilities with features for transient boaters in vessels 26 feet or longer. The program also produces and distributes information and educational materials.

The **National Coastal Wetlands Conservation** grant program provides grants to governor-appointed State agencies to restore and protect coastal wetland ecosystems nationwide. Partnerships are an essential part of this program and allow the Service to work closely with a wide range of agencies and organizations, leveraging program funds for broad conservation benefits.

The **North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)** grant program is an internationally recognized conservation program that provides grants throughout North America for the conservation of waterfowl and other wetland-associated migratory birds. This program receives funds from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund to support projects in U.S. coastal areas. These funds help sustain the abundance of waterfowl and other migratory bird populations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The **National Outreach** program improves communications with anglers, boaters, and the public regarding angling and boating opportunities, which reduce barriers to participation in these activities, advance adoption of sound fishing and boating practices, promote conservation and the responsible use of the Nation's aquatic resources, and further safety in fishing and boating.

Recent Sport Fish Restoration Program projects include:

#### **Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center**

Sport Fish Restoration funds supported construction and ongoing operations at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, Texas. This 106-acre facility combines hatchery production, stocking over four million largemouth bass fingerlings annually, with immersive aquatic education. More than 1.1 million visitors have learned about fisheries conservation here, and thousands have caught their first fish at the center's stocked ponds. The center serves as a hub for research, education, and angler recruitment, strengthening Texas' freshwater fisheries for future generations.

### **Native Cutthroat Trout Recovery in Utah**

Sport Fish Restoration funds have been pivotal in restoring Utah's four native cutthroat trout subspecies: Bear River, Bonneville, Colorado River, and Yellowstone cutthroat. What began in the 1970s with a few hundred fertilized eggs has grown into the largest assisted migration in Utah, stocking millions of cutthroat trout annually. Today, anglers can complete the Utah Cutthroat Slam by catching all four subspecies, a challenge created to celebrate this conservation success and reconnect people with native trout heritage.



*Biologist holds spawning adult cutthroat captured in Utah waterway. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources offers anglers the opportunity to catch native trout as part of the Utah Cutthroat Slam. Credit: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.*

### **Artificial Reef Development in Alabama**

Sport Fish Restoration funds have supported Alabama's extensive artificial reef program, the largest in the United States, spanning more than 1,200 square miles of Gulf waters. Thousands of reef structures built from recycled concrete, bridge rubble, and other durable materials have transformed open water into productive fish habitat. These reefs provide essential structure for popular sportfish like red snapper and grouper, sustaining healthy fisheries and offering anglers exceptional saltwater fishing opportunities. By combining habitat restoration with innovative recycling, Alabama's program delivers lasting benefits for marine ecosystems and coastal communities, generating millions in annual economic impact through recreational fishing and tourism.

### **Premier Boating Access at Lake Hartwell, South Carolina**

Sport Fish Restoration funds transformed Green Pond Landing into a world-class boating facility on Lake Hartwell. The \$2.8 million project added three 276-foot concrete launch ramps, a floating courtesy dock, and drought-resilient design features. Today, the site hosts major tournaments like the Bassmaster Classic, drawing thousands of visitors and generating millions in local economic impact. These improvements ensure anglers have reliable access to prime fishing waters while supporting tourism and conservation partnerships.

### **Coastal Habitat Restoration in Florida**

Sport Fish Restoration funding supports Florida's living shoreline projects, which restore salt marshes, seagrass beds, and oyster reefs along the Gulf Coast. These efforts stabilize shorelines, improve water quality, and create nursery habitat for redfish, snook, and other sportfish species. By enhancing coastal resilience and sustaining world-class fishing opportunities for millions of anglers, these projects demonstrate the power of conservation partnerships in protecting aquatic resources.

**Aquatic Resources Education in Alabama**

Through Sport Fish Restoration’s Aquatic Resources Education grants, Alabama hosts hundreds of “Go Fish” events and school programs each year, introducing thousands of youth and families to fishing. These programs teach basic angling skills, aquatic ecology, and conservation ethics, helping recruit the next generation of anglers and stewards of aquatic resources. In recent years, Alabama has certified thousands of new anglers through these events, strengthening participation and conservation awareness statewide.

**Budget Estimate**

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The FY 2027 budget estimate for the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act programs is \$554,144,000 and 42 FTE.

**Table 1****U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ESTIMATED APPORTIONMENT  
OF DINGELL-JOHNSON SPORT FISH RESTORATION FUNDS\*****CFDA: 15.605**

<b><u>STATE</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2025</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2026</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2027</u></b>
ALABAMA	7,119,164	7,527,263	7,620,299
ALASKA	20,819,138	21,941,850	22,213,050
AMERICAN SAMOA	1,387,942	1,462,790	1,480,870
ARIZONA	8,377,930	8,987,479	9,098,563
ARKANSAS	6,600,245	6,826,537	6,910,913
CALIFORNIA	19,033,303	19,943,626	20,190,128
COLORADO	11,474,198	11,951,255	12,098,973
CONNECTICUT	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
DELAWARE	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	1,387,942	1,462,790	1,480,870
FLORIDA	15,893,093	16,906,655	17,115,620
GEORGIA	11,196,889	11,857,448	12,004,006
GUAM	1,387,942	1,462,790	1,480,870
HAWAII	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
IDAHO	8,026,968	8,528,810	8,634,226
ILLINOIS	7,082,983	7,472,714	7,565,076
INDIANA	5,863,240	6,378,130	6,456,963
IOWA	5,175,955	5,480,737	5,548,478
KANSAS	5,603,776	6,276,594	6,354,172
KENTUCKY	5,841,976	6,165,074	6,241,274
LOUISIANA	7,902,226	8,039,376	8,138,742
MAINE	4,296,647	4,426,939	4,481,655
MARYLAND	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
MASSACHUSETTS	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
MICHIGAN	12,766,193	13,616,453	13,784,751
MINNESOTA	14,101,420	14,496,295	14,675,469
MISSISSIPPI	4,705,334	4,859,166	4,919,225
MISSOURI	8,740,560	9,458,375	9,575,280
MONTANA	10,327,917	10,946,569	11,081,868
N. MARIANA ISLANDS	1,387,942	1,462,790	1,480,870
NEBRASKA	5,337,943	5,652,620	5,722,486
NEVADA	6,290,520	6,664,910	6,747,288
NEW HAMPSHIRE	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
NEW JERSEY	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
NEW MEXICO	7,296,244	7,898,337	7,995,960
NEW YORK	9,025,671	9,692,590	9,812,390
NORTH CAROLINA	12,980,672	13,072,727	13,234,305
NORTH DAKOTA	4,780,108	5,071,059	5,133,737
OHIO	8,336,071	8,822,480	8,931,526

<u>STATE</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>FY 2026</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>
OKLAHOMA	7,897,462	8,150,369	8,251,107
OREGON	9,134,695	9,620,385	9,739,293
PENNSYLVANIA	10,175,606	10,581,205	10,711,988
PUERTO RICO	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
RHODE ISLAND	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
SOUTH CAROLINA	5,424,482	5,762,406	5,833,629
SOUTH DAKOTA	5,138,988	5,429,417	5,496,525
TENNESSEE	8,616,203	9,160,120	9,273,338
TEXAS	20,819,138	21,941,850	22,213,050
UTAH	7,727,758	8,191,968	8,293,221
VERMONT	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
VIRGIN ISLANDS	1,387,942	1,462,790	1,480,870
VIRGINIA	6,215,243	6,647,784	6,729,950
WASHINGTON	8,313,303	8,844,875	8,954,197
WEST VIRGINIA	4,163,828	4,388,370	4,442,610
WISCONSIN	12,863,784	13,345,116	13,510,060
WYOMING	6,317,890	6,613,417	6,695,159
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>416,382,754</b>	<b>438,837,000</b>	<b>444,261,000</b>

\*This table includes reverted funds and sequester returns from prior years.

# Migratory Bird Conservation Account

## **Appropriations Language**

*This activity does not require appropriations language, except for advances, which are not requested, as there is permanent authority as provided in the 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, Second Session—Chapter 896, Interior Appropriations Act, 1951, September 6, 1951 (64 Stat. 697) to use the receipts.*

## **Authorizing Statutes**

***The Migratory Bird Conservation Act**, as amended (16 U.S.C. 715-715d, 715e, 715f-715r), established the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) to approve migratory bird areas that the Secretary of the Interior recommends for acquisition. The Act also authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire MBCC-approved migratory bird areas.*

***The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act**, as amended (16 U.S.C. 718a-718k), requires all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older to possess a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly known as a Duck Stamp, while waterfowl hunting. Funds from the sale of Duck Stamps are deposited in a special treasury account known as the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) established by this Act. The Act also authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to use funds from the MBCF to acquire waterfowl production areas. The 2014 amendment to the Act (P. L. 113-264) increased the price of the Federal Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25, with the \$10 increase dedicated to the acquisition of conservation easements.*

***The Wetlands Loan Act** (16 U.S.C. 715k-3 - 715k-5), requires the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the FWS Director, to obtain the approval of the State's Governor or the appropriate State agency to acquire land in the State with MBCF monies. The Act also authorized the appropriation of advances of up to \$200,000,000 to accelerate acquisition of migratory waterfowl habitat. From 1963 to 1988, \$197,439,000 was appropriated under this authority.*

***The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act**, as amended (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee), requires payment of fair market value for any right-of-way granted over, across, through, or under National Wildlife Refuge System lands. These payments are deposited into the MBCF.*

***The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act**, as amended (P. L. 99-645; 100 Stat. 3582), provides for: (1) an amount equal to the amount of all import duties collected on arms and ammunition to be paid quarterly into the MBCF, and (2) removal of the repayment provision of the Wetlands Loan Act (P. L. 87-383).*

**Appropriation: Migratory Bird Conservation Account**

<b>Activity: Migratory Bird Conservation Account</b>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						Change from 2026 Enacted
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	
<b>Import Duties on Arms and Ammunition</b>											
<b>Subtotal, Import Duties on Arms and Ammunition</b>	51,221	-	47,500	-	-	-	-	-	47,500	-	-
<i>Sequestration</i>	-2,920	-	-2,708	-	-	-	-	-	-2,708	-	-
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	3,273	-	2,920	-	-	-	-212	-	2,708	-	-212
<b>Total, Import Duties on Arms and Ammunition</b>	51,574	-	47,712	-	-	-	-212	-	47,500	-	-212
<b>Duck Stamp Receipts</b>											
<b>Subtotal, Duck Stamp Receipts</b>	24,073	-	22,200	-	-	-	-	-	22,200	-	-
<i>Sequestration</i>	-1,372	-	-1,265	-	-	-	-	-	-1,265	-	-
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	1,331	-	1,372	-	-	-	-107	-	1,265	-	-107
<b>Total, Duck Stamp Receipts</b>	24,032	-	22,307	-	-	-	-107	-	22,200	-	-107
<b>Duck Stamp Receipts - Easements Setaside</b>											
<b>Subtotal, Duck Stamp Receipts - Easements Set-aside</b>	15,739	-	14,800	-	-	-	-	-	14,800	-	-
<i>Sequestration</i>	-897	-	-844	-	-	-	-	-	-844	-	-
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	872	-	897	-	-	-	-53	-	844	-	-53
<b>Total, Duck Stamp Receipts - Easements Setaside</b>	15,714	-	14,853	-	-	-	-53	-	14,800	-	-53
<b>Land Acquisition: Fee, Easements, and Leases</b>											
<b>Total, Land Acquisition: Fee, Easements, and Leases</b>	-	73	-	73	-	-	-	-3	-	70	-
<b>Total Migratory Bird Conservation Account</b>	91,320	73	84,872	73	-	-	-372	-3	84,500	70	-372

## Program Overview

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The Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) supports America's conservation legacy and its tradition of migratory bird hunting. The MBCF is a sportsmen and waterfowl enthusiast-funded account that provides the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) with monies to acquire important waterfowl habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act and the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act.

The *Migratory Bird Conservation Act* established the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC), which oversees MBCF expenditures. The MBCC is chaired by the Secretary and includes four members of Congress. The MBCC has a nearly 100-year legacy of securing key wetland habitats to sustain migratory bird populations, while establishing or enhancing many of our country's most popular destinations for public waterfowl hunting and bird watching. Since 1929, the MBCC has approved proposals to establish or expand approximately 250 national wildlife refuges using the MBCF. These national wildlife refuges now account for 70 percent of all refuge visits for waterfowl hunting and migratory bird hunting, and 47 percent of all refuge visits for fishing.



*Duck hunter at Upper Mississippi River NWR  
Credit: USFWS.*

All proposed MBCF land acquisitions for national wildlife refuges must be approved by the MBCC, and the MBCC only considers such proposals in a State after:

- The State's legislature has consented by law to acquisition by the United States (16 U.S.C. 715f).
- The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has consulted with the affected county or other unit of local government and with the State's Governor or the appropriate State agency, about the proposed land acquisition (16 U.S.C. 715c).
- The State's Governor or their designee has approved the acquisition (16 U.S.C. 715k-5).

Additionally, the State official that administers the State's game laws, or their representative, serves as an ex officio member of the MBCC and considers and votes on all proposed acquisitions in their State.

There are two major sources of funds deposited into the MBCF account. The best-known source is the revenue received from the sale of Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as Duck Stamps, as provided for under the *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of March 18, 1934, as amended*. The other major funding source are import duties collected on arms and ammunition, as provided for under the *Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986*. The MBCF is further supplemented by payments for rights-of-way granted across refuge lands, and any proceeds from refuge land disposals or State-reverted Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration funds.



*The 2025-2026 Duck Stamp features artist Adam Grimm's painting of a pair of spectacled eiders.*

### **Delivering Conservation for Migratory Birds**

Since its creation, the MBCF has contributed significantly to the successful conservation of wetland-dependent migratory birds and continues to support habitat conservation for waterfowl and other birds, including conservation of coastlines, grasslands, and forests. Examples of recent MBCC-approved land acquisition projects are below:

- Acquisition of 298 acres at Big Muddy National Wildlife Refuge, located 40 miles west of St. Louis, Missouri. Acquisition and restoration of the property protects open and emergent wetlands, brood pools, and mixed grasses, sedges, and forbs that provide essential resting and breeding habitat for migratory waterfowl, especially American black ducks, mallards, and teal. Prior to this acquisition, public hunting land in the county was nearly non-existent. FWS now manages the property for compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation, including public hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography.



*Forested wetlands at Big Muddy NWR in Missouri serve as vital resting and breeding habitat for waterfowl, including wood ducks.*

- Acquisition of 982 acres at Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, located 15 miles southwest of Yazoo City, Mississippi. This acquisition protects bottomland hardwood forest, providing high-quality habitat for waterfowl—including breeding wood ducks—as well as for migratory and resident songbirds, wading birds, and other native wildlife species. FWS manages the property for compatible, wildlife-dependent recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

- Acquisition of 280-acre and 376-acre conservation easements at the Bear River Watershed Conservation Area, located east of Paris, Idaho. These acquisitions protect emergent wetlands, which provide habitat for mallards, pintail, teal, and Canada goose. FWS manages the adjacent Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge for compatible, wildlife-dependent recreational activities, including public hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography.



*Waterfowl lifts off from wetlands at Bear Lake NWR in Idaho is a vital stopover for migrating waterfowl.  
Credit: USFWS.*

### **Budget Estimate**

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The 2027 budget estimate for the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund is \$84,500,000 and 70 FTE.

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# The National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF)

## **Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders**

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### *Great American Outdoors Act*

The Great American Outdoors Act, P.L. 116-152 (GAOA) combines a financial commitment to conservation and recreation for future generations with a significant investment in the facilities needed to carry out Interior’s important missions, ranging from operating Bureau of Indian Education schools to the care and maintenance of America’s national treasures. This investment provides an unprecedented opportunity to address the Department of the Interior’s deferred maintenance backlog and restore deteriorating assets. To do so effectively requires prioritization, consistent with lifecycle investment plans and a sound program execution and management strategy.

The legislation also authorizes permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million per fiscal year.

### *National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund*

The Department of the Interior is responsible for administering and implementing GAOA’s National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF) program, which is shared with the U.S. Forest Service. For fiscal years 2021 through 2025, Congress authorized up to \$1.9 billion annually to be deposited in the LRF for projects that address priority deferred maintenance. The annual deposit was equal to 50 percent of energy development revenues, up to \$1.9 billion, from oil, gas, coal, alternative, or renewable energy on Federal land and water credited, covered, or deposited into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts under Federal law in the preceding fiscal year. The annual funding was allocated to the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Education, and the U.S. Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture

The Service has the legal mandate and responsibility to ensure its inventory of assets, facilities, and infrastructure is safe and adequate to accomplish its conservation mission and that operations are conducted in compliance with applicable regulations.

## **Program Overview**

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Across the initial five years of funding, GAOA LRF has had a transformative impact in addressing critical infrastructure needs. Projects in progress continue to address roughly \$5.9 billion of deferred maintenance and repairs on nearly 4,000 Department of the Interior assets across the country. Yet much work remains, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supports the reauthorization of the LRF as part of the 2027 President’s Budget, which received its last deposit based on qualified energy development revenues in fiscal year 2025. The budget proposes to reauthorize the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund for an additional five years at the current funding level of 50 percent of qualified energy

development revenues from the preceding fiscal year, up to \$1.9 billion annually. Reauthorization will allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue utilizing life-cycle efficient methods to address priority deferred maintenance needs through infrastructure repair, replacement, and divestiture. Infrastructure investments under a reauthorized fund will enhance operational efficiency and public safety, improve recreation access and service delivery, reduce liabilities associated with deferred maintenance, and help ensure that facilities on public lands meet the needs of visitors and communities.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service GAOA LRF Statistics**

The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) has 41,485 real property assets, valued at over \$55.65 billion, which serve to deliver its mission. Approximately 45 percent of the infrastructure inventory is 40 years old or older and many have identified, but unfunded, deferred maintenance deficiencies. GAOA LRF has been a critical infusion to address deferred maintenance needs. As of December 1, 2025, the Service has obligated \$262 million of its \$486 million allocation. The Service FY 2021-2025 portfolio focuses on 560 assets with the majority in the Operational Buildings and Water Infrastructure and Utilities categories. As of December 1, 2025, the Service has 70% of LRF-funded projects in the Construction, Substantially Complete, or Completed phases, with 11% of funded projects in the Solicitation phase. The Service has taken a holistic approach, prioritizing lifecycle investments at field stations in the NWRS to strategically retire deferred maintenance.

### **Accomplishments**

Additional information and project data sheets are available at the Department’s GAOA LRF website: <https://www.doi.gov/gaoa-project-data>.



*Prime Hook NWR: Replacement Visitor Contact Station Completed.  
Image: USFWS*



*Dale Bumpers White River NWR: Replaced Water Control Structures to Control Flooding for Improved Visitor Access and Hunting Opportunities. Image: USFWS*



*GAOA Funded Maintenance Professional Replacing Siding on a Quarters building at Ninigret NWR. Image: USFWS*



*GAOA Funded Maintenance Professionals Repairing a Damaged Fishing Pier at Wappanocca NWR. Image: USFWS*

## **Reauthorization**

The budget proposes to reauthorize the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund for an additional five years, maintaining the current funding level of 50 percent of qualified energy development revenues from the preceding fiscal year, up to \$1.9 billion annually. Investments made under this reauthorized fund will not only enhance operational efficiency and public safety but also improve service delivery, reduce liabilities associated with deferred maintenance, and ensure that facilities on public lands adequately serve both visitors and communities. Additionally, these investments will significantly benefit recreational assets and access, promoting a more enjoyable experience for all visitors. The Department of Interior looks forward to sharing the fiscal year 2027 LRF project list and project data sheets at a later date, following LRF reauthorization.

# National Wildlife Refuge Fund

## Authorizing Statutes

*Refuge Revenue Sharing Act* (16 U.S.C. 715s). Authorizes payments to be made to offset tax losses to counties in which Service fee and withdrawn public domain lands are located.

*Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Sections 1002 and 1008* (16 U.S.C. 3142 and 3148). Address the procedures for permitting oil and gas leases on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain (Section 1002) and other non-North Slope Federal lands in Alaska (Section 1008).

**Appropriation: National Wildlife Refuge Fund**

<b>Activity: Payments to Counties</b>											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request						
Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)	Budget Authority	FTE	Change from 2026 Enacted
National Wildlife Refuge Fund (Discretionary)											
<b>Subtotal, National Wildlife Refuge Fund (Discretionary)</b>	<b>13,228</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>13,228</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-13,228</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-13,228</b>
Payments to Counties (Permanent)											
<b>Subtotal, Payments to Counties</b>	<b>8,621</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Sequestration</i>	<i>-491</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Previously Unavailable BA</i>	<i>430</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>491</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-35</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>456</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-35</i>
<b>Total, Payments to Counties</b>	<b>8,560</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8,035</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-35</b>

**Program Overview**

The purpose of the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act is to share revenues derived from refuge lands with counties and other units of local government to compensate for lost tax revenues from Federal land acquisitions. The Act authorizes appropriations to be deposited into a special fund, the National Wildlife Refuge Fund (NWRF), and used for payments to counties in which lands are acquired in fee (fee land) or reserved from the public domain (reserved land) and managed by the Service for fish and wildlife purposes, minus any associated costs. The Act authorizes payments for Service-managed fee lands based on a formula that entitles counties to whichever is the highest of the following amounts: 1) 25 percent of the net receipts; 2) 3/4 of 1 percent of the fair market value of the land; or 3) 75 cents per acre.



*Forest thinning and prescribed fire improve foraging habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers at Piedmont NWR. Proceeds from timber sales are deposited into the National Wildlife Refuge Fund to be distributed to counties and other forms of local government. Image: USFWS*

The refuge revenue sharing payments made on lands reserved from the public domain and administered by the Service are always 25 percent of the net receipts collected from the reserved land in the county. If no receipts are collected, there is no revenue-sharing payment. However, the Department of the Interior makes Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) (31 U.S.C. 6901-6907) on all public domain lands, including Service-reserved lands. The Service reports to the Department annually on all Service reserved land acres and the revenue sharing amounts already paid on those acres. The Department then calculates the PILT amounts, subtracts the amounts the Service has already paid, and makes the PILT payments to the local governments.

Discretionary Appropriations: The 2027 President's Budget does not request funding for the discretionary portion of the National Wildlife Refuge Fund. This Fund was intended to compensate communities for lost tax revenue from Federal land acquisitions but does not take into account the economic benefits refuges provide to communities.

Mandatory Receipts: The 2027 estimate for National Wildlife Refuge Fund revenue from activities, such as grazing leases and timber sales, is \$8,000,000. The table below shows how the Service derives the funding amount available for payments to counties and other units of local government.

**National Wildlife Refuge Fund Estimates for Payments to Counties (Dollars in Thousands)**

<b>Category/Element</b>	<b>2025 Actual</b>	<b>2026 Estimate</b>	<b>2027 Estimate</b>
Receipts Collected	8,621	8,000	8,000
Sequestration	-491	-456	-456
Recoveries	18	50	50
Expenses for Sales	-2,478	-2,529	-2,529
ANILCA Expenses	0	-35	-35
Estimated User-Pay Cost Share	-43	-45	-45
<b>Net Receipts</b> -- Available during the following year	5,627	4,985	4,985
Receipts Available - collected previous year		5,627	4,985
Sequestration Restored		491	456
Appropriations		13,228	0
<b>Total Available for Payments to Counties</b>		<b>19,346</b>	<b>5,441</b>

# Contributed Funds (Permanent)

## **Appropriations Language**

Activities funded from this account do not require appropriation language since there is permanent authority to use the receipts.

## **Authorizing Statutes**

***Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act*** (16 U.S.C. 661-668). This Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to accept donations of land and contributed funds in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

***Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956*** (16 U.S.C. 743b-7421). This Act authorizes loans for commercial fishing vessels; investigations of fish and wildlife resources; and cooperation with other agencies. The Service is also authorized to accept donations of real and personal property. P.L. 105-242 amended this Act to authorize cooperative agreements with nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and to promote volunteer outreach and education programs. Funds contributed by partners from sales and gifts must be deposited in a separate account in the Department of the Treasury.

***Land and Water Conservation Fund Act*** (16 U.S.C. 4601-1h). This Act authorizes donations of fund, property, and personal services or facilities for the purposes of the Act.

***National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Act*** (16 U.S.C. 742).

Authorizes cooperative agreements with nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and to promote volunteer, outreach, and education programs.

***National Fish Hatchery System Volunteer Act*** (120 STAT 2058-2061). Authorizes cooperative agreements with nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to promote the stewardship of resources through biological monitoring or research; to construct, operate, maintain, or improve hatchery facilities, habitat and services, and to promote volunteer, outreach, and education programs.

**Appropriation: Contributed Funds**

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Change from 2026 Enacted		
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)			
<b>Contributed Funds</b>	3,607	13	5,000	15	-	-	-	-	5,000	15	-

## **Program Overview**

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The Service accepts unsolicited contributions from other governments, private organizations, and individuals. Once collected, the funds are used to support a variety of fish and wildlife conservation projects that contribute to fulfillment of the Department of the Interior’s goals and the Service’s mission. Contributions are difficult to forecast accurately due to external events.

## **2027 Program Performance**

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The Service uses contributed funds to address its highest priority needs in concert with other types of funding. The funds in 2027 will likely be used for projects similar to those planned and completed in previous fiscal years. For example, the Service used contributed funds for the following activities in FY 2025:

### ***National Wildlife Refuge System***

**Don Edwards NWR (CA):** Don Edwards San Francisco Bay used contributed funds to enhance and manage 58 Vernal Pools and meadow habitat on the Warm Spring unit to enhance aquatic and vegetation through grazing; biological monitoring; and enhancement of the flora and fauna endemic to vernal pools such as the California tiger salamanders, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, and Contra Costa goldfields. In addition, the dunes support educational and community engagement programs about vernal pool habitats.



*Refuge System employees and volunteers monitor wetlands on the Warm Springs Unit of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR. Photo credit USFWS*

**National Elk NWR (WY):** The National Elk Refuge used contributed funds to support the refuge irrigation program which enhances grassland habitat to provide forage for bison, elk and other wild ungulates as well as habitat for migratory bird species and other wildlife; purchase supplemental feed pellets for winter feeding of bison and elk; and support youth internship programs.

### ***Fish and Aquatic Conservation***

Fish and Aquatic Conservation used contributed funds to support the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership's 2025 National Investigational New Animal Drug (INAD) Program. Over 100 different Federal, State, private, Tribal, and university partners participated in the INAD Program that included 19 INADs to choose from. INAD treatments were used in over 775 studies on approximately 24 million fish. Therapeutic types of INADs that were administered to sick fish saved 83% of the treated fish that would have otherwise died without treatment.

One example of how the INAD Program is being used is by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources where a spawning aid is being used to develop a successful tiger muskie production program in their state. The use of this spawning aid has dramatically increased the number of tiger muskie fry for not only Utah but for the surrounding states as well. The tiger muskie production program in Utah manages fish populations by introducing sterile tiger muskies into Utah waters. This program not only helps to control nuisance fish but also creates better fishing opportunities. Without this INAD, and support of the INAD Program, tiger muskie production in Utah would suffer and possibly come to an end.



*Lee Kay Hattery manager Chad Hill injecting female Muskellunge with Carp Pituitary Extract. All spawning activity takes place at the Lee Kay facility where we have 4 brood ponds. Photo Credit: UTDWR.*

### **Budget Estimate**

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The 2027 budget estimate for Contributed Funds is \$5,000,000 and 0 FTE.

# Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations

## Appropriations Language

Activities funded from these mandatory spending accounts do not require appropriation language since they were authorized in previous years.

## Authorizing Statutes

*Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, as amended*, (P.L. 98-473, section 320; 98 Stat. 1874). Provides that all rents and charges collected for quarters of agencies funded by the Act shall be deposited and remain available until expended for the maintenance and operation of quarters of that agency.

*Flood Control Act, as amended*, (16 U.S.C. 460d). Provides that receipts collected from the sales of timber and crops produced on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land leased by another Federal agency for natural resources conservation may be used to cover expenses of producing these products and for managing the land for natural resource purposes.

*Truckee-Carson Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act*, (P.L. 101-618, section 206(f)), as amended by Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY 1998, (P.L. 105-277). Authorizes certain revenues and donations from non-Federal entities to be deposited into the Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund to support restoration and enhancement of wetlands in the Lahontan Valley and to restore and protect the Pyramid Lake fishery, including the recovery of two endangered or threatened species of fish. Payments to the Bureau of Reclamation for storage in Northern Nevada's Washoe Project that exceed the operation and maintenance costs of Stampede Reservoir are deposited into the Fund and are available without further appropriation, starting in FY 1996. Beginning in FY 1998, P.L. 105-277 provides that receipts from the sales of certain lands by the Secretary of the Interior are to be deposited into the Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund.

*Commercial Filming Fee*, (P.L. 113-287). This law authorizes a fee system for commercial filming activities on Service land and to use the fees for expenditure by the Secretary, without further appropriation.

*Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998*, (16 U.S.C.742f). This Act authorizes the cooperative agreements with nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, or State and local governments to construct, operate, maintain, or improve refuge facilities and services, and to promote volunteer outreach and education programs.

### Appropriation: Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Activity/Sub Activity/Program Element/Budget Element	2025 Actual		2026 Enacted		2027 Request				Change from 2026 Enacted		
	Budget Authority	FTE	Budget Authority	FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (\$)	Program Changes FTE (+/-)			
<b>Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations</b>											
Operations and Maintenance of Quarters	4,247	3	3,700	3	-	-	-	-	3,700	3	-
Proceeds from Sales	275	-	275	-	-	-	-	-	275	-	-
Lahontan Valley & Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund	695	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Community Partnership Enhancement	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	100	-	-
Film and Photography Fee Program	-	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	75	-	-
<b>Total, Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations</b>	<b>5,217</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4,150</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,150</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>

### **Operations and Maintenance of Quarters**

The Operations and Maintenance of Quarters (Quarters) Account uses receipts from the rental of Service-owned quarters to pay for maintenance of those quarters. Certain circumstances, including a lack of off-site residences and site isolation, require Service personnel to occupy government-owned quarters. Such work includes protecting fish hatchery stock (e.g. maintaining water flow to fish rearing ponds during freezing temperatures), monitoring water management facilities, ensuring the health and welfare of visitors, responding to fires and floods, and protecting government property.

### **Proceeds From Sales, Water Resources Development Projects**

As described in 16 U.S.C. 460(d), receipts collected from the sale of timber and crops from National Wildlife Refuge System lands leased or licensed from the Department of the Army may be used to pay the costs of production of the timber and crops and for managing wildlife habitat. Twenty-three National Wildlife Refuges were established as overlay projects on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land, and they are administered in accordance with cooperative agreements. The agreements provide that timber and grain may be harvested and sold with the receipts returned for development, conservation, maintenance, and utilization of such lands. The Service has used these funds in the past for soil amendments; road construction and repairs; and ditch and fence construction and maintenance. These expenses cannot exceed the receipt amounts deposited as proceeds from sales.

### **Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund**

Pursuant to the Truckee-Carson Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act of 1990, the Lahontan Valley and Pyramid Lake Fish and Wildlife Fund receives revenues and donations from non-Federal parties to support the restoration and enhancement of wetlands in the Lahontan Valley and to restore and protect the Pyramid Lake fishery. Payments received from the Bureau of Reclamation's Washoe and Truckee Storage Projects in excess of operation and maintenance costs for Stampede Reservoir are available without further appropriation, as are donations made for express purposes and State cost-sharing funds. In addition, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to deposit proceeds from the sale of certain lands and interests in lands into the Fund. Land sales proceeds are used primarily to pay annual water delivery costs for Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, Northern Nevada's premier waterfowl hunting destination and part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

### **Community Partnership Enhancement**

The Community Partnership fund was established to encourage volunteer programs, donations, and other contributions by persons or organizations for the benefit of a particular National Wildlife Refuge or complex. The partnership between a refuge or complex and non-Federal organizations may promote public awareness of the resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System and public participation in the conservation of resources. Partnerships may be in the form of a non-profit organization (as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of that Code), academic institution, or State or local government agency to carry out projects or programs for a refuge or refuge complex. Funds may be used to promote education and the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and cultural and historical resources on a refuge or refuge complex.

### **Film and Photography Fee Program**

Congress provided authority for the Service to require permits and establish reasonable fees for commercial filming activities and certain still photography activities under Service jurisdiction. The Service manages commercial filming and still photography in the National Wildlife Refuge System according to laws and regulations in 50 C.F.R. 27.71 (and 43 C.F.R. Part 5). This enables a national wildlife refuge manager to require a special use permit for commercial filming, and to collect and retain cost recovery charges associated with processing permit requests and administering the permit. Visit <https://www.fws.gov/story/filming-activities-national-wildlife-refuge-system> for more information.

### **2027 Budget Estimate**

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The 2027 budget estimate for Miscellaneous Permanent Appropriations is \$4,150,000 and 2 FTE.

# General Provision

*Amounts made available in this Act or any other Act, including transfers, to the Department of the Interior under the heading "Fish and Wildlife Service--Resource Management" may be used to carry out any provision of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), as amended, notwithstanding the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970, except with respect to enforcement and the importation or exportation of terrestrial plants, and may be used to carry out any provision of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.), as amended, to the same extent as if references in such statutes to the Department of Commerce refer to the Department of the Interior and any references to the Secretary of Commerce refer to the Secretary of the Interior .*

## **Justification of Language Change**

The added language supports the Administration's proposal to transfer the NMFS's Office of Protected Resources and associated ESA and MMPA implementation responsibilities into FWS, which will streamline permitting activities and ensure consistent and successful ESA and MMPA implementation. This consolidation will improve the efficiency of implementing the ESA by having only one agency review projects impacting endangered species.

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# Appendix

## Section 403 Compliance

This exhibit fulfills the statutory reporting requirements for directed in Public Law 119-74, Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026 as shown below.

### *DISCLOSURE OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES*

*SEC. 403. The amount and basis of estimated overhead charges, deductions, reserves, or holdbacks, including working capital fund charges, from programs, projects, activities and subactivities to support government-wide, departmental, agency, or bureau administrative functions or headquarters, regional, or central operations shall be presented in annual budget justifications and subject to approval by the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Changes to such estimates shall be presented to the Committees on Appropriations for approval.*

**NATIONAL COMMON PROGRAM SERVICES:** The Service has unified all regional shared costs and national shared costs into a common program services charge. These charges account for specific administrative services for facilities management, procurement, human resources, financial and other services.

**NON-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT USER-PAY COST SHARE:** Non-Resource Management Programs continue to pay annually for the administrative services they consume. The funding received from Non-Resource Management Programs supplements central, regional and Servicewide support operations. Specifically, the Non-Resource Management Programs pay for their actual use of communication services and Workers' Compensation. Other costs, such as Washington and Regional office Administration and Service-wide costs, such as Unemployment Compensation, are measured through FTE usage.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION:** The Service has historically paid workers' compensation costs centrally through the Servicewide bill paying account. As a result, programs were not aware of the costs that result from employee injuries. Since FY 2015, workers' compensation costs have been charged to the applicable programs. The Service made this change to address an audit finding and provide incentives for programs to participate in the Department's Return to Work initiative.

**ENTERPRISE-WIDE SERVICES:** In order to provide the necessary level of funding for Enterprisewide and Working Capital Fund Direct Bill services, the Service assesses its resource

management programs for costs that can be directly tracked back to users. This includes IT management, policy, cybersecurity, and oversight requirements, as well as software licenses, cell phone costs, personnel system costs, employee badges and the like.

RESERVES: The Service Director may manage a deferred allocation fund of up to one-half of one percent of the current year Resource Management appropriation for each subactivity in excess of three million dollars. These management reserve funds are used for unanticipated requirements.

Below shows administrative cost estimates for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027:

**Bureau Administrative Costs**

<b>Cost Description</b>	<b>2025 Actual</b>	<b>2027 Estimate</b>
<b>Program Assessments</b>		
Holdbacks, Reserves, and Deductions	7,376,765	7,169,657
<b>Bureau Administrative Costs/Central &amp; Regional Operations</b>		
National Common Program Services	36,500,000	38,500,000
Non-Resource Management User-Pay Cost Share	9,473,497	10,500,000
Workers' Compensation	4,128,000	4,998,400
Enterprise-Wide Services	34,320,075	39,600,000
<b>Unification Costs</b>		
WCF Unification	57,531,900	182,016,200
<b>TOTAL, Bureau Administrative Costs</b>	<b>149,330,237</b>	<b>282,784,257</b>

<b>Working Capital Fund</b>						
<i>Dollars in Thousands (\$000)</i>						
	<b>2026 Estimate</b>			<b>2027 Estimate</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Direct</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Direct</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
OS Shared Services	2,084.2	8,382.9	10,467.1	2,374.3	8,410.5	10,784.8
OS Activities	110,500.0	1,853.6	112,353.6	104,886.4	1,664.9	106,551.3
IT Shared Services	46,521.8	11,653.0	58,174.8	45,125.7	10,511.8	55,637.5
Interior Business Center	4,116.2	3,624.7	7,740.9	4,038.4	3,004.2	7,042.6
<b>TOTAL, WCF Billing</b>	<b>163,222.2</b>	<b>25,514.1</b>	<b>188,736.3</b>	<b>156,424.8</b>	<b>25,591.4</b>	<b>182,016.2</b>

### **Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act**

The Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act (GAO-IG Act, P.L. 115-414) enacted January 3, 2019, requires that Agencies report the status of each open audit recommendation issued more than one year prior to the submission of the Agency’s annual budget justification to Congress. The Act requires Agencies to include the current target completion date, implementation status, and any discrepancies on closure determinations.

The Department of the Interior leadership takes audit follow-up very seriously and considers our external auditors, to include the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Office of the Inspector General, valued partners in not only improving the Department’s management and compliance obligations but also enhancing its programmatic and administrative operations. As stewards of taxpayer resources, the Department applies cost-benefit analysis and enterprise risk management principles in recommendation implementation decisions. The Department’s GAO-IG Act Report will be available at the following link: <https://www.doi.gov/cj>

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

### Employee Count by Grade (Total Employment)

	<b>2025 Actual</b>	<b>2026 Enacted</b>	<b>2027 Estimate</b>
Executive Level V	1	1	1
SES	19	17	17
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>
SL - 00	0	0	0
ST - 00	0	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
GS/GM -15	110	95	88
GS/GM -14	447	385	357
GS/GM -13	1,270	1,095	1,014
GS -12	1,719	1,482	1,373
GS -11	1,417	1,248	1,156
GS -10	9	8	7
GS - 9	708	610	565
GS - 8	83	72	66
GS - 7	504	435	402
GS - 6	164	141	131
GS - 5	250	216	200
GS - 4	72	62	57
GS - 3	9	8	7
GS - 2	1	1	1
GS - 1	0	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6,793</b>	<b>5,857</b>	<b>5,425</b>
Other Pay Schedule Systems	971	638	418
<b>Total employment (actuals &amp; estimates)</b>	<b>7,784</b>	<b>6,513</b>	<b>5,861</b>