

**DEPARTMENTAL
HIGHLIGHTS**

LISTENING TO ALL VOICES ON CONSERVATION



...Interior oversees an enormous amount of landscape...the only way we can monitor that much real estate and activity is to listen to all voices, and follow a process I call the Four C's: they are consultation, cooperation, and communication, all in the service of conservation.

Secretary Gale A. Norton, March 14, 2001

The President's call for a new environmentalism gives all stakeholders a greater voice in how the Nation's natural resources are managed. His vision for a shared Federal and public approach to conservation comes to life in Secretary Norton's Four C's: conservation through consultation, cooperation, and communication. This approach is reflected in the Secretary's citizen-centered approach to managing parks, refuges, and other public lands. The Secretary is committed to listening to the Nation's citizens; tribal, State, and local governments; and non-governmental and private sector organizations and to involve citizens in decisions.

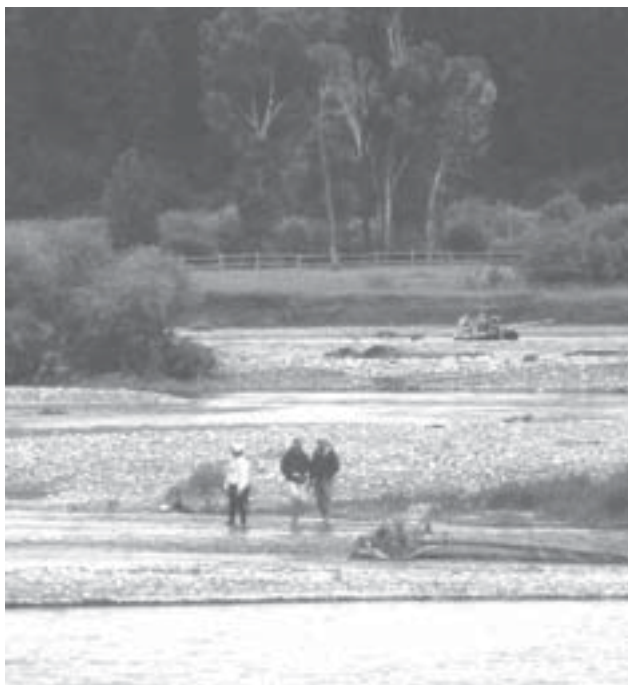
The 2003 budget proposes a new conservation approach for the Federal government through a Cooperative Conservation Initiative. After more than a century of Federal leadership in establishing parks, safeguarding Federal lands, and protecting wildlife, the Department of the Interior will undertake a new initiative, CCI, to enable the American people to carry the torch of conservation for the new century. Its goal is simple: to use the government and its resources to remove barriers to citizen participation and to provide the help that is needed to fulfill the environmental promise of citizen stewardship. This program will provide new and expanded opportunities for landowners and others to participate in projects that foster innovation and create incentives for stewardship of natural resources. Cost-shared projects that will achieve conservation benefits will vary from small-scale revegetation for erosion control to county-wide resource protection efforts, competitively chosen in consideration of potential conservation benefits.

The Landowner Incentive and Private Stewardship programs continue for a second year. Initiated in 2002, funding from these two programs provides resources to local landowners for conservation and brings a new spirit of cooperation with local citizenry. Throughout the country, these grants will be used to support efforts that local citizens and communities want to undertake in order to contribute to natural resource conservation. From the town square to panoramic western vistas, these funds will result in the protection of habitat for a wide diversity of species and will encourage local communities to participate directly in conservation efforts.

Also continued in the 2003 budget are the highly successful programs that provide grants to States and Tribes for targeted conservation purposes, including wildlife conservation, protection and recovery of endangered and threatened species, and efforts to conserve migratory birds and their habitat. These programs add yet another tool to the conservation toolbox that will help to build collaborative relationships that result in the protection and improvement of natural areas throughout the country. Interior's land acquisition program will augment this partnership approach by protecting unique natural and cultural resources in collaboration with local communities and using a variety of tools including easements, land swaps, and direct purchase of property.

COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

The Cooperative Conservation Initiative funds stewardship on working landscapes and stimulates conservation innovation. It earmarks \$100.0 million for State grants, and for the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service to work cooperatively with citizens, land-user groups, environmental organizations, communities, local and State governments, Tribes, and industries on conservation projects that advance the health of the land and the well-



being of people. The goal of this initiative and the President's new environmentalism is to move the environmental decisionmaking pendulum away from conflict toward cooperation and innovative conservation initiatives.

Recognizing that most good ideas reside in communities across the Nation, CCI will provide broad flexibility for creative natural resource restoration ideas developed with partners. The CCI will spur on new ideas and foster new land-use practices that can apply across regions and serve as models for maintaining ecologically healthy landscapes and vibrant communities.

At the heart of the Four C's is the belief that for conservation to be successful, we must involve the people who live on, work on, and yes, love the land.

Secretary Gale A. Norton, December 5, 2001

In keeping with the President's commitment to shared responsibility, one-half of the initiative, \$50.0 million, will be managed by the States through the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance program and benefit State as well as adjacent lands. The remaining half will be used through the operating accounts of three land management bureaus: BLM, FWS, and NPS and used for projects on, adjacent to, or that benefit these Federal lands. The benefits of this funding will at least be doubled with a one-to-one match from partners. Benefits to State and Federal lands will compliment the private lands conservation activities conducted with private stewardship funding.

Projects will be selected through a competitive process, based on criteria that encourage partnering, innovation, and performance results. Emphasis will be placed on the expansion or replication of programs that are currently succeeding and pilot projects that address unfunded resource restoration needs or problems. The CCI will encourage coalitions of partners. The program will be managed for excellence and accountability. The CCI applications will highlight the benefits to be achieved as well as the timelines for accomplishing clearly defined goals.

To ensure that cooperation and consultation with affected stakeholders occur, project applications will identify the communities involved and report

The President's new environmentalism puts emphasis on results rather than on procedures. It changes the 'have a permit, pass go' focus, asking instead: 'Is the air cleaner? Are our ecosystems healthier? Have we restored degraded habitats?'

Assistant Secretary P. Lynn Scarlett, October 2001

on the level of involvement that they have had in development of the proposed project.

The BLM will collaborate with landowners to build working landscapes for wildlife. Through partnerships that match Federal funds with local contributions of money, supplies, and labor, the program will improve land-use practices, create habitat for wildlife, and give public land managers a tool to cooperatively work with local communities on Federal and adjacent lands. This program expands BLM's ability to enter into collaborative efforts such as the effort underway at Muddy Creek, Wyoming.

At Muddy Creek, 35 partners - ranchers, environmentalists, miners, a local conservation district, Federal agencies, and others - are cooperatively working together to manage 500,000 acres. These partners are protecting streambeds, reducing erosion, eliminating invasive species, and creating healthier habitats for wildlife. They are accomplishing all this while maintaining local ranching and other economic opportunities on the land. Their tools are simple. They are using tensile fencing to manage cattle while letting wildlife roam. They are experimenting with rotational grazing to allow for re-vegetation of grazed areas. Their key to success lies in cooperative locally generated ideas.

The FWS will expand its collaborative efforts with private individuals and communities to conserve wildlife and important habitat on public and nearby private lands. The initiative will provide new opportunities that benefit partners, providing assistance in improving habitat. The FWS will also expand a modest refuge challenge grant program that funds wildlife habitat conservation and restoration projects on refuges and adjacent private lands. For example, FWS could work with partners including Ducks Unlimited to restore wetlands and bottomland hardwoods at refuges in the Southeast that are critical to waterfowl, shorebirds, and neotropical migrants.

The NPS has major opportunities to support coop-

erative ventures with numerous partners that have diverse but allied interests. For example, NPS may seek ventures between park and caving groups, Bat Conservation International, and other organizations to perform cartographic surveys, document cave resources, and protect key caves on park lands to promote bat conservation. The CCI will also strengthen partnerships with adjacent gateway communities that are a working part of the landscapes of national parks. The health of one is dependent on the health of the other. The CCI will help build strong and prosperous partnerships between gateway communities and national parks to address both the needs of people and the conservation needs of America's most spectacular places.

The CCI is a measured step toward a new stewardship ethic for, one that is citizen-led, landscape-based, and incentive-driven. It is an important part of the President's and the Secretary's agenda to share the responsibility for conservation with citizens and to inspire a new environmentalism founded in community, compassion, and voluntary action. Above all, it fosters conservation through the creativity of the American people and dedicates individual and community stewardship to the public task of helping to care for the Nation's parks, refuges, public lands, and wildlife.

LANDOWNER PARTNERSHIPS

The FWS Landowner Incentive program, a presidential initiative newly funded in 2002, is an exciting program to facilitate private wildlife conservation efforts. The 2003 request includes \$50.0 million, an increase of \$10.0 million over the level funded in 2002 for grants to States, the District of Columbia, Territories, and Tribes to work with private landowners.

The FWS Landowner Incentive program provides competitive matching grants for the protection and restoration of habitats found on private lands

Working hand in hand with those at the local level, we will chart a course that will use the strengths of each to bolster the conservation of our fish, wildlife and other natural resources to benefit the American people.

Secretary Gale A. Norton, December 5, 2001

that benefit listed species or species at risk. The FWS has been actively working with representatives of partner organizations such as State fish and wildlife agencies to develop implementation guidance and appropriate criteria for awarding grants through States to private landowners.

The program provides opportunities for all States to develop the capacity to implement a program modeled after several State initiatives, including the Texas Private Lands Enhancement program. The Texas program provides technical assistance to landowners that promote land use practices that conserve and enhance habitat for imperiled species. The selection criteria for grant awards are being finalized cooperatively with State agencies and will likely include: the level of cost sharing or

match; the importance of the projects to recovery of the targeted species; the area affected; the number of species benefited; the number of partners involved; the number of States and Tribes cooperating on a project; and the initiation of new programs currently not available to landowners.

PRIVATE STEWARDSHIP

The \$10.0 million for FWS Private Stewardship grants directly assist individuals and groups engaged in local, private, and voluntary conservation efforts for the benefit of federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, and other imperiled species. This presidential initiative provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to

Colorado's Shortgrass/Black-tailed Prairie Dog Habitat Incentive Program

The Landowner Incentive Program will provide assistance to States to establish or supplement landowner incentive programs. A model for the kind of State efforts that may receive support is the Shortgrass/Black-tailed Prairie Dog Habitat incentive program, a new program being piloted in Colorado in 2002. Colorado's program will provide financial assistance to landowners



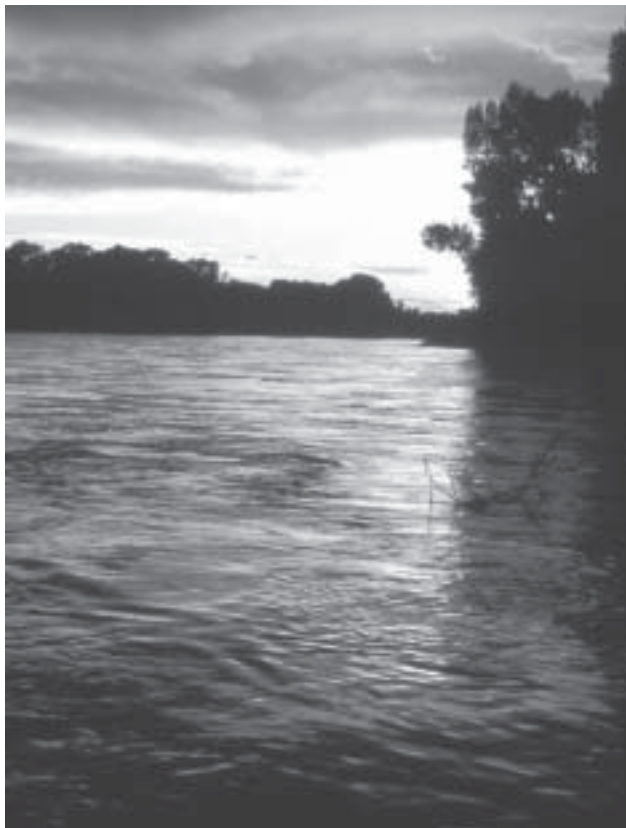
in four soil conservation districts in eastern Colorado to protect black-tailed prairie dogs, their habitat, and associated shortgrass prairie. The black-tailed prairie dog is considered vital to shortgrass prairie ecosystems in the West. Last year FWS added this prairie dog to the list of candidate species warranting ESA protection. Eleven States, including Colorado, are developing their own goals to help conserve the species so that Federal listing will not be necessary.

Over 80 percent of occupied black-tailed prairie dog habitat in Colorado is located on private property. Landowners are eligible to offer a per-acre bid for the amount of compensation they believe is reasonable for protecting prairie dogs for five or ten-year periods. Lands with the highest benefits in comparison with costs will be accepted into the program.

help avoid harming endangered and threatened species and to improve habitat for native species. A diverse panel of representatives will help assess the applications and make funding recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior. For landowners concerned that their activities may attract candidate and listed species, FWS will provide assurances through safe harbor and candidate conservation agreements. The Private Stewardship grant program will work closely with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, which currently provides biological, technical, and financial assistance to over 27,000 landowners for conservation of fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.

WILDLIFE PARTNERSHIPS

The 2003 request includes \$194.6 million for three other FWS conservation grant programs: \$91.0 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund; \$43.6 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund; and \$60.0 million for the FWS State and Tribal Wildlife grants. These programs are funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 2003, re-emphasizing the importance in achieving the land and water con-



servation goals set forth in the LWCF Act. The FWS Cooperative Endangered Species program provides funds for State and local land acquisition to protect and restore threatened and endangered species, including habitat conservation planning and recovery of listed and candidate species. The North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, a habitat management program begun in 1991, provides matching grants to private landowners, States, non-government conservation organizations, Tribes, trusts, and corporations for acquisition, restoration, and enhancement of wetland habitat. The FWS State and Tribal Wildlife grants will fund a wide variety of State and tribal programs for the benefit of wildlife and habitat.

CONSERVATION TOOLS

The LWCF State Assistance and Federal land acquisition programs for 2003 build upon the President's vision of cooperation with States and local landowners to meet basic responsibilities for species protection, habitat restoration, and the protection of national treasures.

The 2003 request includes \$200.0 million for the LWCF State Assistance program, an increase of \$56.0 million. It will be managed in two segments, including \$150.0 million for the traditional State grants program and \$50.0 million for CCI. As mentioned earlier, this \$50.0 million will complement the traditional State grants program by providing additional funding for competitively awarded grants focusing specifically on natural resource restoration.

The traditional program provides grants to the States for approved recreation plans. Grants require at least a 50/50 match and are used to acquire and develop land for a variety of public recreation purposes. The allocation to States is based on a national formula established by law, with State population being the most significant factor. The Stateside program has been successful in leveraging State and local funds for the acquisition of open spaces and natural areas and the development of recreation areas.

A \$204.1 million request for Federal land acquisition in 2003 will support 99 projects in 33 States. To make the most efficient use of this funding, promote cooperative alliances, and leave land on State tax roles, the request emphasizes innovative alternatives to fee title purchase, such as conserva-

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND
(\$000)

The 2003 budget fulfills President Bush's commitment to provide \$900 million annually from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

	<u>2003</u> <u>Request</u>
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	
Federal Land Acquisition	
BLM	44,686
FWS	70,384
NPS	86,057
Shivwits Water Settlement	3,000
Subtotal	<u>204,127</u>
LWCF Grant Programs	
NPS	
State Assistance Grants	200,000
CCI included above	[50,000]
FWS	
Landowner Incentive Grants ..	50,000
Private Stewardship Grants	10,000
Coop. Endg. Species Grants	91,000
NAWCF Grants	43,560
State/Tribal Wildlife Grants ...	60,000
Subtotal	<u>454,560</u>
Subtotal, Interior	<u>658,687</u>
U.S. FOREST SERVICE	
State LWCF Programs	
State and Private Forestry	120,000
Federal Land Acquisition	130,510
Subtotal, Forest Service	250,510
TOTAL (without CSRS/FEHB)	<u>909,197</u>
CSRS/FEHB leg. proposal	1,927
TOTAL (with CSRS/FEHB)	911,124

tion easements and land exchanges.

For example, in the area 20 miles north of Idaho Falls, Idaho, the Upper Snake/South Fork Snake River project provides valuable riverfront, cottonwood riparian properties, and public access along the river corridors. This portion of the river has a world famous blue ribbon fishery for cutthroat trout, provides habitat for the majority of Idaho's bald eagle production with 17 nesting territories, and is prime habitat for 126 bird species. To foster wise stewardship of this area, BLM cooperates with eight organizations such as Ducks Unlimited and Trout Unlimited, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, and numerous landowners to protect the river corridors through conservation easements. Other partners donated \$6.9 million in conservation easements, and Bonneville Power Administration provided a grant of \$6.3 million to the project. The 2003 budget includes \$2.0 million for BLM to pursue opportunities to acquire an additional 400 acres through conservation easements from willing sellers in the area.

The 2003 request for Federal acquisition includes \$44.7 million for BLM, \$70.4 million for FWS, \$86.1 million for NPS, and \$3.0 million in Departmental Management for a total of \$204.1 million. The Departmental Management request funds the Shivwits Indian Water Settlement Act of 1999, which authorizes use of land and water conservation funds for the Paiute Tribe in Utah.

Appendix D includes a complete listing of the land acquisition projects funded in the 2003 budget by bureau and State. The total for direct Federal acquisitions of interests in land is \$75.0 million less than the 2002 enacted level. This year's budget request focuses on grants, taking better care of existing lands and facilities, and achieving the Secretary's conservation goals through partnerships with States, local governments, private landowners, and other interested groups.

Volunteerism

Volunteers are an integral part of Secretary Norton's vision of the Four C's – conservation through cooperation, consultation, and communication. As an American tradition, volunteerism over the years has made an immeasurable contribution to communities, organizations, and individuals throughout the country. Over 200,000 volunteers provide in excess of seven million hours of service to the Interior Department every year, valued at over \$95 million per year.



Volunteers are often the first people to greet visitors to parks, refuges, and campgrounds. They are a great source of new ideas and infuse the Department's programs with energy, vitality, and creativity.

Interior's volunteers come from every State and nearly every country in the world, working hand in hand with Interior employees to help preserve and protect America's natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of this and future generations. They work at information desks, present live history demonstrations, give interpretative tours, and deliver talks on the diverse resources found on the Department's public lands. Volun-

teers also conduct fish and wildlife population studies; assist with research; help refuges complete habitat modification projects; inventory natural and cultural artifacts; build trails and fences; and pick up litter along roads, trails, seashores, and rivers. Behind the scenes, volunteers design brochures and exhibits and develop computer programs and websites.

Interior is working with multiple partners to create a new internet portal to promote public sector volunteer programs. The Volunteer.gov website will provide a new on-line tool that successfully matches prospective volunteers to opportunities nationwide. Volunteer.gov will make volunteer opportunities more accessible to a broader range of the public through the web by providing the capability to search for volunteer opportunities by location, agency, or personal interest, and submit applications on-line. The natural resource agencies involved in the project are the NPS, BLM, FWS, BOR, USGS, the U.S. Forest Service, and Army Corps of Engineers. The site will include volunteer opportunities for other agencies and partners, including the Department of Veteran's Affairs, the Corporation for National Service, and the State of New York. The portal has the potential to expand to incorporate volunteer opportunities for other service areas across government, such as education, science, health care, and social services. Phase I of the new system is scheduled to go on-line in April 2002, during National Volunteer Week.

To continue this collaborative spirit, the Secretary is rekindling the Take Pride in America program to promote volunteerism and foster an appreciation for the Nation's public lands and build Federal-public partnerships for conservation.

