

Natural Resources Related Updates

FORT IRWIN: Relocation of desert tortoises OK to resume

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Federal wildlife officials have given the U.S. Army the go-ahead to move dozens of desert tortoises out of an area where the military had planned to conduct maneuvers.

An effort to relocate the animals in 2008 was stopped because of a higher-than-expected death rate among the tortoises that had been moved.

An 83-page analysis by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists found that moving an estimated 59 tortoises would not jeopardize the survival of the species, which is threatened with extinction. The finding, called a biological opinion, allows the animals to be moved from a 22,000-acre area where the Army had planned tank maneuvers and live-fire training.

The appropriate Fort Irwin officials could not be reached for comment Monday afternoon.

Of the 580 tortoises moved in 2008, at least 51 were killed by coyotes or dogs, according to the Fish and Wildlife analysis completed on Friday. Another 121 died from unknown causes.

A study published in 2010 in the scientific journal *Endangered Species Research* found that drought conditions in 2008 made normal coyote food sources such as rabbits scarce, so the hungry canines turned to tortoises. The animals moved by the Army generally fared no better or worse than those living in wild areas of the Mojave Desert, the study found.

To give the tortoises a better chance of surviving, Fish and Wildlife is limiting the relocations to spring and fall months, on days when temperatures stay below 95 degrees. That gives the Army a few weeks to move the tortoises this spring. The tortoises will be moved to military land, according to a Bureau of Land Management spokesman.

Ileene Anderson, a biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity, said Monday that if the Army moves tortoises in the coming weeks, many could again die in the jaws of coyotes. The Mojave Desert region, as in 2008, is seeing a drought phase when prey species favored by coyotes, feral dogs and other predators won't be as plentiful, putting the tortoises at higher risk, she said.

This new period of scarcity follows two wet years of plenty that bolstered the predators' numbers, she said. "We know there are more predators on the landscape," Anderson said. "We hope they (the Army) learned their lesson and are not trying to translocate during a drought year," she said.

Last month, more than 50 tortoises displaced by the BrightSource Energy Co. solar development in northeastern San Bernardino County were moved to public land near the Nevada border. Officials so far have not reported problems.

Follow David Danelski on Twitter: @DavidDanelski

Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries Make it Easier to Describe and Understand Critical Habitat Boundaries for ESA-Protected Species

Using maps instead of lengthy written descriptions is more efficient, less expensive and clearer.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA

Fisheries) have taken a significant step in their effort to make the process of proposing or changing boundaries of critical habitat designations for species protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA), more efficient, less complex and less expensive. By eliminating lengthy textual descriptions and replacing them with maps illustrating critical habitat boundaries, the two agencies will effectively provide landowners and the general public with information that is clearer, while simultaneously reducing costs for the American taxpayer.

Previously, when the agencies designated or revised critical habitat for ESA-protected species, they were required to describe, in text, the boundaries of the designation for the Federal Register, in addition to using visual methods such as maps. These textual descriptions often cost hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to publish and can be difficult to interpret and understand. The FWS and NOAA Fisheries have finalized a joint rule to make the regulation under the ESA that requires the textual description of critical habitat boundaries optional.

The final joint rule, which will publish in the Federal Register on May 1, 2012 will not affect how the two agencies designate critical habitat under the ESA, or alter the criteria or methods used to evaluate areas for inclusion as critical habitat. The boundaries of critical habitat as mapped or otherwise described in the official rulemaking published in the Federal Register will remain the official delineation of the designation.

For further information or for a copy of the final rule, visit http://www.fws.gov/endangered/improving_ESA/CH_Text.html.

Critical habitat is a term in the ESA identifying areas that contain habitat features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and which may require special management considerations. A designation does not set up a preserve or refuge, and has no specific regulatory impact on landowner actions on private land that do not involve Federal agency funds, authorization, or permits. Critical habitat is designated as part of a public process that takes into consideration the economic impact the designation could cause, as well as any other relevant impacts.

The agencies have increasingly provided the public with more detailed and user-friendly information about critical habitat designations and other Endangered Species Act matters through their websites, the federal regulations Internet portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, and through local field offices.

America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. To learn more about the FWS Endangered Species program, go to <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usnoaagov>.

To learn more about the NOAA Fisheries Endangered Species program, go to <http://www.nmfs.gov/pr>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence,

stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfws, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws>.

-FWS-

Senate Agriculture Committee adopts 2012 Farm Bill

Posted April 27

In response to the Senate Agriculture Committee's adoption of their version of the 2012 Farm Bill, [NASF released a statement](#), finding that the bulk of the legislation is consistent with their platform. "While no Farm Bill can be perfect, we greatly appreciate the Committee providing many of the tools necessary for improving and maintaining the health of the nation's forests," said West Virginia State Forester and NASF President Randy Dye. "We recognize the budget climate necessitated difficult policy changes that limited and repealed other Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act authorities that are key to responding to the threats and issues identified in every state's Forest Action Plan."

<http://stateforesters.org/blog/senate-agriculture-committee-adopts-2012-farm-bill>

U.S. EPA, Dept. of Energy Launch Innovative New Tools to Determine Solar, Wind Energy Potential on Contaminated Lands

City of Richmond, Calif. is serving as a pilot community for development of the tools

For Immediate Release: April 25, 2012

Media Contact: Mary Simms, simms.mary@epa.gov, (415) 947-4270

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) have developed and launched new tools designed to test underutilized sites and contaminated land for solar and wind energy potential. The tools give local communities and landowners ways to evaluate sites for renewable energy potential without the need for technical expertise.

The alternative energy 'decision trees,' leverage NREL's knowledge of renewable energy technologies and EPA's experience in returning contaminated lands to productive use.

The EPA estimates that nationwide there are approximately 490,000 sites and almost 15 million acres of potentially contaminated properties.

"Opportunities to install renewable energy systems on vacant properties can be found in every community," said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "Tapping sun and wind power at brownfield sites, rooftops, parking lots, and abandoned land could provide untapped gigawatts of clean energy."

The City of Richmond, Calif. is serving as a pilot community for development of the tools.

"Developing more local renewables is among my top priorities," said Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin. "We are extremely excited that the green, innovative City of Richmond, California is partnering with the EPA to help communities throughout the United States fully leverage technology to improve the environment, create local jobs and attract green companies."

Positioning renewable energy on sites can increase economic value of the properties, provide a sustainable land reuse option, create local green jobs and provide clean energy for use on-site or for the utility grid. Using the decision trees, state and local governments, site owners and community members

can help identify the most desirable sites for solar or wind installations from both a logistical and economic standpoint.

In addition to opportunities in cities, thousands of potentially contaminated acres in less populated areas across the country could be put to beneficial reuse with renewable energy.

The tools can be used to evaluate individual or multiple sites, such as brownfields, Superfund and other hazardous waste sites, abandoned parcels, landfills, parking lots, and commercial or industrial roofs, depending on the technology.

The tools and a podcast by the Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response on the solar and wind decision trees are now available on EPA's website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/renewableenergyland>

USDA Announces Assistance for 13 Wetlands Partnership Projects in 12 States

Release No. 0131.12

Contact: Office of Communications 202-720-4623

WASHINGTON, April 24, 2012 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced funding for 13 partnership agreements for high-priority wetland restoration and conservation work in 12 states. The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and a network of partners have nearly \$15 million in financial and technical assistance available for these projects in 2012 and will enter into long-term agreements to deliver additional assistance over the next four years.

[View article...](#)

Presidential Pipeline

A Message From Clean Water America Alliance President Ben Grumbles

April 24, 2012

Forests & Faucets, Wetlands & Waterworks

Earth Day and U.S. Water Prize celebrations remind me that some of the most important things we can do for water are above the intake and beyond the outfall-sometimes many miles above and beyond the man-made infrastructure systems.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes this and its "Forests to Faucets" project, is doing something about it. They're using GIS to model and map land areas most important to surface drinking water and exploring the role forests play in protecting these areas and the extent of threat from development, insects, disease, and fire. The data can help shape state forest conservation plans, identify areas where a "payment for watershed services" project may be an option for financing conservation work, and show the link between forests and the provision of surface drinking water.

It's all important, urgent work: USDA notes about 53% of the nation's water supply originates on forest land and that within the next 25 years 44.2 million acres of private forests in the U.S. will be at risk of conversion to developed uses.

One of the best known examples of the tree-to-tap connection is in the New York City (NYC) watershed. NYC has protected more than 35% of the watershed. Just ask Carter Strickland, the NYC Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner, whether it's been worthwhile. He'll tell you NYCs [\[Continue Reading\]](#).

Sincerely,

Ben Grumbles
President
Clean Water America Alliance

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) today released the following reports, testimony, and correspondence:

April 24, 2012

OTHER WRITTEN PRODUCT

Farm Bill: Issues to Consider for Reauthorization, GAO-12-338SP, April 24

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-338SP>

Lawsuit says wind energy industry hurts condors

Posted: 04/22/2012

Associated Press via Mercury News

The Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife and the Sierra Club "filed a federal lawsuit this month against the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to stop the proposed 100-turbine North Sky River wind project in Kern County's Tehachapi region, the Ventura County Star reported Saturday."

They "said in the filing that a neighboring wind farm, Pine Tree, has killed at least eight golden eagles and that California condors could be at risk from the blades of turbines as well.".....

http://www.mercurynews.com/science/ci_20457235/

Statement From Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on the Senate Agriculture Committee 2012 Farm Bill Mark

Release No. 0129.12

Contact: Office of Communications (202)720-4623

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2012 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today made the following statement on the Senate Agriculture Committee 2012 farm bill mark released today:

"I commend Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts for working together in a bipartisan fashion to write a farm, food and jobs bill this year. Farmers, ranchers, and the men and women who live in rural communities deserve to know what the rules will be moving forward. With the current law expiring, we cannot wait any longer to reauthorize this essential law for rural America.

While we still need to review all of the policies, reforms and investments proposed in this bill, I am optimistic that members of Congress will work to pass legislation that will support farmers, guarantee a safe, affordable, and nutritious food supply, support nutrition programs that help millions of families put food on the table, and help create jobs for the American people."

Update on America's Great Outdoors Initiative

On April 5, 2012, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, plus the heads of DOI, CEQ, EPA, and the Army, signed a memo recognizing the need to offer career-building experiences on our public lands. America's Great Outdoors Report to the President recommended creating a "21st Century Conservation Service Corps," and this new memo shares that a new Federal Advisory Committee has been established and has started work to advise on creating a "21CSC" that will build on existing programs and partnerships. The memo encourages field offices to work with new and existing partners to employ young Americans this summer within current funding levels. [More info can be found here.](#)

**President Obama to Sign Proclamation Designating Fort Ord National Monument
National Monument will honor veterans, serve as hub for conservation and recreation**

**The White House
Office of the Press Secretary**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2012

President Obama today will sign a Proclamation to designate federal lands within the former Fort Ord as a National Monument under the Antiquities Act. Fort Ord, a former military base located on California's Central Coast, is a world-class destination for hikers, mountain bikers, and outdoor enthusiasts who come to enjoy the area's history and scenic landscapes. "Fort Ord's dramatic landscape lives in the memories of thousands of veterans as their first taste of Army life, as a final stop before deploying to war, or as a home base during their military career. This national monument will not only protect one of the crown jewels of California's coast, but will also honor the heroism and dedication of men and women who served our nation and fought in the major conflicts of the 20th century," said President Obama.

"Already, over 100,000 people come every year to enjoy all that Fort Ord has to offer. President Obama's action, with the strong support of the people of California, will ensure that this special place continues to thrive for generations to come. At the same time, the creation of this new national monument is good for tourism, recreation, and local businesses that cater to the tens of thousands of people who come to experience this remarkable place," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar.

President Obama first used the Antiquities Act in November 2011 to designate the Fort Monroe National Monument, a former Army post integral to the history of slavery, the Civil War, and the U.S. military. First exercised by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 to designate Devils Tower National Monument in Wyoming, the authority of the Antiquities Act has been used by 16 presidents since 1906 to protect unique natural and historic features in America, such as the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty, Colorado's Canyons of the Ancients, and the Papahānaumokuākea marine protected area of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Today, Fort Ord provides exceptional recreational opportunities to over 100,000 visitors annually, offering 86 miles of hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails. The area is an economic engine for the community and serves as a key venue for the annual Sea Otter Classic, one of the largest bicycling events in the world with approximately 10,000 athletes and 50,000 spectators every year.

Nearly two and a half centuries ago, the area was traversed by a group of settlers led by Spanish Lieutenant-Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza, whose diaries were used to identify the route of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. The area's open, contiguous landscape owes its undeveloped state largely to its role as a U.S. Army facility. From World War I through the early 1990s, the area's rugged terrain served as a military training ground for as many as a million and a half American soldiers.

The Fort Ord National Monument will be managed by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM currently manages approximately 7,200 acres of the area, and the Army will transfer approximately 7,450 acres after clean-up under an existing base closure agreement between the Army and the BLM. The BLM will continue to work closely with its many community, state, and Federal partners to effectively manage the new national monument, which will become part of the Bureau's 27-million-acre National Landscape Conservation System.

The Department of the Interior lands support \$363 billion in economic activity and 2.2 million jobs annually, with BLM public lands in California alone hosting more than 10 million recreation visitors a year. This translates to an estimated contribution of \$980 million to local California economies and 7,600 recreation-related jobs.

US Forest Service targets \$40.6M to purchase, restore lands in 15 states

Land and Water Conservation Fund provides support for land acquisition projects

Contact: Press Office: (202) 205-1134

Twitter: @forestservice

4/15/2012



WASHINGTON, April 6, 2012 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the U.S. Forest Service will dedicate \$40.6 million for 27 exceptional land acquisition projects in 15 states that will help safeguard clean water, provide recreational access, preserve wildlife habitat, enhance scenic vistas and protect historic and wilderness areas.

Projects funded are in Alaska, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah and Washington. Projects range from protecting nationally significant lands from threat of residential development in North Carolina to help pave the way

to help purchase the largest single parcel of privately held land with the [Kootznoowoo Wilderness](#) on the [Tongass National Forest](#) in Alaska.

"In keeping with the Obama Administration's *America's Great Outdoors* conservation initiative, USDA is committed to conserving and restoring our forests and bringing jobs to rural America," said Vilsack.

"Through our partnerships with states, communities, tribes and others, it is vital that we step up our efforts to safeguard our country's natural resources."

"The pristine wildernesses, flowing waters and majestic vistas help define what makes this country great," said [U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell](#). "These projects will help ensure a long future of quality open space for those hunters and anglers, hikers, campers and other nature lovers who enjoy America's great outdoors. The funding will also reduce administrative costs and provide us increased flexibility in how we restore lands across the country."

The money is made available through the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#), created by Congress in 1964 to provide funding to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands. The fund receives the majority of its money through royalty payments from offshore oil and gas revenues to mitigate the environmental impacts of those activities. Those funds also are augmented by additional money or in-kind services of a variety of partnerships.

Lands are purchased from willing sellers at fair-market value or through partial or outright donations of property. Landowners may also sell or donate easements on their property that restrict commercial development while keeping the land in private ownership.

The fund supports many goals set out in President Obama's [America's Great Outdoors](#) initiative, including the need to support locally-led efforts to protect and renew rivers and other waters; conserve and restore national parks, wildlife refuges and other federal lands and waters; and enhance recreational access and opportunities.

The projects were selected through a competitive process based on ability to safeguard watersheds, provide recreational access, restore healthy forests, mitigate climate change, defend communities from wildfire, create management efficiency, and reconnect fragmented landscapes and ecosystems.

The following new projects are approved for funding in 2012. To see applications for funding on each project, visit the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#).

Alaska:

- **Cube Cove /Admiralty National Monument, Tongass National Forest:** With the exception of limited shoreline on Cube Cove, the land is entirely surrounded by Admiralty National Monument/Kootznoowoo Wilderness. Three main watersheds are within the parcel and the acquisition will result in preservation or restoration of the unique coastal island ecosystem in perpetuity. **\$500,000**
- **Misty Fjords National Monument, Tongass National Forest:** The monument is a national showcase of pristine lands and waters where the scenery, wildlife and recreation opportunities are abundant. The acquisition will reduce private land ownership within the wilderness and avoid private development that would conflict with wilderness values. **\$500,000**

California:

- **Hurdygurdy, Six Rivers National Forest:** The land on the Smith River National Recreation Area covers portions of three streams, including the Hurdygurdy, a designated as Wild and Scenic River that serves as refuge and vital spawning habitat for Coho and Chinook salmon and steelhead and coastal cutthroat trout. The acquisition will help restore and improve fish and wildlife habitats and development of public recreational access and dispersed recreation sites. **\$1 million**

- **Deer & Mill Creek, Lassen National Forest:** The parcel of land will help complete a continuous protected fish and wildlife habitat area along about 30 miles of Deer Creek, one of the most productive salmon-producing streams in the Sacramento River system. As a dam-free stream with little development, Deer Creek has breathtaking scenery and abundant fish and wildlife. **\$1.5 million**
- **Eldorado Meadows, Eldorado National Forest:** This project is part of the Sierra Nevada Checkerboard Initiative, a large ongoing effort to address land ownership patterns intermingled with private and public land. The funds will be used to help leverage non-federal funds from threat of private land sale and development. **\$1.5 million**
- **Stony Creek Consolidation; Shasta-Trinity National Forest:** This parcel, within the congressionally designated Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area, is a donut hole in the midst of Forest Service recreation facilities on the shore of Lake Shasta and is threatened with incompatible subdivision and development. Acquisition will preserve the high quality visual character of this key recreation area while preventing lakeshore degradation and habitat fragmentation. **\$800,000**
- **Fleming Ranch, San Bernardino National Forest:** Will conserve and enhance resources in the San Jacinto Mountains in part by implementing fire and biofuels management that would prevent emissions release, maintain sequestration in forests, and through restoration practices advance carbon migration. **\$1.5 million**
- **Sierra Nevada Inholdings, Tahoe and Eldorado National Forests:** Will leverage a large land donation to purchase vital areas threatened by incompatible development. This acquisition will preserve an ancient petroglyph, as well as conserve meadows, wetlands and riparian areas at the headwaters of the American and Yuba rivers. **\$2 million**

California/Oregon/Washington:

- **Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, multiple national forests:** The area was one of first two congressionally designated national scenic trails. The acquisition will help protect critical portions of the 2650 mile trail system that stretches from Mexico into Canada. The land will help protect key wildlife corridors that support the migration of the grey wolf, grizzly bear, elk, deer, coyote and moose as well as protecting the trail from encroaching development. **\$1 million**

Colorado:

- **Little Echo Lake, Arapaho National Forest:** The acquisition will forever preserve a spectacular mountain lake and surrounding land adjacent to the 17,000-acre James Peak Wilderness Area and concurrently protect Denver's water supply. Adding the parcel to the national forest also will enhance recreational opportunities by providing legal access into the wilderness area and nearby Continental Divide Trail. The area is home to the federally threatened Canada lynx as well as the Boreal toad and wolverine which are designated by the Forest Service as sensitive species. **\$950,000**
- **Ophir Valley, Uncompahgre National Forest:** The acquisition will protect breathtaking mountain vistas, including a portion of the Howards Fork drainage, a narrow steep valley roughly 2,500 feet below the top of Ophir Pass, and areas that link Telluride to Silverthorne. Recreational access for hunting and four-wheel drives, fishing rock climbing, sightseeing, camping, hiking and horseback riding will be significantly enhanced. **\$1.5 million**

Georgia:

- **Georgia Mountains and Rivers, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest:** Georgia's national forests are near population centers numbering in the millions, creating tremendous pressures for clean water and recreation on the nearby public lands. These acquisitions focus on providing

recreation opportunities and protecting watershed and wetlands in an area where the viability and availability of clean, abundant water is critical. **\$2 million**

Idaho:

- **Salmon-Selway Initiative Area, Salmon-Challis and Sawtooth National Forests:** The Morgan Ranch is an old homestead that lies upstream from the Middle Fork of the Salmon River within the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area. The 18 miles of Sulphur Creek, a tributary of the Middle Fork, provides significant spawning and rearing habitat for three species of fish listed under the Endangered Species Act: Chinook salmon, steelhead trout and bull trout. **\$3.5 million**
- **Upper Lochsa, Clearwater National Forest:** The parcel includes habitat for threatened steelhead and bull trout, denning and foraging habitat for Canada lynx, critical elk winter range and portions of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail. The Nez Perce Tribe has contributed more than \$7 million in non-federal monies toward aquatic habitat restoration in the Upper Lochsa drainage area and proposes to continue funding of roughly \$1 million per year. **\$1 million**

Indiana:

- **Hoosier National Forest:** This project is focused on the protection of the Lost River, a subterranean river that is associated with the second largest cave system in the State. The river supports a unique ecosystem that has been found to contain at least 15 globally-imperiled subterranean species. Acquisition of this parcel will protect several sinkhole entrances to the Lost River cave system. **\$466,000**

Michigan:

- **Great Lakes/Great Lands, Hiawatha and Ottawa National Forests:** This acquisition will directly support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative by protecting watershed health and integrity in the Great Lakes region. The project will also help ensure the conservation of the Sturgeon Wild & Scenic River and associated wetlands. These parcels provide travel connectivity for the endangered Eastern Gray Wolf and the threatened Canadian Lynx as well as habitat for other sensitive and endangered species. **\$640,000**

Missouri:

- **Missouri Ozarks, Mark Twain National Forest:** The land, which include prime riparian river frontage on the Current River, will help connect existing national forest lands to the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Consolidating the lands will help protect watershed quality and provide maximum benefit for both resident and migratory wildlife species. **\$990,000**

Montana:

- **Legacy Completion, Lolo and Flathead National Forests:** The project will enhance resource management within and adjacent to the Crown of the Continent by protecting healthy watersheds, diverse habitats for threatened and endangered species, and open space on a landscape-scale and public access to high quality recreation opportunities. This parcel is a part of the Montana Legacy project, one of the most ambitious conservation projects in modern Forest Service history and includes a 111,740 acre donation from conservation partners. **\$2 million**
- **Tenderfoot Part I, Lewis and Clark National Forest:** The Tenderfoot watershed in Central Montana is remarkably diverse spanning areas from 3,200 feet elevations sub-alpine mountains to grass meadows and riparian areas. The acquisition parcels will provide high quality water and fisheries habitat for west slope cutthroat trout, and habitat for elk, moose, deer and many other wildlife species. The land offers incredible scenic views and extraordinary recreation opportunities, especially for anglers and hunters. **\$2 million**

New Mexico:

- **Miranda Canyon Phase I, Carson National Forest:** The land offers breathtaking views from its numerous ridges and peaks of the Rio Grande Gorge to the west and Wheeler Peak to the north. Historical features include the Camino Real Trail, unique geologic features such as a small volcano and 1.7 billion-year-old rock outcrops that rival the age of rocks found at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Hunting, sightseeing, camping, hiking, interpretation and horseback riding will be enhanced. **\$3,442,000**

North Carolina:

- **North Carolina Threatened Treasures, National Forests in North Carolina:** Nationally, land managed by the National Forests in North Carolina rank second in recreation visits but are among the most vulnerable to adjacent commercial and residential development. Forest fragmentation is a major issue and the acquisition will help to ensure recreation access, ecological integrity and watershed values on adjacent federal lands and for downstream resources. **\$1 million**

Oregon:

- **Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest:** One of America's most treasured landscapes, Hell's Canyon is renowned for its natural, historical, archaeological and recreational values. The properties will serve as public gateways to thousands of acres of public lands and are home to 14 key fish and wildlife species, including Oregon's largest Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep herd. The land also contains habitat for rare plants and at-risk bird species including the yellow breasted chat, mountain quail, Lewis' woodpecker and willow flycatcher. **\$1,417,500**

Oregon/Washington:

- **Pacific North West Streams, multiple national forests:** Lands selected for acquisition include key habitat for at-risk fish stocks. Immediate public benefits will be secured public access, increased recreation opportunities and more efficient long-term management and restoration of key stream, riparian areas, tidal marsh and estuary needed for bird and wildlife recovery. **\$1.1 million**

Tennessee:

- **Rocky Fork, Cherokee National Forest:** This acquisition will provide protection for what was recently one of the largest contiguous tracts of private forest land in the East. The Forest Service identified Rocky Fork as a "national priority" because of its high natural resource values and recreational opportunities including a portion of the Appalachian Trail, blue-ribbon trout fishing, and a variety of recreational activities such as wildlife watching, rock climbing and hunting. **\$5 million**

Utah:

- **Bonneville Shoreline Trail, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest:** This parcel is becoming one of the last undeveloped areas on the Wasatch Front for traditional summer/winter range for deer and elk. Several parcels have historical nesting habitats for peregrine falcon, a sensitive species. Unique features, such as waterfalls and montane riparian areas add to the biological and recreational value of the land. **\$600,000**
- **Uinta-Wasatch-Cache, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest:** The land has historic significance because it once supported construction of the Trans-Continental Railroad across the U.S. as well as the early fur trapping and logging industries. The acquisition offers a rare opportunity to enhance public access and sustain recreational opportunities, protect wildlife and fish habitat and limit the spread of development. **\$1.2 million**

Washington:

- **Washington Cascade Ecosystem, Wenatchee National Forest:** The acquisition is part of a larger, landscape-scale effort to resolve the fragmented land ownership pattern blanketing Washington's

Central Cascades. Threading through the area are several significant north-south wildlife corridors that need to be protected and restored to preserve healthy wildlife populations. **\$1.5 million** USDA works with state and local governments and private landowners to conserve and protect our nation's natural resources—helping preserve our land and clean our air and water. In 2010, President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors initiative to foster a 21st century approach to conservation that is designed by and accomplished in partnership with the American people. During the past two years, USDA's conservation agencies—NRCS, FSA and the U.S. Forest Service—have delivered technical assistance and implemented restoration practices on public and private lands. At the same time, USDA is working to better target conservation investments to embrace locally driven conservation and entering partnerships that focus on large, landscape-scale conservation. In 2011, USDA enrolled a record number of acres of private working lands in conservation programs, working with more than 500,000 farmers and ranchers to implement conservation practices that clean the air we breathe, filter the water we drink, and prevent soil erosion.

BLM Announces Landscape Approach for Public Land Management

BLM Utah News Releases
April 13, 2012 12:31 PM

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today released an update on a bureauwide initiative that is helping the agency evaluate and respond to public land issues such as wildfire, energy development, and climate change while continuing to promote the smart use of the public lands. The initiative, called the *Landscape Approach for Managing the Public Lands*, looks for ecological conditions, patterns, and management opportunities that may not be evident when managing smaller land areas.

"The stewardship of public lands has never been more challenging," said BLM Director Bob Abbey. "To meet these challenges, we need an approach that crosses traditional management boundaries while managing wildfire, controlling weeds and insect outbreaks, providing for energy development, and addressing impacts from climate change."

The approach will help the BLM respond to an increasing demand for the use of the public lands for recreation and energy development. Recreation and energy development often support local economies in the West. In FY 2011, activities on BLM-managed lands boosted the National economy by more than \$130 billion and supported more than a half-million jobs.

The BLM recognizes that evaluating broad landscapes, such as the Central Basin and Range -NV, CA, UT and a portion of ID, will be more effective than relying only on conditions at the field office level. This new approach results in better decisions because BLM employees understand how their work fits into the larger geographic area.

Many BLM field offices are already conducting large-scale resource assessments, planning across watersheds and jurisdictions, and working with partners to address landscape-scale restoration needs. These efforts recognize that landscapes are being affected by complex influences that reach beyond traditional management boundaries. The landscape approach builds upon, connects, and supports these ongoing field efforts. This approach also complements and supports the Landscape

Conservation Cooperatives the Department of the Interior is helping establish throughout the country. Information collected under the initiative will be used for long-term conservation, restoration, and development efforts, including partnerships.

“With the landscape approach, reliable information will flow across programmatic, organizational, land ownership, and political boundaries,” Abbey said. “As a result, we will improve our ability to evaluate and respond to all types of land health concerns, and help us in our mission to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands.”

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