

## 2014 National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Project Summaries

### *Pacific Northwest Region*

#### **Ahihi-kina'u Coastal Wetlands Ecosystem Restoration**

The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources is awarded a \$344,400 grant to restore and permanently protect coastal ecosystems and species in the Ahihi-Kina'u Natural Area Reserve on Maui from damage by feral goats, invasive non-native plants, and marine debris. The 770 acre restoration area includes globally rare anchialine pools, rocky intertidal areas, coral reefs, and unique coastal lava fields with rare plant communities. This project supports goals of the state's Reserve Management Plan. Specifically, it will fence goats out of the anchialine pools and remove them from the project area, remove invasive vegetation from anchialine pools and adjacent uplands, replant impacted areas with native vegetation, and remove marine debris from shorelines and coral reefs. The state will also conduct extensive public outreach to describe the biological importance of the area and how visitors can minimize their impacts. This project will benefit many rare species, including anchialine pool shrimp and federally listed Hawaiian stilts, green sea turtles, coastal plants, and Hawaiian monk seals.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Hawaii	\$344,400	\$161,225		\$505,625

#### **South Slough Shorelands Project**

The Oregon Department of State Lands, partnering with Coos Watershed Association and the South Coast Land Conservancy, is awarded a \$1 million grant to permanently protect 596 acres of estuarine wetland habitats in South Slough in Oregon's Coos Estuary. South Slough is the site of a longstanding effort to conserve estuarine wetland habitat. The project site is adjacent to South Slough National Estuary Research Reserve and state protected lands. The project site contains tidally influenced coastal wetlands, adjoining coastal fresh water wetlands, and forested uplands. This project supports goals of multiple management plans and will benefit numerous wildlife and plant species, including shorebirds, harbor seals, shellfish, and federally listed coho salmon and western bog lilies. It also is identified as a priority in the Oregon Strategic Plans for the Coastal Program and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the 1994 Pacific Coast Joint Venture 1994 Implementation Plan for the Southern Oregon Focus Area.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Oregon	\$1,000,000	\$711,925		\$1,711,925

#### **Waite Ranch Tidal Wetlands Restoration Project**

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is awarded \$592,735 grant to restore tidal wetland function on 207 acres of the Waite Ranch property owned by the McKenzie River Trust in the lower Siuslaw River estuary in Oregon. The grant will complement funding secured from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and OWEB for other phases of restoration and build on previous financial support, including a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant used to acquire the property. The goals of the project are to remove barriers to tidal exchange, restore tidal flow through channel excavation, and re-establish the ecological processes needed to restore habitat function. Restoration of Waite Ranch will generate high-quality nursery, refuge, feeding, and nesting habitat for numerous wetland-dependent fish and wildlife species, including shorebirds, waterfowl, steelhead, and federally listed Coho salmon.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Oregon	\$592,735	\$274,500		\$867,235

### **Elliot Slough Acquisition Project**

The Washington State Department of Ecology, in partnership with the Chehalis River Basin Land Trust and with strong support from the Quinault Indian Nation, is awarded a \$310,000 grant to permanently protect 175 acres of high quality coastal surge plain and 6 miles of sloughs at the head of Grays Harbor in Washington State. This acquisition is part of a larger effort to conserve the Chehalis Surge Plain and is located next to a State Natural Area Preserve and an Audubon Society preserve. The project will also control and eradicate invasive species at the site. Grays Harbor is one of the largest and most important estuaries on the Pacific coast. Up to 50,000 ducks and 500,000 shorebirds migrate annually through Grays Harbor, which was designated by the American Bird Conservancy as a Globally Important Bird Area. The area also provides critical rearing and foraging areas for salmon, steelhead, and federally listed bull trout.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Washington	\$310,000	\$211,000		\$521,500

### **Lower Naselle – Ellsworth Creek Acquisition**

The Washington Department of Ecology, partnering with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), is awarded a \$921,767 grant to permanently protect 386 acres of estuarine wetlands and adjacent uplands at Willapa Bay, Washington. This includes estuarine tidal lands along the Lower Naselle River and the last private inholding within TNC’s adjacent Ellsworth Creek Preserve. The project will support on-going conservation efforts of a large number of agencies and partners, including the nearby Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge, to protect and restore the estuary. Willapa Bay is a large, diverse, and productive tidal bay and is considered one of the most pristine estuaries in the United States. It is also one of the most productive commercial oyster areas in the U.S., due largely to its unspoiled nature and good water quality. During spring migration, more than 100,000 shorebirds stop to feed and rest in the bay, which is designated in the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan as a Site of International Significance. Bald eagles, waterfowl, bull trout, several species of salmon, and federally listed marbled murrelets and green sturgeon also use the bay.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Washington	\$921,767	\$435,745		\$1,357,512

### **Skokomish Estuary Restoration - Phase 2**

The Washington Department of the Ecology, partnering with the Mason Conservation District and Skokomish Tribe, is awarded a \$1 million grant to complete the restoration of estuarine wetlands located on the Skokomish Reservation at the mouth of the Skokomish River in Puget Sound. Phase 2 builds upon the successful work of Phase 1, with the goal of restoring natural processes, functions, and species to an 825 acre area of the Skokomish estuary, which contains a variety of nationally declining wetland types. The estuary provides important habitats for federally listed bull trout, chinook, chum, and steelhead. It also supports cutthroat trout, and numerous other fish and wildlife species, including Olympia oysters, forage fish, and migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. The estuary is within an Audubon Important Bird Area. This project is supported by the Skokomish Watershed Action Team, a coalition of over 40 private, public, and tribal stakeholders within the Skokomish watershed.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Washington	\$1,000,000	\$709,897		\$2,234,897

*Southeast Region*

**Lillian Swamp Wetlands**

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) is awarded a \$1 million grant to permanently protect the 675-acre Lillian Swamp Wetlands tract as an addition to the Lillian Swamp Wetlands Complex. The wetlands complex lies within the Perdido River Coastal Area at the mouth of the Perdido River and borders Perdido Bay. Acquisition of this tract will support the goals of multiple federal, state, and other agencies to protect sensitive species and their habitats. The ADCNR has recommended this area as a Geographical Area of Particular Concern (GAPC), which are managed according to conservation plans. The wetlands have also been designated as a Gulf Ecological Management Site (GEMS), which means that it is considered to be important to the environmental quality of the Gulf of Mexico. Perdido Bay has also been identified as a conservation priority in Alabama’s Wildlife Conservation Strategy and by the Northern Gulf Coast Wetlands Planning Program.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Alabama	\$1,000,000	\$1,206,500		\$3,051,300

**Altama Plantation Acquisition - Phase 1**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, partnering with The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Marine Corps is awarded a \$1 million grant to help permanently protect 1,384 acres of the Altama Plantation. The project site includes tidal wetlands, inland maritime forests, and adjacent uplands in the Lower Altamaha River watershed. This project will build on an on-going multi-agency effort to conserve priority habitat in the lower Altamaha River system. To date, over 120,000 acres of wetlands and adjacent uplands stretching inland for 50 miles have been protected. The lower Altamaha River watershed, designated as one of the “Last Great Places” by TNC, supports a wide variety of biologically diverse ecosystems and boasts the highest documented number of rare plants, animals, and natural community occurrences in the state of Georgia. The wetlands on Altama Plantation are mapped as Freshwater Forested Wetlands (declining) and Emergent Wetlands (stable). The adjacent uplands areas are being marketed as potential vacation properties.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Georgia	\$1,000,000	\$1,206,500	\$844,800	\$3,051,300

**Ebenezer Crossing Tract Acquisition Project**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) is awarded a \$400,000 grant to permanently protect 250 acres of nationally declining wetlands, including palustrine forested and palustrine scrub shrub. The National Park Service designated the lower 1,350 acres of the Ebenezer Creek watershed, which includes the Tract, as a National Natural Landmark, noting it was the best remaining cypress-gum forest in the entire Savannah River Basin. Protection of these lands is a priority in the GDNR Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy because of the old growth bald cypress – water tupelo swamp. Conservation of the Tract supports migration in the Savannah River corridor for species such as the federally endangered Wood stork and the state-listed Swallow-tailed kite. The Tract is located approximately 3.5 miles north of the Savannah Wildlife Refuge and will serve as an important

transitional area as sea level rise alter the salinity levels all along the Savannah River and adjacent wetlands.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Georgia	\$400,000	\$189,890		\$589,890

**Dos Mares Acquisition Project - Phase 2**

The Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (PRDNER) is awarded a \$1 million grant to permanently protect 51.2 acres of coastal wetlands and forested uplands in Fajardo on the northeastern coast of Puerto Rico. The project area will be combined with the 87.4 acres of habitat already protected to form the 138.6-acre Dos Mares Natural Reserve. The property is located in the Northeastern Ecological Corridor – a 3,200-acre natural reserve containing an extraordinary diversity of rare coastal habitats, including mangroves, coastal pre-Columbian forests, and near shore coral communities. The project will provide habitat for 12 federally-listed threatened and endangered species, including Leatherback and Hawksbill sea turtles. It will also benefit many species of migratory and wetland-dependent birds, freshwater aquatic fish and crustacean species, and other wildlife and their habitats. Acquisition of the Dos Mares property is a priority in the PRDNER 2005 Critical Wildlife Areas document.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Puerto Rico	\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000		\$4,000,000

**Wooten Tract Acquisition**

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, partnering with the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, is awarded a \$1 million grant to acquire 1,500 acres of land located in Turnagain Bay and Long Bay in Carteret County, North Carolina. This land is part of the 5,400 acre Turnagain Bay/Wooten Tract with extensive estuarine marsh and forested wetlands. The property has been on the market for several years and this project is the first phase of a multi-phase conservation effort to protect as much property as possible. The Wooten property is located just west of Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge and will connect the Refuge to thousands of acres of corporate timberlands and the 155,000 acre Croatan National Forest. The Tract contains diverse ecological communities, including estuarine wetlands, peatland pocosin, longleaf pine flatwoods, and maritime forest, which provide excellent waterfowl and wildlife habitat. The Tract provides habitat for 25 priority bird species and will be managed as public game lands.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
North Carolina	\$1,000,000	\$600,000		\$1,600,000

*Northeast Region*

**Middle Bay Wetlands Partnership Project**

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) is awarded a \$1 million grant to conserve 86.1 acres on Middle Bay in Harpswell, Maine, including 43.2 acres of nationally decreasing wetlands, 0.8 acres of stable wetlands, 0.40 acres of stable wetlands, and 41.7 acres of buffering wetlands. The project lands are priorities for protection in Maine’s State Wildlife Action Plan. The project’s estuarine intertidal emergent wetlands and marine intertidal wetlands have been mapped as significant waterfowl and wading bird habitat and as significant shorebird feeding and roosting habitat

by MDIFW. According to a GIS habitat analysis prepared by the USFWS Gulf of Maine Program, the two parcels provide important habitat for 60 of 91 priority trust species in the northeast. The project will also benefit three endangered species, two threatened species, and more than 30 state species of concern.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Maine	\$1,000,000	\$424,980		\$1,424,980

**Popes Creek Coastal Wetland Conservation**

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) was awarded a \$1 million to permanently protect 220 acres of marsh, palustrine wetlands, and forested land in Newburg, Charles County, Maryland. The property will be acquired through fee simple purchase, with the property to be held and managed by Charles County Department of Parks and Recreation. The property contains 92 acres of upland forest and 128 acres of wetlands, as well as some open water and beach front. Popes Creek is a conservation focus area, having been identified by MD DNR as both a Targeted Ecological Area and a Natural Heritage Area. It lies within the Zekiah Swamp area, which is a priority protection for the USFWS Chesapeake Bay Program, MD DNR, and Charles County. Plans for the site also include the creation of a biking/walking trail along an abandoned railway bed.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Maryland	\$1,000,000	\$516,000		\$1,516,000

**Port Tobacco Wetlands Coastal Wetland Conservation**

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is awarded a \$630,000 grant to permanently protect 150 acres of estuarine wetlands, palustrine wetlands, forested uplands, and cleared fields at the village of Port Tobacco in Charles County, Maryland. The property will be acquired through fee simple purchase with the property to be held and managed by Charles County Department of Parks and Recreation. The protection of the Port Tobacco wetlands will protect habitat at the boundary of the freshwater and estuarine wetlands, offer new public access, and allow restoration of upland forest to further enhance filtration and buffering of wetlands and river. The property is part of a tract that listed for sale and is being actively marketed. The landowner has completed septic testing and there is the potential of developing 3-5 large waterfront homes. If the property is not acquired for conservation, it will be sold to a developer.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Maryland	\$630,000	\$227,500		\$857,500

**Muddy Creek Restoration Bridge**

The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) is awarded a \$1 million grant to restore 55.2 acres of tidal wetlands and fund construction of the Muddy Bridge Restoration Project in Harwich and Chatham in Barnstable County, Massachusetts. DER will work with the Towns of Harwich and Chatham to restore tidal flow in Muddy Creek by replacing two culverts with a single concrete span bridge. Impaired water quality, exacerbated by undersized culverts that restrict tidal flow, has been linked to degraded wetlands, fisheries, shellfisheries and avian habitat. The bridge will restore more natural tidal exchange resulting in improved water quality and improved health of the salt marsh and other coastal wetlands, shellfish habitat and wildlife habitat. All of the wetlands on the site are classified as stable or declining. In addition, the project seeks to permanently protect five parcels

totaling 11.7 acres that are either in or directly adjacent to Muddy Creek by placing conservation easements on the properties.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Massachusetts	\$1,000,000	\$1,924,689		\$2,366,215

**Mount Airy Rappahannock River Coastal Wetland Conservation**

Virginia Outdoors Foundation is awarded a \$770,000 grant to permanently protect the 170-acre Mount Airy Farm on Cat Point Creek in Richmond County, through the purchase of a perpetual conservation easement. The easement will be held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The property includes 69 acres of upland forest, 42 acres of wetland, 29 acres of tidal freshwater marsh, and 59 acres of farmland. As part of the project, 10 acres of the farmland will be converted to bottomland hardwood forest. The property is located within the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge acquisition boundary. Protection of the Farm will add 170 acres to an existing block of over 3,830 acres of protected fish and wildlife habitat in the Refuge’s Cat Point focus area and will complete the Refuge’s conservation goals for this focus area. It will also increase landscape resiliency to climate change by eliminating a potential source of habitat fragmentation due to residential or commercial development.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Virginia	\$770,000	\$312,667		\$1,082,667

*Alaska Region*

**Northern Afognak Island Coastal Conservation Project, Perenosa Bay - Phase 1**

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), in partnership with the Great Land Trust, is awarded a \$1 million grant to permanently protect approximately 2,585 acres of coastal wetlands and near shore habitat on northeastern Afognak Island within the Kodiak Archipelago. This project includes five parcels and is the first phase of a multi-phase effort to conserve the remaining unprotected lands of Perenosa Bay and adjacent to and between the Kodiak Island National Wildlife Refuge and Afognak Island State Park. Conservation of these lands will protect sensitive and declining coastal wetlands, estuarine and near shore habitat for Salmonids, Stellar sea lions, and Steller eider. This project is supported by numerous conservation plans, including the USFWS Alaska Coastal Program Strategic Plan, The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Restoration Plan, the Kodiak Regional Comprehensive Salmon Plan, and the ADNR Kodiak Area Plan.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
Alaska	\$1,000,000	\$4,182,000		\$5,182,000

*Pacific Southwest Region*

**Bair Island Restoration Project**

The California State Coastal Conservancy is awarded a \$554,485 grant to restore 188 acres of estuarine tidal marsh habitat and 1.1 miles of historic slough channel, enhance 20 acres of transitional upland habitat, and provide valuable habitat for numerous listed and wetland dependent species. Bair Island was diked in the late 1800s for agriculture and later converted for salt production. The project will restore the wetland habitat by breaching levees along the historic channel, armoring one of the breaches to maintain the channel, making levee improvements, planting native vegetation, and

monitoring project improvements. The majority of the Bair Island complex is owned by California Department of Fish and Wildlife and USFWS. The restored habitat will assist with the protection and recovery of both the California clapper rail and the Salt marsh harvest mouse, both of which are federally listed as endangered. As the site accretes, the intertidal mudflats will support shorebirds and water birds.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
California	\$554,485	\$660,000		\$1,214,485

**Los Osos Creek Wetland Conservation Project - Phase 1**

The California State Coastal Conservancy is awarded a \$510,222 grant to protect in perpetuity 81.7 acres on lower Los Osos Creek in the Morro Bay watershed. The parcel abuts Morro Bay estuary and is comprised of 64.6 acres of nationally decreasing palustrine wetlands, including 0.5 miles of designated critical habitat for the federally threatened South-Central California Coast steelhead trout and 9 acres of critical habitat for the federally endangered Tidewater goby. The parcel will be owned and managed by the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District. The project will include a restoration alternatives study to consider opportunities and constraints, recommend restoration options, and complete conceptual design and cost estimates for the project. Morro Bay was designated as an estuary of national significance because it is a relatively intact lagoon and wetland environment, and supports the most significant wetland system on the coast of Central California.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
California	\$510,222	\$182,005		\$692,227

**San Francisco Bay Coastal Wetlands Vegetation and High Tide Refuge Islands Project**

The California State Coastal Conservancy is awarded a \$1 million grant to reverse coastal wetland habitat degradation and enhance 1,200 acres of estuarine intertidal emergent wetland habitat in the San Francisco Bay estuary by propagating and planting 150,000 native plants and constructing 20 high tide refuge islands in eight key locations. The goal of the project is to provide critically-needed cover, forage, nesting, breeding, and high tide refuge islands for the federally endangered California clapper rail, and to enhance habitats for other tidal salt marsh dependent fish, migratory birds, and other wildlife. This project will help complete the final two years of a major five-year habitat enhancement program lead by the Conservancy and the USFWS Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, East Bay Regional Park District, and other local partners.

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Non-federal match</i>	<i>Other federal funds</i>	<i>Total project cost</i>
California	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$21,000	\$2,021,000

**White Slough Restoration Project**

The California State Coastal Conservancy is awarded a \$1 million grant to restore 37 acres of coastal wetlands and 3 acres of associated uplands located in the White Slough Unit of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge on Humboldt Bay in Humboldt County, California. The project will be carried out by non-profit partners of the Conservancy and USFWS. The project area contains diked former tidelands, consisting primarily of 35 acres of brackish marsh, and small areas of agricultural wetlands, freshwater marsh, and riparian habitat. Of the 40 acres project area, approximately 25 acres will be restored to saltmarsh, and at least 13 of the 15 remaining acres will be brackish or freshwater marsh

that will have enhanced ecosystem function once tidal influence is restored. The remaining acreage will consist of restored slough channel and remnant portion of the existing dike to provide high tide bird refugia. The project will provide valuable habitat for the endangered Tidewater Goby, federally threatened Green sturgeon, Coho salmon, and Steelhead trout.

State/Territory	Grant	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$1,000,000	\$457,759		\$1,457,759