

## *Federal funding opportunities for habitat protection and restoration*

### **Gulf of Maine Coastal Program**

The federal grants to protect and restore habitat in Maine listed and briefly described below are supported through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Program and other federal, state and non-government conservation partners. Approaches that can be funded with these grants may include conservation easements, land acquisition, habitat restoration and management, agricultural incentives and conservation education. Nationally important habitats that are likely to compete successfully for federal funding include coastal wetlands, nesting islands, or habitat for federally endangered/threatened species, migratory waterbirds and anadromous fish. Most of these federal grants require non-federal matching contributions, in the form of donated lands, bargain sales, staff and volunteer support and/or other in-kind services. All of these federal grants require willing landowners as partners.

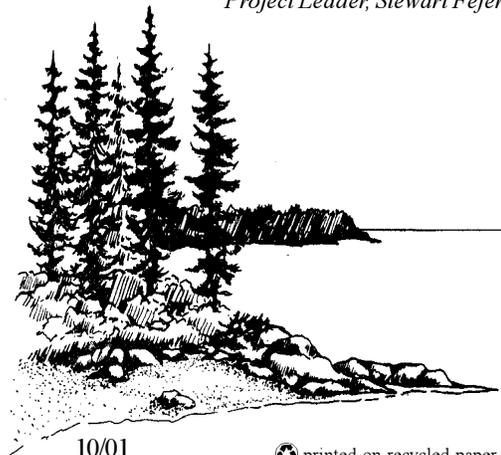
### **North American Waterfowl Management Plan Grants**

Common acronyms:  
NAWCA (pronounced naw-ca)  
North American

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan, established to conserve our continent's remaining wetlands and increase migratory bird populations, is funded with appropriations from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). This international effort provides large matching grants (up to \$1,000,000 in federal funds) to manage, restore and/or acquire habitat, through purchase or easement. In addition, a small grants program (less than \$50,000 in federal funds) is available to encourage new partnerships. To be nationally competitive, these matching grants should provide more than 200% in non-federal matching funds and provide clear benefits for waterbirds, as well as federally endangered/threatened species and/or anadromous fish. Non-federal match can be derived from donated lands, bargain sales, cash or in-kind services. Lands used as match must be permanently protected in fee or easement  $\pm$  two years of the date of the grant application. The Plan has identified five Focus Areas in Maine, prioritized in the following order for funding through the large grants program: Cobscook Bay, Lower Kennebec River/Merrymeeting Bay, the East Coast, the West Coast, and Inland Wetlands. (Habitat proposed for protection/restoration through the small grants program does not need to follow priorities as established in the Focus Areas). In Maine, the Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition (Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy--Maine Chapter, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Program, Land for Maine's Future Program, Ducks Unlimited and appropriate land trusts) meet regularly to identify land protection priorities and coordinate large grant application efforts. In the 1990's, funds from the large grant program have been used to protect thousands of acres bordering Cobscook Bay, the Lower Kennebec River and Merrymeeting Bay. Typically, habitat acquired through fee or easement with the large grant program has been transferred to Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for protection and management, but any organization that can demonstrate its ability to hold and manage land for wildlife values in perpetuity is eligible to receive a grant. Funds from the small grant program have been awarded to land trusts in six other areas with high value waterbird habitat. Individual Coalition members are available to provide technical support in developing small grant applications. (*Note: Lands provided as non-federal match can be owned and managed by any conservation organization that guarantees permanent protection for wildlife values*). Annual application deadlines for large grants program: April and August. Annual application deadline for small grants program: December.

*For further information, please contact:*

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## National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants

Common acronyms:  
Coastal Wetland Grant  
CWPPRA (pronounced quip-rah)

This matching grant program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, directs funds from the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act to state conservation agencies to acquire, restore, or manage coastal wetlands for fish and wildlife values. Nationwide, recent grants have ranged from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000. To be nationally competitive, proposals should provide a minimum 35% match in non-federal funds. Match can be derived from donated lands, bargain sales, cash or in-kind services. In Maine, the Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition (see description of NAWCA on the previous page) has often taken a lead role in identifying land protection priorities and coordinating grant applications on behalf of Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. In 1995, Lee Island, a large island in the Kennebec River with an important eagle nesting site and a fringing salt marsh, was purchased. In 1996, Hog Island at its surrounding mudflats in Machias Bay was acquired, protecting an eagle nest, thousands of migrating shorebirds and wintering black ducks. In 1997, Lines Island and its complex of estuarine wetlands at the southern end of Merrymeeting Bay, were protected for migratory bird and fish habitat. In 1998, mid-coast Maine wetlands and adjacent upland buffer in the Weskeag Estuary and Reachwood Peninsula were acquired. In 1999, the Mill Pond region of Little Kennebec Bay in downeast Maine was protected. In 2000, coastal wetlands and uplands surrounding Little River adjacent to Reid State Park were protected, and in 2001, coastal wetlands and uplands surrounding Scarborough Wildlife Mgt. Area were protected. *(Note: Lands provided as match for this grant must include fee ownership or a conservation easement to MDIFW that meets MDIFW requirements).*  
Annual application deadline: June

## National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants

Common acronyms:  
NFWF (pronounced nif-wif)

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, a non-profit organization, was established by Congress to award grants for conservation activities that support habitat protection and restoration, research, public awareness and education, and management. Federal funds directed from many federal land management agencies to the Foundation are used as seed money to attract additional private donations. Ultimately, the Foundation releases funds to grant recipients on a matching grant basis. Grants typically range from several thousand dollars to more than \$100,000 and can be directed to federal and state agencies, universities, non-profit organizations, and private corporations. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awards individual grants to specific projects and currently provides the following two block grants to Maine:

**The Atlantic Salmon Collaborative**, administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Program, supports habitat protection and restoration work along Atlantic salmon rivers -- with a focus on those rivers identified with "wild Atlantic salmon." Non-federal match requirements vary. Grants typically range from \$1K - \$25K. Application deadline: May.

**The Maine Habitat Restoration Partnership**, administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Program, supports habitat restoration work in coastal wetlands, grasslands and along sea-run fish rivers. Non-federal match requirements vary. Grants typically range from \$1K - \$25K. Funds available to eligible projects on a first-come basis.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation also awards individual grants to specific projects that fall outside the parameters of the block grants.  
Annual application deadlines: August and December.

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## Land and Water Conservation Fund

Common acronyms:  
Land and Water  
LWCF (to pronounce, spell out the letters)

Congressional approval is needed to access and appropriate all LWCF funds, which are derived from surplus property sales, motorboat fuel taxes, offshore oil and gas extraction, and user fees collected at National Parks and other federal fee collection areas. These revenue sources raise about \$900 million annually, but funds actually appropriated by Congress are much less. LWCF funds can be available through two separate funding pools. Federal land management agencies, with support from partners, can request money from "federal-side LWCF" funds to acquire lands for federal protection. Similarly, state agencies can request money from "state-side LWCF" funds to acquire land for state and local protection and/or to expand outdoor recreation opportunities. Federal LWCF requires no matching funds, but state-side LWCF does require matching funds. In the last few years, \$4 - 5 million of "federal-side LWCF" dollars have been used annually by Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge, Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge and Acadia National Park to acquire important habitat in Maine. In recent years (with the exception of FY2000), state-side LWCF funds have been limited, but this funding source is expected to increase. In Maine, the Dept. of Conservation takes the lead in implementing "state-side LWCF" protection initiatives.

## Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Funds

Common acronyms:  
Duck Stamp

Waterfowl hunters are required to purchase a federal "duck stamp." Revenues are used by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge system to acquire waterfowl habitat. If you know of wetland habitat near an existing national wildlife refuge, contact the Refuge Manager to explore the possibility of using Duck Stamp funds for acquisition. In 1999, approximately \$750,000 of Duck Stamp funds was available to purchase habitat from Virginia to Maine.

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Branch of Habitat Conservation

Gulf of Maine Coastal Program  
Partners for Fish and Wildlife

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Coastal Program in Falmouth (781-8364) provides technical and biological assistance, along with knowledge of federal funding opportunities, to protect and restore nationally important coastal fish and wildlife habitat through partnerships. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, administered out of the Maine Field Office in Old Town (827-5938), provides technical and biological assistance to restore fish and wildlife habitat on private lands. Both the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program may access funds to support habitat restoration initiatives statewide that benefit wetlands, streamside habitat for migratory fish, and coastal nesting islands. Restoration work generally requires matching funds from other governmental agencies, private organizations and/or private landowners.

## Farm Bill conservation easement program

The federal Farm Bill permits landowners who have borrowed money from the Farm Service Agency, a branch of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, to reduce their debt by voluntarily establishing a conservation easement on their property. Generally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service accepts permanent management authority over the easements, but if the easement is adjacent to land trust or state property, those organizations are also eligible to manage the easement. Currently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Maine Field Office (827-5938) manages nearly 3,000 acres of Farm Bill conservation easements in Maine.

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## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Challenge Grants**

Administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this program provides matching funds to support restoration projects. Priority funding is directed to national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries, but restoration projects on private lands are also eligible. In 1996, The Nature Conservancy -- Maine Chapter received a Challenge Grant to restore a degraded section of one of its preserves and Rachel Carson and Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge received Challenge Grants for coastal marsh restoration projects. Challenge Grants are typically limited to \$15,000 or less.

## **Partnerships for Wildlife**

This matching grant program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides grants to Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife focusing on species which are NOT hunted or fished, or NOT protected under the Endangered Species Act or the Marine Mammals Protection Act. Priority is given to projects involving species at risk of becoming threatened or endangered. Grants can be used for resource management and research, land acquisition, restoration or enhancement, education and/or promoting non-consumptive forms of wildlife recreation (i.e. photography, viewing). States must provide 1/3 of the cost, private groups can contribute 1/3 of the cost, and the Partnerships Program provides the final third. Each state is limited to \$250,000 annually from this program.

## **Casco Bay Land Opportunity Fund**

This small grant program, funded by the Casco Bay National Estuary Program, supports fish and wildlife habitat protection initiatives in the Casco Bay watershed. Funds can be used to support the upfront costs of habitat protection, such as survey and appraisal work, and the funds can also be used to purchase land in fee or easement. Funds must be used to protect high value fish and wildlife habitat -- either as identified in the Important Habitats Analysis completed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Casco Bay Action Plan, or as confirmed by other verifiable biological data. The application process is initiated with a phone call to Forrest Dillon at Maine Coast Heritage Trust (729-7366) or Lois Winter at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Program (781-8364). No matching funds are required. Generally, grants will be awarded for \$15K or less, and limited funds are distributed to eligible projects on a first come basis.

## **Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment Mini-Grants**

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, a coalition of primarily state and provincial land management agencies, with some federal agency, non-governmental organization and business affiliates, is supported in part by a federal grant. Local organizations can apply for matching funds from the Council to complete projects in their community that benefit the marine and coastal environment. Grants supporting educational, research, marine debris and pollution reduction, habitat restoration and habitat protection projects are limited to \$10,000. All grants have a 50% match requirement, with at least half of the match required in cash. For current information, contact the State Planning Office -- Maine Coastal Program (287-3261).

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## Other federal habitat protection and restoration opportunities

Federal agencies other than the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also provide a variety of grants for conservation initiatives. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency provides Non-Point Source Pollution **319 Grants** to local or state government and private nonprofit conservation and planning organizations. The U.S. Forest Service's **Forest Legacy Program** provides up to 75% federal cost-sharing to acquire (fee or easement) forest lands threatened by development. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides habitat protection funding through the **Farmland Protection Program**. NRCS restoration funding programs regularly used in Maine include the **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** for wetland projects, and the **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** for river projects, and the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP)** for non-point source abatement projects. Federal funds from the **Transportation Efficiency Act (TEA-21)** may be available through Maine Dept. of Transportation for specific kinds of conservation work, linked to alternative transportation. For expensive and complex initiatives, the Army Corps of Engineers may provide 65% federal funds to plan, design and implement wetland and river restoration work through its **206 Program** and its **1135 Program**.

## State habitat protection opportunities

A small percentage of the funds available from the **Outdoor Heritage Fund lottery** and the "**loon license plate**," can be used for habitat protection. (Most of these funds are reserved for state fish and wildlife management initiatives other than land protection). The **Land for Maine's Future Program**, supported primarily by a \$50 million statewide bond approved, and also through a small percentage of the MBNA's Land for Maine's Future credit card sales, provides a key source of state funds for land protection.

## Environmental Grantmaking Foundations

Private foundations support environmental initiatives, and major libraries have comprehensive reference books and CD's that list and describe the kinds of programs each foundation is likely to support. The Maine Philanthropy Center at the University of Southern Maine in Portland has references on funding sources, including the Foundations Center Database, a comprehensive and searchable CD for identifying grant sources. The Maine Philanthropy Center's website at: [www.megrants.org](http://www.megrants.org) describes the Center and its services, lists training opportunities on grantsmanship and also includes many (but not all) foundations included on the Foundations Center Database CD. The Maine Philanthropy Center has satellite sites providing similar services at the Camden Public Library, University of Maine at Machias and the Houlton Public Library. If you plan to visit the Maine Philanthropy Center at USM, call 780-5039 to schedule a time. First-time users need instruction, and repeat users need to schedule computer time. If the Maine Philanthropy Center is not convenient for you, another excellent source of information is [Environmental Grantmaking Foundations](#), available as a CD and in hard copy through the Environmental Data Research Institute at 1-800-724-1857.

