



A bimonthly update on what's happening

COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION NEWS

April 2007—No. 2



We are pleased to share with you our second newsletter and the release of our first annual report on the numerous activities underway to implement Executive Order 13352 entitled: *Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation*. We trust you will find this information useful as you develop and implement collaborative partnerships in your own communities. The report can be found at <http://cooperativeconservation.gov>.

PRESIDENT HIGHLIGHTS COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION IN 2007 EARTH DAY MESSAGE

“As we observe the 38th Earth Day this Sunday, we celebrate the rich blessings of our Nation's natural resources, and we renew our commitment to protecting our environment so we leave our children and grandchildren a flourishing land.

By encouraging cooperative conservation, innovation, and new technologies, my Administration has compiled a strong environmental record. This Earth Day, harmful air pollutant levels are down more than ten percent since 2001. Millions more Americans are drinking cleaner, safer water. We have removed hazardous fuels from more than 19 million acres of federal land. We have created, restored, or protected more than 2.5 million acres of wetlands, and we have conserved almost 200 million of acres of habitat through Farm Bill conservation programs. And we are taking positive steps to confront the important challenge of climate change. Our work is not done. We also have a responsibility to pass on to future generations our commitment to the environment.

To do so, we must ensure that future generations have a strong connection to nature. This will require working together to protect and conserve not only nationally significant natural wonders but also local parks, ponds, and working lands where parents and mentors can teach young people about the outdoors through recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, biking and nature watching. And we must also encourage Americans of all ages to get involved in conservation-related volunteer activities.

I call on all Americans to commemorate this Earth Day by recommitting to being good stewards of our land and oceans. When we do so, we take an important step forward to a more vibrant future for our country.”

FY 2008 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET: PARTNERING FOR COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION

President Bush's 2008 Budget includes a strong emphasis on programs and initiatives that achieve results through Cooperative Conservation. Examples include:

National Parks

The President's FY 2008 budget includes the highest increase ever in parks operations funding and requests the first funding for the National Parks Centennial Initiative. The President's National Parks Centennial Initiative will enhance our parks leading up to their 100th anniversary by providing up to \$3 billion in public and private investment over 10 years. The Initiative includes a Federal commitment of \$100 million per year over 10 years for improvements to our parks. In addition, the President's Centennial Challenge urges individuals, foundations, and the private sector to help support the parks by contributing \$100 million annually for 10 years. The President's FY 2008 Budget proposes matching these contributions.



The President, Mrs. Bush and Secretary Kempthorne discuss the National Parks Centennial Initiative during a visit to Shenandoah National Park.

Conservation Tax Incentives

Last year, President Bush signed into law a provision that significantly expanded Federal tax incentives for conservation-related donations made in 2006 and 2007. The incentives promote voluntary land conservation and provide an economic benefit for family farmers and ranchers. The President's 2008 Budget proposes to make these tax incentives permanent. The conservation tax incentives have now been introduced by bipartisan cosponsors in both the House and Senate. The bill numbers are H.R. 1576 and S. 469.

2007 Farm Bill

Outlined in the 2008 Budget, the President's 2007 Farm Bill proposal was developed as a result of Farm Bill forums held throughout the Country. The proposal includes \$56 billion to conserve and protect our natural resources over the next ten years. This represents a \$7.8 billion increase over spending authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill and a \$33 billion increase since 1998.



Secretary Johanns participates in a Farm Bill Forum

The Great Lakes Program

The 2008 budget includes \$56.8 million, to continue work with state, local, and Tribal partners to restore Great Lakes ecosystems.

The Chesapeake Bay Program

The budget includes \$28.8 million for the Environmental Protection Agency to build on the continuing efforts of states and local communities to increase the pace of restoration, and implement the most cost-effective nutrient and sediment controls and key habitat restoration strategies.

Fish and Wildlife Service's State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program

The 2008 budget includes \$69.5 million, an increase of \$19.5 million above 2007. With the completion of State Wildlife Action Plans, states are conducting projects to conserve wildlife.

Healthy Lands

The \$22 million 2008 budget investment in the Healthy Lands Initiative will expand cooperative conservation efforts to restore landscapes, increase water quality and quantity, improve rangeland conditions and protect and create wildlife habitat on nearly 500,000 acres of western land. The initiative is expected to leverage another \$10 million in contributions from local governments, philanthropic organizations, and industry partners.

Penobscot River

The 2008 budget includes \$10 million to purchase, remove and modify dams along the Penobscot River. The project involves a consortium of federal, state and private interests united behind a common vision to restore Maine's largest watershed and help restore nearly 1,000 miles of habitat for endangered Atlantic salmon.



Photo: Penobscot River Valley, Maine

These are just a few examples of the cooperative conservation programs funded for 2008. Other programs can be found at the following link: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Wetlands Initiative

Since 2004, six Federal departments have been working with states, communities, tribes, and private landowners to meet the President's goal to restore, improve, or protect three million acres of wetlands by Earth Day 2009. This month, the Council on Environmental Quality released the 2007 Wetlands Report on progress made toward achieving this goal. According to the report, nearly 2.77 million acres of wetlands have been restored, protected or improved and we are on track to achieve the Presidents goal a year early.

Volunteerism

During the 2002 State of the Union Address, President Bush challenged all Americans to further America's proud tradition of volunteerism by taking time for community service. Cooperative Conservation Department and Agency heads and their staffs have been working to meet the President's challenge through a number of conservation related volunteer activities.

For example, Department of Defense and Forest Service personnel have been active as volunteers in the Keep America Beautiful Great American Cleanup efforts along the Mississippi Gulf Coast where Federal Environmental Executive Edwin Pinero presented Presidential Volunteer Service Awards and delivered remarks highlighting volunteerism. Interior Secretary Kempthorne and his employees volunteered in the Capital River Relief Cleanup on the Potomac River. EPA Administrator Johnson presented the President's Volunteer Service Award to Jay Olsen in Salt Lake City, and to the North Area Environmental Council in Pittsburg. He presented the President's Environment Youth Awards in Washington DC. EPA employees participated in

a cleanup event in the park. Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James Connaughton and his staff are helping to prepare Kingman Island in the Anacostia River for reopening.

These are just a few examples of the many efforts underway by federal staff to meet the President's call to service. Visit the Cooperative Conservation website to find information about volunteer activities in your community: <http://cooperativeconservation.gov/get-involved/volunteerops.html>

Water Infrastructure-Successful Strategies for Local Leadership

On March 21, EPA's Local Government Advisory Committee released a DVD entitled *Water Infrastructure-Successful Strategies for Local Leadership*. The DVD highlights five case studies where local leaders encouraged collaboration to develop successful investment approaches for water infrastructure projects. For more information visit:

http://www.epa.gov/waterinfrastructure/lgac_video/index.html.

Cooperative Conservation Lessons Learned

Part of the President's Ocean Action Plan, (<http://ocean.ceq.gov/>) the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR) was formed in March 2005. SIMOR seeks to identify and promote opportunities for collaboration and cooperation among federal agencies and to build partnerships among federal, state, tribal and local authorities, the private sector, international partners, and other interested parties. SIMOR sought to advance existing efforts to promote cooperative conservation and partnerships by highlighting examples of successful collaboration in its new report, subtitled "Top 10 Marine and Coastal Cooperative Conservation Lessons Learned." The report can be found at CooperativeConservation.gov.

CABINET SECRETARIES GUIDE EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

On December 1, 2006, White House Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James Connaughton hosted Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Steve Johnson, and Commerce Undersecretary Conrad Lautenbacher for a briefing on the progress of Cooperative Conservation. The briefing included a review of legislative actions, efforts to engage the public, and strategies for building workforce capacity. Participants were supportive of ongoing actions and encouraged the Departments to explore additional ways to institutionalize Cooperative Conservation principles. The Cooperative Conservation Task Force is working to achieve the vision set forth during the productive meeting.



Photo: Admin. Johnson, Sec. Kempthorne, and Chairman Connaughton at Briefing

CONTACT US

In keeping with President Bush's vision of Cooperative Conservation, we welcome your views. Please feel free to **Contact Us** on the www.cooperativeconservation.gov website to share any comments, ideas, or requests for information.