



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

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The Honorable James L. Connaughton  
Chairman  
Council on Environmental Quality  
722 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable Linda M. Springer  
Director  
Office of Personnel Management  
1900 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Mr. Connaughton and Ms. Springer:

I am pleased to respond to your November 28, 2005, request for a report outlining the actions the Department of the Interior will take to develop the collaboration and partnering competencies necessary to meet the objectives set forth in the President's Executive Order 13352 - Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation.

As you know, the Department has taken a leading role in advancing cooperative conservation. Environmental progress ultimately resides in the efforts of us all to apply a caring hand to the landscape. It resides in our action in our own backyards, at our places of work, on our farms and ranches, and in our communities. During my tenure as Secretary, we have built a solid record of cooperative conservation achievements by adjusting our budget priorities, developing new policies, and strengthening our workforce. With the support of the President, we have increased our cooperative conservation funding by 239 percent over Fiscal Year 2000. We have improved the habitat on millions of acres of public and private lands, strengthened the relationships with America's hunters and anglers, recovered wildlife populations, and achieved local environmental successes of national significance.

The 1,300 participants attending the landmark White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation offered us wise counsel on how to advance cooperative conservation for years to come. They recommended that the Federal Government continue to improve the collaborative skills of its workforce to nurture, sustain, and support a growing nation of conservation partners. We have taken this recommendation seriously and have drafted the enclosed plan, building on efforts already underway. Expanding the skills, talent, and capacity of Interior employees to work effectively with

