



## DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

### THE BUSH BUDGET A DISASTER FOR WILDLIFE

**On February 6, 2006, President Bush submitted his budget for FY 2007 to Congress and the American people. As in past years, the president has used his budget to shortchange key conservation programs both through funding cuts and budgetary gimmicks, seriously jeopardizing our wildlife and public lands. The FY 2007 budget is nothing short of a disaster for our nation's wildlife and habitat and falls far short of recommendations made in the FY 2007 Green Budget recently released by fifteen environmental groups (<http://www.defenders.org/greenbudget.pdf>). Below is Defenders' analysis of key wildlife conservation programs and how the president's cuts will undermine the conservation legacy we leave to our children.**

#### OVERALL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES FUNDING

**The president's budget would cut funding for natural resources and the environment by 13% below 2006.**

Most of the federal funding for environmental protection and resource conservation falls within the environment and natural resources budget category. The total that the president has allocated for this important line item is \$28.7 billion, just 1 percent of the massive \$2.8 trillion federal budget. This represents a cut of \$4.3 billion, or 13 percent, below FY 2006 funding levels.

#### LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

**The president's budget eviscerates the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), cutting it by \$57.4 million or more than 40% below 2006 and uses budget gimmicks to mask the true impacts.**

The LWCF, established in 1964, is one of the greatest tools we have to address the increasingly significant loss of open space, forests and wildlife habitat by providing funding for acquisition of lands for our national wildlife refuges, parks and forests and for state purchase of open space. The Natural Resources Inventory estimates 2.2 million acres are lost to development each year – once these lands are lost, they can never be recovered.

On the campaign trail in 2000, the president vowed to fully fund the LWCF. In fact, it was one of the only environmental promises made by then candidate Bush. Since that time, he has lived

up to that promise only through the use of accounting gimmicks, “robbing Peter to pay Paul.” Just as in previous years, while the president says he is funding LWCF at a far higher level, \$533 million. The president is playing a bait and switch game by counting 15 other important, but non-LWCF, programs towards this total. In reality, the total budgeted for true LWCF purposes is just \$85.1million, more than 90 percent below the \$900 million authorized level, 40.3 percent below 2006 and 85 percent below 2002. The budget also proposes to eliminate the portion of the LWCF that provides grants to states for acquisition of open space.

## **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: ENDANGERED SPECIES**

### **The president’s budget again cuts Fish and Wildlife Service funding for recovery of endangered and threatened animals and plants, this year by 10.4% below 2006 levels.**

For more than 30 years, the Endangered Species Act has helped prevent the extinction of our nation’s wildlife treasures. Because of the act, beloved symbols of America such as the bald eagle, the Florida manatee and the California condor are all thriving. Only nine of the 1800 plants and animals currently protected by the act have been declared extinct, an astonishing success rate, making the act a true symbol of our nation’s successful commitment to protecting our natural heritage for future generations. The Endangered Species Act provides added benefits to people by maintaining healthy natural systems that provide us with clean air and water, food, medicines and other products that we all need to live healthy lives. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to be good stewards of the environment and leave behind a legacy of protecting endangered species and the special places they call home.

Once again the Bush administration forces deep budget cuts on programs to conserve our nation’s threatened and endangered wildlife. By refusing to request the amount needed to carry out its legal responsibilities, the Bush administration is creating a self fulfilling prophecy that will condemn imperiled wildlife to a continued downward spiral.

Despite the fact that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) biologists have estimated that about 200 currently listed species are on the verge of extinction primarily because not enough funding is available for recovery activities, the president’s budget once again cuts FWS recovery – this time by a whopping \$7.7 million, or 10.4 percent, below 2006 levels and \$47.7 million below the recommendation in the Green Budget. The total FWS Endangered Species operating program is cut by \$6.8 million, or 4.6 percent, below 2006 levels.

Even though more than 280 candidates await proposal for protection under the Endangered Species Act, the president’s request for programs that list new species as endangered or threatened and designate their critical habitat is virtually level. Many of these plants and animals have been waiting years for protection. This stagnant funding will not begin to cover the more than \$150 million listing backlog and falls \$12.2 million below the level recommended in the Green Budget. Finally, the budget requests for candidate conservation, which provides some resources to protect the candidates awaiting protection, and for consultation, which helps landowners, federal agencies, states and others move forward with projects while still protecting endangered wildlife fall \$5.5 million and \$6.2 million respectively below Green Budget recommendations.

The Department of the Interior again says it will address the shortfall to the endangered species program by funding actions to benefit listed species through existing grant programs. While these are important, they cannot substitute for mandated FWS obligations under the Endangered Species Act. The core FWS endangered species program is the backbone on which a healthy body of effective protection of imperiled species must be built.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM**

**The president's nearly \$1 million cut for National Wildlife Refuges is really much worse – a \$17 million cut when accounting for fixed costs and coming on top of unprecedented hurricane damage to refuges last year.**

The National Wildlife Refuge System, with 545 refuges on nearly 100 million acres across the country is an American treasure and serves as our nation's anchor for protecting our cherished wildlife and wild places. There is a refuge in every state and within an hour's drive of most American cities. In addition, our national wildlife refuges serve as economic engines for many local communities. The Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that, in FY 2004 alone, nearly 37 million people visiting refuges generated \$1.37 billion of sales in regional economies, helping to create nearly 24,000 jobs and about \$454 million in employment income.

Despite the \$2.46 billion operations and maintenance backlog plaguing the refuge system, the president's request cuts funding by nearly \$1 million, putting the system nearly \$17 million behind even meeting fixed costs and \$36 million below the level recommended in the Green Budget. The operations backlog is so severe that nearly 200 refuges have no staff on site. The cut is also coming on top of an unprecedented \$260 million in damage to refuges from hurricanes last year, more than 65% of the National Wildlife Refuge System's annual nationwide budget. Thus far, only \$20 million in new money has been appropriated for the damages – if additional funding is not provided to address these impacts, management of the entire refuge system will be seriously harmed for years to come, as funds are shifted to meet the dire needs of the Southeast and Gulf.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: MIGRATORY BIRDS**

**The president does request a badly needed \$3.1 million increase for the migratory bird program, but it still is less than half the increase recommended in the Green Budget.**

Migratory birds are vital to our nation's conservation heritage and play an important role in keeping our environment healthy. Yet about twenty five percent of our nation's migratory bird species need help to ensure their future survival. The president's budget does include some important increases to begin implementation of new conservation plans for nine species, address recent declines in webless game birds such as the mourning dove, develop a management plan for the ivory-billed woodpecker, and protect habitat through the Joint Ventures program. However, it still falls below the Green Budget recommendation by \$3.9 million.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**The near-level funding for the International Affairs program fails to keep up with fixed costs and falls \$3 million below the level recommended in the Green Budget.**

Wildlife recognizes no national political borders. Some of the animals most beloved by Americans are found in nations far across the globe, while others are shared with many countries. Even though many foreign countries face tremendous development pressures, the relative wealth of our nation means that modest U.S. investments can reap significant returns in the developing world. The near level funding for the International Affairs program is actually a cut when accounting for fixed costs and falls \$3 million below the level recommended in the Green Budget for needed replacements of personnel and boosts to the Wildlife Without Borders Programs. In addition, the International Affairs program must expend resources in the upcoming year to prepare for the fourteenth regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, a crucial international treaty aimed at regulating worldwide trade in protected species.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**The \$1.2 million increase falls below the level needed even to keep up with fixed costs and \$4.2 million below the recommended Green Budget increase for hiring needed special agents and wildlife inspectors.**

With globalization, e-commerce and the ever-increasing complexity of our world, wildlife here at home and around the world are targets of escalating criminal activity. The U.S. supports one of the largest markets for both legal and illegal wildlife and wildlife products. The Service's Law Enforcement program is severely understaffed to meet the rapidly proliferating threats. The \$1.2 million increase requested for FY 2007 does not even meet fixed costs which total nearly \$2.4 million and falls \$4.2 million below the level recommended in the Green Budget to hire needed special agents and wildlife inspectors.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: STATE AND TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS**

**The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program, which would receive a needed \$7.2 million increase, would still be funded at more than \$10 million below 2002 and more than \$25 million below 2001.**

More than 5000 additional plants and animals may need protection under the Endangered Species Act without proactive efforts to reverse declines. The innovative State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program channels money to states to protect at-risk wildlife before Endangered Species Act protection becomes necessary. The upcoming year is very important since each state for the first time has just completed a State Wildlife Action Plan under this program to help guide wildlife conservation more strategically and effectively, and funding increases are needed to begin implementation of key actions in the plans. This program does get a sorely needed increase of \$7.2 million over FY 2006 in the president's budget, but ground is still being lost –

this level is still more than \$10 million below 2002 and the level recommended in the Green Budget and more than \$25 million below 2001.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**The president's budget cuts this crucial landowner assistance program by \$8.4 million or 16%.**

Private lands are vital to the conservation of our nation's wildlife and habitat. Through the voluntary Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, the Fish and Wildlife Service provides financial and technical assistance to landowners to restore degraded habitat on their property. This effective program has worked with more than 34,000 landowners to restore 639,550 acres of wetlands; 1,069,660 acres of native prairie, grassland and other upland habitats; and 4,740 miles of riparian and in-stream aquatic habitat. Yet the president's budget levels an \$8.4 million or 16.4 percent cut to this important program, \$14.3 million below the level recommended in the Green Budget.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND**

**The president's budget slashes the small but effective Multinational Species Conservation Fund by 33.4 % below 2006.**

The Multinational Species Conservation Fund is a small but highly successful program aimed at providing resources for on the ground conservation of endangered wildlife in foreign countries. Species like African elephants in the Serengeti, gorillas in Uganda, tigers in the forests of India, and sea turtles from Mexico to Indonesia have all benefited from critical conservation funding provided under this groundbreaking program. On average, every government dollar contributed to these programs has been matched 3 to 1 by private donations. These dollars have funded anti-poaching patrols for rhinos in Indonesia, rebuilt wildlife reserves destroyed by war in the Congo, and helped foster community education programs to protect Asia's disappearing orangutans.

Despite this tremendous success and the already meager funding, however, the Bush Administration has proposed cutting the fund by \$2.1 million, a whopping 33.4 percent reduction from last year and \$3.7 million below the Green Budget recommendation. Instead of cutting dollars for international conservation, the administration and congress should consider expanding the scope of the fund to include some of the most endangered great cats and rare canids in the world like snow leopards, Ethiopian wolves, cheetahs and African wild dogs. As the budget did last year, it also continues to play the shell game of proposing to move the Neotropical Migratory Bird Fund into the Multinational Species Fund – which makes it look like this Fund is getting an increase when, in fact, it is getting a large decrease.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION FUND**

**The president's \$2.2 million increase for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund still falls more than \$33 million below the Green Budget recommendation.**

More than half of the original wetlands in the U.S. have been lost, contributing to the steady decline of migratory birds as well as other wetland dependent fish and wildlife. The president's budget does request a \$2.2 million increase above FY 2006, but it still falls more than \$33 million below the level requested in the Green Budget.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION FUND**

**The level funding request falls \$1.1 million below the amount requested in the Green Budget, leaving important habitat restoration for our migratory birds unaddressed.**

This fund directly helps to restore and conserve the wintering habitats of neo-tropical migratory birds, thus helping to ensure that our migratory birds -- which include many of our songbirds -- will safely return to our backyards and other habitats in the spring. Monies support partnership programs to conserve birds in the U.S., Mexico, the Caribbean, and Latin America, where approximately 5 billion birds representing over 500 species spend their winters, including some of the most endangered birds in North America - the endangered Kirtland's warbler and black-capped vireo and the imperiled cerulean warbler and red knot. All grant requests must leverage at least a three to one match. The program, which is currently authorized at \$5 million per year, is up for reauthorization and efforts are focused at doubling the current level. While more than 100 worthy proposals are received each year, with the current funding provided, only 40 can be funded. Despite this compelling need, the president's budget for this important program is level with FY 2006 and \$1.1 million below the Green Budget recommendation.

#### **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: COOPERATIVE ENDANGERED SPECIES FUND**

**The president's request for the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund is \$20 million below the Green Budget recommendation.**

Non-federal lands are crucial to the conservation of rare species. At least 65% of federally listed plants and animals are found on non-federal lands, with many absolutely dependent upon these lands for their survival. The Cooperative Endangered Species Fund provides grants to states for wildlife and habitat conservation activities on non-federal lands both for listed and candidate species including: research, species status surveys, habitat restoration, captive propagation and reintroduction, planning assistance, and land acquisition by states for Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery. For FY 2005, the Service received 21 requests at a total of \$161 million for Habitat Conservation Plan land acquisition but was able to fund only 11 requests at \$49 million. The president's budget request is level with last year's enacted amount, but \$20 million below the Green Budget recommendation and \$25 million below the amount enacted in FY 2001. The request also includes a nearly \$5.6 million cut to HCP land acquisition, much of which is going to implement the Snake River Water Rights Act of 2004.

## **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: LANDOWNER INCENTIVE GRANTS AND PRIVATE STEWARDSHIP GRANTS**

**The president does request a total \$4.8 million increase for these two important landowner incentive programs, but it still falls short of the Green Budget recommendation by more than \$26 million.**

Endangered and other at-risk wildlife depend upon private lands – and the help of private landowners – for their survival. Many landowners want to help and are implementing voluntary conservation actions on their lands, ranging from habitat protection and restoration to the implementation of land management practices that directly benefit vulnerable wildlife. Landowner Incentive Grants and Private Stewardship Grants provide funding specifically for these efforts to conserve plants and animals at risk on private lands. The Landowner Incentive Program awards competitive grants to state and tribal conservation agencies for their work with private landowners and tribal lands, while the Private Stewardship Program allows the Fish and Wildlife Service to provide funding directly to individuals and groups implementing private land conservation actions. The need for these programs far outstrips available funding – for example, in FY 2005, the Private Stewardship Program received 191 proposals at a total of \$22 million but was only able to fund 72 proposals at \$5.7 million. In Oregon alone, for FY 2005, \$2.8 million in proposals for Landowner Incentive Program grants with a total project value of nearly \$6 million went unfunded. The president does request a total \$4.8 million increase for these two programs, but it still falls short of the Green Budget recommendation by more than \$26 million.

## **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

**The president's budget proposes opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to energy development.**

In his State of the Union address, the president lamented America's "addiction to oil" and pledged to invest in a clean energy future, but the budget that he proposed just one week later reveals a stunning contradiction between his rhetoric and his policy recommendations: his budget calls for leasing the National Arctic Wildlife Refuge's coastal plain – the biological heart of the refuge – for oil and gas drilling. Using wildly speculative calculations, the president's proposal claims that lease sales in the refuge will generate \$7 billion after an initial sale in 2008, and another \$1 billion after a second sale in 2010. Generating this much money would only happen if oil companies paid more than 209 times per acre what they've been willing to pay for any lease on Alaska's North Slope in the last 15 years! Moreover, the estimates of recoverable reserves represent just a drop in the bucket of our oil consumption, less than one year's supply of oil. The development footprint of drilling in this pristine wilderness would be enormous, and would devastate wildlife populations. Congress should reject the president's proposal to drill for oil in the Arctic Refuge on the grounds that the revenue and oil supply projections are highly speculative and the damage to America's most pristine wilderness area would be devastating. Congress has refused to adopt this backward-looking, ill-conceived legislation for nearly twenty-five years; it is time for the president to stop wasting Congress' time with this tired, losing proposition and instead propose real energy solutions.

## **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT: WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

**The president's level funding request and the projected expanding energy development will likely ensure that these two important wildlife and fisheries conservation programs will continue to see their meager resources siphoned away from proactive wildlife and habitat conservation work.**

The Bureau of Land Management manages more land, and more wildlife and fish habitat, than any other federal agency, administering half of the remaining habitat for the imperiled sage grouse and almost 15 million acres of prairie grasslands vital to many declining grassland dependent species. BLM's diverse habitat supports over 3,000 animal species, and more than 300 federally proposed or listed species.

The Wildlife and Fisheries Management (WFM) and Threatened and Endangered Species Management (TESM) programs are understaffed, but with the growing emphasis on land use planning and energy development on BLM lands in the West, are increasingly relied upon to ensure that these plans and activities comply with the Endangered Species Act and other laws and regulations at the expense of their own proactive wildlife and habitat conservation activities – 30 percent of funds are allocated to non WFM and TESSM programs. In addition, over the last ten years, there has been an overall 10% decrease in permanent WFM and TESSM program staff, yet the president's request is virtually level with FY 2006 and almost \$7.1 million below the Green Budget recommendation. Given the major expansion of energy development on BLM lands included in the president's budget – more than 10,000 applications for permits to drill will be processed in 2006 – it is highly likely that these two important wildlife conservation programs will continue to see increasing portions of their resources siphoned away from proactive conservation work.

## **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGE COST SHARE**

**The president's budget funds the effective Challenge Cost Share program at last year's level, \$5 million below the Green Budget recommendation and fails to address gaping needs for sage grouse conservation, off-highway vehicle management, and invasive species control.**

The Bureau of Land Management's Challenge Cost Share (CCS) program allows the agency to partner with state and local governments, private individuals and companies, and nongovernmental organizations to restore habitat, monitor species, maintain archeological sites, repair trails, and other activities. The program, which requires a match of at least \$1 for every \$1 spent by BLM, averages a \$2 match and for some projects, upwards of \$3, providing tremendous leverage for federal funds. Wildlife and Fisheries Management program staff report that CCS partnerships were how most often proactive conservation work is being accomplished in field offices. Annually, however, the BLM has to turn away on average \$20 million of potential projects that could be leveraged into \$60 million for the total program. There are gaping needs for projects relating to sage grouse conservation, off-highway vehicle management, and invasive



species control. Unfortunately, the president's request funds this worthy program at last year's level, and \$5 million below Green Budget recommendation.

#### **FOREST SERVICE: WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

##### **The president's budget slashes Forest Service Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management by \$9 million or 6.8 percent.**

Our national forests and grasslands play an essential role in the conservation of our nation's wildlife and habitat. More than 425 species listed under the Endangered Species Act and an additional 3,200 at-risk species are found on Forest Service lands. Fish and wildlife resources on our National Forests are important to people all across the nation – about 40 million visits per year are primarily for hunting, fishing or wildlife viewing. Yet the president's budget slashes Forest Service Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management by \$9 million or 6.8 percent to \$124 million, even though the Forest Service has identified approximately \$186 million in needed fish and wildlife habitat conservation projects for FY 2007.

#### **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND FOREST SERVICE: SELLING OFF LANDS**

##### **The budgets both for Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service include troubling proposals to sell off our public lands.**

The BLM budget proposes a new land sale program with a target of raising \$182 million over the next five years from the privatization of public lands. The request would require that 70 percent of the money raised from sales would be deposited in the Treasury, rather than allocated for purchase of inholdings within National Parks, National Forests, and BLM conservation areas as is now the case. Under the Forest Service budget a legislative proposal would allow the sale of hundreds of thousands of acres that belong to all Americans to fund counties and schools that previously received revenue from timber sales.

#### **NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE: FARM BILL CONSERVATION**

##### **While heralding funding the Wetlands Reserve Program, the president's budget once again fails to provide the mandatory levels to the whole suite of critical conservation programs as promised in the 2002 Farm Bill.**

The 2002 Farm Bill made an unprecedented commitment to helping farmers and ranchers protect wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and ensure good environmental stewardship. Unfortunately, in every year since passage of the farm bill, the promise to fully fund these progressive programs has been broken. This year is no exception.

The 2002 Farm Bill promised mandatory conservation funding in FY 2007 of \$4.693 billion. Yet, the total amount in the president's FY 2007 budget request for all programs is \$4.172 billion, \$521 million less than was promised and is needed.

Specifically, the proposed budget reduces the landmark Conservation Security Program (CSP), which supports farmers who implement and maintain effective resource stewardship practices on their working farm lands. The budget cuts the program by 8 percent. However, the actual cuts to CSP have been much deeper, because the program has been hit repeatedly with budget cuts and administrative limitations. As originally enacted, CSP should have received \$846 million in 2007, or 2.5 times the president's request. Likewise, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, which provides assistance to farmers improving and protecting wildlife habitat on their lands, gets slashed by 35 percent. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which provides technical assistance, cost-share/incentive funding to assist crop and livestock producers with environmental and conservation improvements on their farms and ranches, is cut by 21 percent. The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, which keeps working farms and ranches in production and puts cash in the pockets of farmers and ranchers, is slashed by a whopping 48 percent.

There is some good news however; the budget again this year contains a laudable proposal to limit environmentally harmful agricultural commodity subsidies, which currently support some of America's agribusiness giants, by capping payments at \$250,000 per farmer. Further, for the first time in the Bush Presidency, the president's budget does call for full funding of the Wetlands Reserve Program at the level authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill - 250,000 acres of restored agricultural wetlands, at a cost of \$403 million. For each of the past two Earth Days, the White House has lauded the role of the WRP in the president's Wetland Initiative, while failing to fully fund this program. While this is heartening, it does not make up for the deep cuts to other critical agricultural conservation programs. These programs once again bear the brunt of the administration's budget axe despite the fact that these conservation programs provide meaningful benefits to both family farmers and the environment.

*[Defenders of Wildlife](#) is recognized as one of the nation's most progressive advocates for wildlife and its habitat. With more than 490,000 members and supporters, Defenders of Wildlife is an effective leader on endangered species issues. For more information, please contact Mary Beth Beetham at (202) 772-0231 or [mbeetham@defenders.org](mailto:mbeetham@defenders.org).*