



DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE FY 2008 BUDGET PRIORITIES AND ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

On February 5, 2007, President Bush submitted his budget for FY 2008 to Congress and the American people. As in past years, the president has used his budget to shortchange key conservation programs through funding cuts and budgetary gimmicks, seriously jeopardizing our wildlife and public lands. While some increases are provided for the National Park Service, they are paid for by cuts in other programs with the result a net conservation loss. The budget would cut appropriated funding for natural resources and the environment by nearly \$1.5 billion below FY 2006, a 4.8 percent cut. The total that the president has allocated for this important budget category is \$28.8 billion, less than 1 percent of the massive \$2.9 trillion federal budget.

The FY 2008 budget leaves our nation's wildlife and habitat struggling to stay afloat and falls far short of recommendations made in the FY 2008 Green Budget released by twenty-one environmental groups. For the few programs where modest increases are provided, they are still far below the need, are outstripped by cuts to other programs, and do not keep pace over the long-term with fixed costs. **To view the green budget or to get more information about funding for wildlife and habitat, visit <http://www.defenders.org/funding/>.** Here is a detailed analysis of the wildlife impacts of the president's budget and Defenders of Wildlife's funding recommendations for FY 2008 – these funding recommendations are identical to those found for these programs in the FY 2008 Green Budget.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The budget eviscerates the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), cutting it by nearly \$85 million to only \$57.9 million, and uses budget gimmicks to mask the true impacts. Defenders recommends \$220 million for federal land acquisition for FY 2008, an increase of \$162.1 million over the president's request.

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. According to a recent Forest Service report, the U.S. loses 6,000 acres of open space a day or 4 acres each minute. Much of the land being developed is former wildlife habitat. Once these places are lost, they can never be recovered.

The president's request would cut LWCF by 60 percent below 2006, providing only 6 percent of the authorized \$900 million level intended each year from receipts from drilling off the Outer Continental Shelf of the U.S. The unspent balance in the Fund on paper will exceed \$15 billion by the end of FY 2007. Only \$22.5 million is provided for planned land acquisition projects and for

the first time ever, the request zeroes out funding for needed projects on Bureau of Land Management Lands. The budget also proposes to eliminate the portion of the LWCF that provides grants to states for acquisition of open space. Rather than cutting the request to nearly zero, the President should be spending as much as possible to stem the staggering loss of open space and wildlife habitat.

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 7.5 percent or \$5.5 million below 2006 levels. Defenders urges a total of \$185.2 million for the four endangered species operations accounts, an increase of \$38.7 million over the president's request, allocated as follows: \$25.2 million for Listing, an increase of \$6.9 million over the request; \$84.8 million for Recovery, an increase of \$16 million over the request; \$63.2 million for Consultation, an increase of \$11.6 million over the request; and \$12 million for Candidate Conservation, an increase of \$3.4 million over the request.

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 \$5.5 million, or 7.5 percent, below 2006 levels. Even though more than 270 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 \$140 million listing backlog.

While Consultation does receive a modest increase, it is paid for by the cut in the Recovery budget, but does not even get the full amount of the cut to recovery, resulting in a net \$1.3 million cut to the overall endangered species program; and Candidate Conservation is funded only at FY 2006 levels. Both of these programs are in need of significant increases. Demand for efforts to conserve the long list of candidates while they await protection far exceeds funding, especially given the meager request in the listing account; and increases are needed to fund projects with local stakeholders and partners. In addition, the number of projects reviewed under the Consultation program has nearly doubled since 1999 and further increases are expected, yet funding and staffing have not kept pace. Finally, the development and implementation of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), which allow activities to proceed while still protecting species, continues to grow, with funding critically needed to help ensure timely and effective development and monitoring of 500 existing and more than 350 new HCPs that together will cover about 72 million acres when complete. All four program areas are currently experiencing at least a 30 percent vacancy rate, with some offices potentially close to 50 percent staffing shortfall, yet the president's request continues to starve this critical conservation program.

Defenders and others in the conservation community are supporting an increase for these four main endangered species accounts to at least \$305.8 million by 2012, an increase of \$158 million over 2006 levels. The FY 2008 recommendation is a first step in reaching this goal. Full funding at the 2012 level would allow for listing of 60 species per year, the average number listed under Presidents George H.W. Bush and Clinton; addressing staffing shortfalls; implementing needed recovery projects and candidate conservation projects; conducting needed, but currently virtually non-existent, long-term monitoring of HCP effectiveness; and meeting fixed costs.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

The meager increase that the administration says will cover fixed costs still leaves the National Wildlife Refuge System more than \$55 million below the FY 2004 inflation adjusted funding level and fails to address the more than \$2.5 billion operations and maintenance backlog. Defenders urges \$451.5 million for Refuge System operations and maintenance for FY 2008, an increase of \$56.7 million over the request.

The National Wildlife Refuge System, with 547 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. Each year, nearly 40 million people hunt, fish, view wildlife, and enjoy educational programs on refuges – there is at least one 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 yearly visitor spending generates more than \$1.3 billion of sales in regional economies, helping to create nearly 24,000 jobs and about \$454 million in employment income.

Despite the importance of the Refuge System to our natural heritage, several years of stagnant or declining budgets have exacerbated the operations and maintenance backlog, forcing a massive restructuring that will result in a dramatic 20 percent cut in staff. Refuge visitors are finding refuges with no staff, roads and visitor centers closed, viewing platforms and trails in disrepair, and biological and education programs eliminated. Invasive plant species are taking over and crime is becoming commonplace as law enforcement officers are spread too thin.

Following the Refuge System centennial in 2003, the FY 2004 funding level of \$391.5 million was the high point for refuge operations and maintenance accounts – since that time, budgets have declined. The \$451.5 million funding for FY 2008 recommended by Defenders and the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a diverse coalition of 21 wildlife, sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations that represent a national constituency numbering more than 5 million, is merely the inflation adjusted 2004 level to keep the Refuge System from sliding further backwards. CARE is currently developing a plan to phase in additional budget increases over the coming years to reach a funding level commensurate with the nationally significant benefits the Refuge System provides to the American people.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: STATE AND TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS

Although the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program receives a needed \$2 million increase over FY 2006, it still falls far below the need. Defenders urges an increase of \$30.5 million over the request for a total of \$100 million.

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 and tribes to protect at-risk wildlife before Endangered Species Act protection becomes necessary. The upcoming year is very important since each state has recently 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. As documented in the plans, most wildlife in the U.S. is declining because of habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation. A broad national bipartisan coalition called Teaming With Wildlife, which includes more than 5,000 organizations, is advocating \$100 million for FY 2008.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: LAW ENFORCEMENT

The funding in the president's request fails to meet inflation adjusted FY 2006 levels. Defenders urges a total of \$66.6 million, an increase of \$9 million over the request.

With globalization, e-commerce and the ever-increasing complexity of our world, wildlife here at home and around the globe 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 Fish and Wildlife Service's Law Enforcement program investigates wildlife crimes, regulates wildlife trade, helps citizens comply with the law and works with other international and U.S. government entities to carry out its mission. The program's wildlife inspectors and special agents, supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory and a new wildlife law enforcement data system, have achieved important successes in many arenas, including reduction of illegal harvest and trade in caviar and cases involving wolves, manatees and endangered migratory birds. Despite these successes, the program is severely understaffed to meet the rapidly proliferating threats and in recent years has been starved of needed personnel and resources, slashing its effectiveness in enforcing both federal wildlife laws and international treaties. Since 2002, the program has lost 45 staff, including 32 special agents and will lose an additional 20 to 25 agents by 2011 due to retirement.

Despite the dire state of the Law Enforcement program, the president's budget fails to keep up with FY 2006 inflation adjusted levels and includes a programmatic decrease of \$1.4 million based on an assumption that an increase in fees for animal importers and exporters to cover the major costs of inspection will be in place by FY 2008. Defenders supports the fee increase, but there is no guarantee that it will be finalized by FY 2008; moreover, the need for funding in the Law Enforcement program would more than justify retaining any increases generated by raising fees without accompanying offsets to appropriated funding. In addition, the president's FY 2008 request will not allow for needed hiring and training of 25 replacement special agents, and scientists for the forensics laboratory.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: MIGRATORY BIRDS

The president's \$2.3 million increase over FY 2006 levels will merely allow the migratory bird program to keep pace with inflation since 2006, and it does not meet programmatic needs. Defenders urges a total of \$52.7 million, an increase of \$12.1 million over the request.

Migratory birds are vital to our nation's conservation heritage and play an important role in keeping our environment healthy. Yet about 25 percent of our nation's migratory bird species need help to ensure their future survival. The Service's Migratory Bird Management Program is multi-faceted and encompasses survey and monitoring, management of permits and hunting regulations, efforts on international treaties, habitat restoration, coordination of work to reduce direct bird mortalities, and implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan as well as other efforts to conserve bird habitat through the Joint Ventures program. In an effort to make more demonstrable progress in on-the-ground conservation to restore bird species to healthy levels, the Service has developed a list of 139 focal species to receive greater attention in the coming years through development and implementation of specific action plans on each species. The first nine plans have either been completed or are nearing completion.

The president's budget does no more than maintain FY 2006 inflation adjusted levels and will not provide adequate funding for beginning implementation of the first nine focal species plans, initiation of efforts to develop the next set of focal species plans, work needed to understand and address declines in populations of webless migratory gamebirds, science and science support, and the Joint Ventures program.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The virtually level funding for the International Affairs program fails to keep up with fixed costs, and, within the request, funding for the Mexico Wildlife Without Borders program is cut. Defenders urges a total of \$17.6 million for International Affairs, \$7.6 million over the request.

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 Fish and Wildlife Service International Affairs program works to meet our international treaty obligations, including, importantly, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and to protect and restore sustainable wildlife populations around the globe through its International Wildlife Trade and International Conservation programs. The program also administers the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. More than 20 years ago, the International Conservation program initiated a series of highly successful regional Wildlife Without Borders initiatives with a mission to work with resident peoples and develop locally adapted and long-term wildlife management and conservation programs supported through broad partnerships.

The president's FY 2008 request is actually a cut when accounting for inflation and also includes a programmatic cut for the Wildlife Without Borders Mexico program. The administration's own budget justifications highlight the harm from this cut that will de-fund 8 to 10 projects. "The curtailment of projects designed for this purpose [education and training for locals] has negative consequences for species because local cultural norms that have prevailed for hundreds of years often conflict with modern scientific knowledge about how humans and wildlife can coexist using the same resources." The request will not provide badly needed increases for boosting the regional Wildlife Without Borders programs (which instead are being cut); implementing the Convention for the Conservation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative, and the Wild Bird Conservation Act; listing and permitting actions to

address a backlog of 56 foreign species awaiting Endangered Species Act protection; and addressing a staffing shortfall of more than 15 percent program-wide.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND

The president's budget again slashes the small but effective Multinational Species Conservation Fund, this year by 33.5% below 2006. Defenders recommends a total of \$10 million for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, an increase of \$5.7 million over the request.

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, more than one-third, below FY 2006 levels. 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.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION FUND

The level funding request leaves important habitat restoration for our migratory birds unaddressed. Defenders recommends a total of \$5 million, an increase of \$1 million.

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. 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.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: COOPERATIVE ENDANGERED SPECIES FUND

The president's request provides only level funding. Defenders urges a total of \$96.2 million, an increase of \$16.2 million over the request.

Non-federal lands are crucial to the conservation of rare species. At least 65 percent 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. Twenty-seven states received funding under this program in 2006 to benefit species ranging from orchids to bull trout to migratory birds to Canada lynx. To adequately fund state endangered species conservation activities, it is critical to gradually increase funding to at least \$160 million annually by FY 2012, an increase of \$80 million over FY 2006. Defenders' FY 2008 request is a first step in meeting this goal.

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

The request eliminates funding for these two important landowner incentive programs, a \$29 million cut below FY 2006 levels. Defenders urges a total of \$27.4 million and \$11 million respectively for the Landowner Incentives Program and Private Stewardship Grants a total increase of \$38.4 million over the proposed zero funding.

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. In 2006, funding was awarded to efforts in 46 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Both programs regularly receive worthy proposals that total two to three times the available funding. To support private landowners in their voluntary conservation efforts, a gradual increase to \$77 million is needed by FY 2012 – the president's request is going in the opposite direction. Defenders' FY 2008 request is a first step in meeting that goal.

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

The president's virtually 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 agency either should stop this diversion of funds or provide increases to compensate for the amounts diverted – an increase of \$22.3 million over the requested level of \$63 million for these two programs for a total of \$85.3 million – \$55.9 million for Wildlife and Fisheries Management and \$29.4 million for Threatened and Endangered Species Management.

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.

While the budget touts a \$15 million cross-cutting "Healthy Lands Initiative" for BLM that says it is targeted to protecting wildlife and restoring habitat in energy interface areas, it is unclear exactly how this money will be spent, and whether it will be effective. The Initiative is essentially designed to begin cleaning up the mess of poor energy development decisions. Proposals to revamp the administration's energy policies would be far more effective in conserving wildlife than this small program. Energy development and other extractive industries on federal land are expected to generate \$4.5 billion in 2008 – more of that money should be used for mitigation activities. In addition, proposed levels for specific BLM wildlife, fish and threatened and endangered species programs are essentially flat. These programs have routinely seen more than 30 percent of funding siphoned away to pay for compliance activities of BLM's energy, grazing and other non-wildlife related programs, and in FY 2006 saw more than 50 percent of their funding drained away. Traditionally, funding for compliance work has come from the benefiting programs. At the same time, the budget proposes a \$32.2 million increase, nearly 36%, for the oil and gas program over FY 2006 levels.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGE COST SHARE

The president's budget provides only level funding for the effective Challenge Cost Share program and fails to address gaping needs for sage grouse conservation, off-highway vehicle management, and invasive species control. Defenders urges a total of \$19.4 million, an increase of \$10 million over the request.

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 often the most proactive conservation work 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.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT: PLANT CONSERVATION

The Interior appropriations subcommittee should establish a new budget activity or subactivity for conservation of native plants under the Management of Lands and Resources account and provide \$15.8 million in FY 2008.

BLM is responsible for managing more than 800 special status plant species, including plants protected under the Endangered Species Act. It has become increasingly apparent that a specific new budget activity or subactivity is needed for plant conservation in the Management of Lands and Resources account. As part of the Burned Area Rehabilitation account, the BLM has been designating \$4 to 5 million annually to the Native Plant Materials Development Program.

Providing native seeds and seedlings for restoration projects after wild fires and other disturbances is vital to preventing the spread of invasive plant species which degrade habitat and ecosystem functioning. The large-scale development of native seed stock is still in its infancy, and often federal agencies are not able to acquire enough plant materials to meet their demands. In addition, extensive conservation actions are needed to maintain and restore native plant communities on BLM lands. Defenders' FY 2008 recommendation would move \$4.6 million in funding previously provided under the Burned Area Rehabilitation account and increase funding to \$15.8 million to establish this new budget activity or subactivity under Management of Lands and Resources. The request includes funding for an additional 22 plant ecologists to work in the program, 2 for each BLM state office.

FOREST SERVICE: WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES HABITAT MANAGEMENT

The president's budget again slashes Forest Service wildlife and fish habitat management, this year by \$14.1 million or 11 percent below FY 2006 levels. Defenders urges a total of \$159.9 million, \$42.3 million over the request.

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 even though \$188 million in projects could be accomplished in the coming year with current staffing. At the same time the budget for logging receives a \$41 million increase, nearly 15 percent. The decrease to the wildlife and fish program would result in a loss of 187 staff, yet the staff in the timber program would increase by 289.

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. Defenders urges rejection of these proposals.

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.

[Defenders of Wildlife](#) is recognized as one of the nation's most progressive advocates for wildlife and its habitat. With more than 500,000 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