2015 National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Project Summaries

*Southeast Region*

**Apalachicola Bay/St. George Sound Conservation**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Florida Coastal Office partnering with Franklin County Board of Commissioners and the Trust for Public Land will acquire, restore, conserve seven acres of impacted maritime hammock, and nationally-significant declining freshwater wetlands along with near shore high marsh and adjacent sea grass beds. This project will restore the rare maritime forest coastal high marsh and preserve existing near-shore sea grasses suitable for numerous federally endangered and threatened species and designated habitat. Successful completion of this project will prevent further loss and restore these critical habitats, while furthering efforts to establish a contiguous protected buffer along Apalachicola Bay.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Florida | $778,110 | $273,390 |  | $1,051,500 |

**Altama Plantation Acquisition - Phase 2**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) will acquire and protect in perpetuity approximately 2,370 acres of the Altama Plantation. The area is made up of tidal wetlands, inland maritime forests and adjacent uplands in the Lower Altamaha River watershed. The lower Altamaha River watershed is designated as one of the “Last Great Places” by The Nature Conservancy and is a top State Wildlife Action Plan priority. It boasts the highest documented number of rare plants, animals and natural community occurrences in Georgia. This project is part of a larger in initiative by GADNR, the Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Forest Service and others to conserve priority habitat in the lower Altamaha River system. All of the project partners are also members of the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Georgia | $1,000,000 | $189,000 | $1,059,000 | $2,240,800 |

**Musgrove Plantation Acquisition – Phase 1**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources will help acquire and protect in perpetuity approximately

57 acres of diverse habitat known as the Musgrove Plantation. The parcel contains 20.9 acres of nationally declining wetlands, 1.7 acres of stable creek on a barrier island. The area is made up of saltmarsh, tidal creeks, forested wetlands, maritime forests and pine/oak woodlands on St. Simons Island in the Altamaha Estuary. The grant proposal is the first of four phases to acquire 480 acres. Conserving the Musgrove Plantation is a high priority of the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the State Wildlife Action Plan. The lower Altamaha River watershed is also designated as one of the 75 “Last Great Places” by The Nature Conservancy because of the biologically diverse ecosystems it supports.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Georgia | $1,000,000 | $2,000,000 |  | $3,000,000 |

**Baxter Tract**

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) will acquire and protect in perpetuity

454.7 acres of forested wetland with a mile of shoreline located in the Black Swamp of coastal Jasper County. The site boasts a high diversity of priority animal and plant species in South Carolina’s Wildlife Action Plan, most notably the federally listed swallow-tailed kite, wood stork, Atlantic sturgeon, shortnose sturgeon, and Kirtland’s warbler. The Baxter Tract is part of a corridor of conservation lands that spans the length of the Savannah River and protects upstream waters that flow south through the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge along the coast. SCDNR will manage the site as a Wildlife Management Area and it will provide outdoor recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, bird watching and hiking.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| South Carolina | $850,669 | $283,556 |  | $1,134,225 |

*Northeast Region*

**Thousand Acre Marsh Wetland Protection Project – Bennett Farm**

The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) will acquire the 140-acre Bennett Farm in New Castle

County, Delaware. The acquisition, combined with the matching Faella Tract, will permanently protect

85.3 acres of nationally declining wetland habitat. It will result in water quality improvements on 150 acres of wetland-associated upland buffers, and reduce the threats from residential development and agricultural production. The project will also increase breeding, foraging, stopover, and wintering habitat for migratory birds. The project area will be managed by DFW as part of the 3,130-acre Augustine Wildlife Area. The Delaware Bay Estuary is designated as a Continentally Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and a Globally Important Bird Area by American Bird Conservancy.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Maine | $220,000 | $100,000 |  | $320,000 |

**Little Yarmouth Island Project**

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife will acquire and permanently protect 13.2 acres on the southern half of Little Yarmouth Island in eastern Casco Bay. The project would also protect 7,022 feet of shorefront and 27.6 acres of associated coastal and freshwater wetlands. All of the wetlands are

designated Wetlands of Special Significance by the State of Maine and the project’s estuarine emergent wetlands and marine unconsolidated wetlands are mapped as Significant Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat. This project will benefit numerous waterbirds, shorebirds and wading birds, including 43 of 91

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service priority trust species and several threatened and endangered species. The Maine Department of Natural Resources has identified the project area’s intertidal mudflats as a high value shellfish growing area for clams and oysters.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Maine | $220,000 | $100,000 |  | $320,000 |

**Weskeag River Wetlands Conservation Project**

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) will acquire four properties, totaling

238 acres. Ninety-four of the acres are wetlands and approximately 34 acres are intertidal mudflats, which is Maine’s most important shorebird stopover habitat. The project will protect approximately 60 acres of nationally decreasing coastal wetland types, more than a mile of tributary streams, and two miles of undeveloped tidal shoreline. The Weskeag River currently supports some of the highest

diversity of species of any marsh in mid-coast Maine and the Penobscot Bay region. In 2008, MDIFW has identified the Weskeag River as a Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance in Maine’s Wildlife Action Plan. The parcels will be added to MDIFW’s R Waldo Tyler Wildlife Management Area in South Thomaston and managed by MDIFW.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Maine | $450,000 | $465,000 |  | $915,000 |

**Tidmarsh Farms Restoration Project**

The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game will restore 250 acres of recently retired cranberry

bogs and supporting lands in southeastern Massachusetts. The site consists of 202 acres of stable and declining wetland types and 48 acres of upland grassland and forest. The project will restore former commercial cranberry bogs to wetlands by removing dams, water control structures and 45,700 cubic yards of sediment, and installing a culvert to reconnect the hydrology in the Beaver Dam Brook watershed. The project will be the largest freshwater wetlands restoration effort to date in Massachusetts and includes a cutting edge, long-term monitoring component. Although the project site is privately owned, NRCS holds a conservation easement on 192 acres and Mass Audubon is in the process of acquiring the site. Once the site is acquired, it will be managed a wildlife sanctuary.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Massachusetts | $790,290 | $372,950 |  | $1,163,240 |

**Padgetts Creek Project**

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), with the assistance of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will acquire several individual parcels of land owned by one landowner in Cumberland County, New Jersey, totaling 695.8 acres. The wetlands in Padgetts Creek are an important migratory stopover for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds, neotropical and other long distance passerines, American woodcock, red knot, bald eagle and other raptors. NJDEP has designated the entire Delaware Bay area as an exceptional resource value, and the Padgett Creek wetlands are identified in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, “Delaware Bayshores Focus Area.” Padgetts Creek is within 20 miles of three national wildlife refuges. The properties will be incorporated

into the 1,298 acre Fortescue Wildlife Management Area and managed by the New Jersey Division of

Fish and Wildlife.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| New Jersey | $900,000 | $500,000 |  | $1,400,000 |

**Ware Creek Wildlife Management Area Creation**

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will acquire and permanently protect the 1,062- acre Ware Creek Preserve, LLC property in New Kent County, Virginia. This project will protect substantial acreages and a vast wetland complex in an area of the Commonwealth that is experiencing rapid growth and development. Coupled with adjoining conserved lands, this project has the potential to create a matrix of 2,683 acres of contiguous protected land. The acquisition property has over five miles of creek frontage overlooking Ware Creek, and substantial wetland values. The project site has a large brackish water marsh system. These wetlands serve as important stopover, foraging and breeding habitat for fish and birds, threatened and endangered species and other wildlife.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Virginia | $1,000,000 | $415,083 |  | $1,415,083 |

**York River Preserve Wildlife Management Area Creation**

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will permanently protect the 1,621-acre York River Preserve in New Kent County, Virginia. The acquisition property has over three miles of river and creek frontage overlooking the York River, Philbates Creek and Ware Creek, and substantial wetland values. Once protected, this parcel will be managed as a new state Wildlife Management Area, which will protect significant nesting, staging and wintering habitat for migratory birds, important nursery habitat for fish, and habitat for threatened and endangered species. Together with adjoining conserved lands, this project has the potential to create a 2,683-acre contiguous wildlife preserve. This acquisition

will also remove habitat threats, including residential development, farming, and unsustainable forestry.

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| *State/Territory* | *Grant* | *Non-federal match* | *Other federal funds* | *Total project cost* |
| Virginia | $1,000,000 | $415,083 |  | $1,415,083 |