

Department of the Interior

America's Great Outdoors

Fifty-State Report



November 2011



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Silver Creek Preserve

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Department of the Interior

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Introduction

President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative on April 16, 2010, to foster a 21st-century approach to conservation that is designed by and accomplished in partnership with the American people. He charged the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality with leading this initiative. The President directed senior Administration officials to undertake an unprecedented listening tour to learn from communities outside of the Nation's Capital that have developed innovative and successful conservation initiatives. The result was perhaps the most robust public conversation about conservation in American history: 51 public listening sessions with more than 10,000 participants and more than 105,000 comments submitted. Building on this conversation, on February 16, 2011, federal agencies submitted to the President "America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations," a report which defines an action plan for conservation and recreation in the 21st century.

The AGO report identified 10 major goals and 75 action items to advance this initiative, from expanding youth programs to increasing public awareness about conservation to better managing our public lands. Among these were three major place-based goals to focus the collective conservation and recreation efforts of the federal government: create and enhance urban parks and greenspaces, renew and restore rivers, and conserve large, rural landscapes.

During the spring and summer of 2011, Secretary Salazar continued the conversation with Americans outside Washington, this time seeking recommendations in each state about opportunities that support the three place-based goals of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Secretary Salazar and his leadership team at the Department of the Interior asked Governors and their senior leadership and stakeholders in all 50 states to identify specific projects in which the federal government could partner with states to advance the AGO goals. The response we received was outstanding. Many states identified far more worthy project ideas than we could list in this report. Based on this input, this America's Great Outdoors Fifty-State Report summarizes two project ideas in each state for the Department of the Interior and other federal agencies to partner with state and local governments and other stakeholders on a shared conservation and recreation agenda. Here are some highlights and themes we heard from states and stakeholders around the country:

1. People value close-to-home places to access the outdoors.

Many of the projects identified seek to create, expand, or improve parks, trails, recreational access, and open space for people to get outdoors in places near to where they live or work. From completing trail connections all over the country to re-establishing access to the Harlem River in New York City to restoring Lake Calumet in South Chicago to supporting the Boise River

Greenway, all over the country are focused on improving the quality of life for their citizens through parks, trails, and open space. Close-to-home parks and greenspaces are especially valuable in connecting young people with the outdoors.

2. People love their rivers.

Since most communities are located along a river, rivers are a particularly good way to connect Americans to the great outdoors. And rivers can be restored through community-scale efforts, encouraging people to become and stay involved. From riverside trails for hiking and biking, to water trails, to multi-dimensional river recreation and restoration initiatives, to projects that aim to restore river ecology, we are inspired and encouraged by the range and diversity of proposed river-related projects at the local, state, and regional levels.

3. People want to conserve our large, rural landscapes.

Americans have a deep appreciation for farmers, ranchers, and foresters and for conserving habitat for wildlife. They also understand the need to think big—at the watershed or landscape scale—to maintain these working lands for food and fiber and the wildlife that depend upon them. Across the country, we heard about the need to protect river valleys, lands that connect public lands to private lands, and areas that should be set aside for their special values.

AGO takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should rise from the American people—that the protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective shared by all Americans. The locally supported outdoor projects identified in this report aim to reconnect Americans to the natural world through parks, trails, and rivers and to conserve and restore working lands and wildlife habitat. The projects will also create jobs through travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation activities. Since the number of ideas received far exceeded what we are able to put in this report, those listed are intended to be a first set of projects on which the Department can partner with states and communities to make America's Great Outdoors a reality. In future years, we hope to expand our partnership with states, communities, and stakeholders.

Given the fiscal constraints facing the federal government, the Department of the Interior will not be in a position to provide significant financial resources to most projects. Interior will work with states and communities to advance these projects with existing resources through technical support and with its administrative authorities. It will also partner with states and communities to leverage grants, private funding, and other resources to help ensure a project's success.

The release of this Fifty-State Report represents the conclusion of another chapter in the ongoing dialogue with the American people on building a conservation and recreation agenda for the 21st century and the beginning of an important chapter of translating the AGO vision into on-the-ground action.



Alabama

Gulf Coast Restoration

Landscape Conservation

Gulf Coast

Project Description and Need: The Gulf Coastal Plain of Alabama, more than 31,000 square miles and home to two million people, is a key area in need of conservation. The region's wetland and pine forest ecosystems are critical habitats for many threatened and endangered species like the Red Cockaded Woodpecker and Red Hills Salamander. The region is expected to see significant new development and population growth during the next 25 years, putting more pressure on these species and their habitat. The State of Alabama has partnered with federal agencies and conservation organizations to acquire easements to conserve habitat, protect migration corridors, and enhance recreational opportunities. The partnership's primary focus is on conservation of the remaining longleaf pine ecosystem. Another important goal of this project is to provide a conservation buffer for local military activities, including "Dark Areas."

Potential Action: Support acquisition of conservation easements to conserve critical habitat for protected species and the continuation of military activities at Fort Rucker, Fort Benning, and Eglin Air Force Base.

Partners: FWS, DOD, State of Alabama, and University of Alabama.

Conservation Education for Alabama's Youth

Education

Alabama

Project Description and Need: As in many parts of the country, there is an increasing disconnect between Alabama's citizens and the outdoors. This disconnect shows up in the decreased amount of time young people are in the outdoors, the increased time they spend in front of electronic devices, and the decline in outdoor recreation like hunting and fishing. Alabama is seeking partners to help it address this growing disconnect between people and nature, between urban and rural communities, and between youth and outdoor recreation. Opportunities include an expansion of outdoor recreation in public schools curricula, including hunter and angler education.

Potential Action: Partner with the State of Alabama to develop environmental education programs and to connect young people to the outdoors.

Partners: NPS, Alabama State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Alabama Department of Public Health, and Alabama Department of Education.

Alaska

Denali State Park Trails

Trails

Central Alaska

Project Description and Need: Denali State Park sits on the south side of the Alaska Range, adjacent to Denali National Park and Preserve. The 325,000-acre park is remarkable for its spectacular views of towering glaciers and ice-carved gorges. Glacial streams wind down to the tundra, home to moose, grizzly bears, caribou, and other wildlife. With its beautiful views and unique landscape, the region is popular for sightseeing and recreation by both residents and out-of-state visitors, and anticipated developments in the region are expected to increase demand. The state park provides a range of recreation experiences that often complement those available in the national park, including a trail system with several trailheads along the state's major north-south highway. The state needs assistance to plan, develop, and maintain an all-season trail system that allows for optimum outdoor recreational use of the area while protecting the natural and cultural resources of the park.

Potential Action: Provide technical assistance from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) to develop a trail management plan with recommendations for design, construction, management, and potential funding sources.

Partners: NPS, State of Alaska, and Denali State Park.



Kachemak Bay Water Trail

Water Trail

Homer, Alaska

Project Description and Need: The goal of the Kachemak Bay Water Trails Association in Homer is to identify a designated water trail suitable for small watercraft from the Homer Spit up the north shore of Kachemak Bay and down the south shore to Seldovia. This trail would connect communities at both ends of the bay to one another and to the outstanding recreational and educational offerings of the bay. The proposed trail is approximately 125 miles long and the proposal will identify access points, landing sites, and recreational facilities available to the public. Educational information related to flora and fauna, Native cultures, and geology will greatly enhance recreational and educational opportunities and promote water safety. The Kachemak Bay Water Trail will emphasize stewardship of the resources and providing Alaska youth and adults with a fun way to learn about the bay, beaches, estuaries, and uplands and their importance to the marine ecosystem.

Potential Action: Provide technical assistance from RTCA to develop a marine-based water trail system, provide recommendations for development of the water trail, build partnerships, identify funding sources, and designate the project as a National Water Trail.

Partners: NPS, Homer Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, Homer Wooden Boat Society, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society, Center for Coastal Studies, Alaska State Parks, FWS National Maritime Wildlife Refuge, Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and City of Homer.



Arizona



DIANE LUGGETT

Rio Salado

Urban Park and Youth Engagement Phoenix

Project Description and Need: The Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center is a nature center in the heart of the City of Phoenix's Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area, a 600-acre park along the Salt River. Located less than two miles from downtown Phoenix, the center is a gateway to lush Sonoran riparian habitat used by over 200 species of birds and other wildlife.

The River Pathways Program supports the AGO priorities of restoring and revitalizing a significant river while creating more green space, urban parkways, and fishing opportunities for residents of Phoenix. The project will engage youth in conservation and monitoring in the Agua Fria National Monument; open a new recreation area near the shore of Lake Pleasant Regional Park on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and Maricopa County Parks; and build and maintain 18 to 20 miles of trails within the Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area.

The River Pathways Program has a goal of educating 25,000 Phoenix inner city youth (94 percent of whom are minority students) in basic environmental literacy by 2015. As part of the project, young people will build regional trails, monitor fragile riparian resources, and restore avian and aquatic habitat.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial support to build trails and develop the recreation site at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. Expand urban fishing opportunities.

Partners: BLM, BOR, FWS, ACE, Audubon Arizona, City of Phoenix, Maricopa County, Valley Forward, Arizona Department of Water Resources, Phoenix Union High School District, local Workforce Investment Boards, Phoenix College, and Student Conservation Association.

Lake Havasu National Bluewater Trail System

Water Trail, Recreation, and Access

Lake Havasu City

Project Description and Need: Lake Havasu provides boating, fishing, camping, and other outdoor recreation for two million visitors a year. The river/lake-based trail will be complemented by a parallel non-motorized trail along the lakeshore. Both would connect the city to two national wildlife refuges at either end of Lake Havasu, three state parks, new public fishing facilities, six new accessible shoreline camps to accommodate disabled visitors, and over 80 existing boating camps on BLM public lands.

The project would highlight over 10 years of work by public/private partners to improve the reservoir's fisheries habitat, shoreline access, and recreation opportunities, as well as its economic and education potentials.

The partners plan to engage a Youth Conservation Corps team in 2012 to do some of the land-based restoration and enhancement work. The project will support the local and regional economies and advance AGO recreation goals.

Potential Action: Provide financial support for the public access and campground projects. Work with DOI bureaus to engage local Youth Conservation Corps. Support designation as a National Water Trail.

Partners: BLM, FWS, BOR, Arizona State Parks Department, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Youth Conservation Corps, Anglers United, Lake Havasu Marine Association, Mohave County Workforce Investment Board, Havasu for Youth, Lake Havasu City.



DIANE LIGGETT

Arkansas

Delta Heritage Trail

Rural Landscapes

Helena to Arkansas City, Arkansas

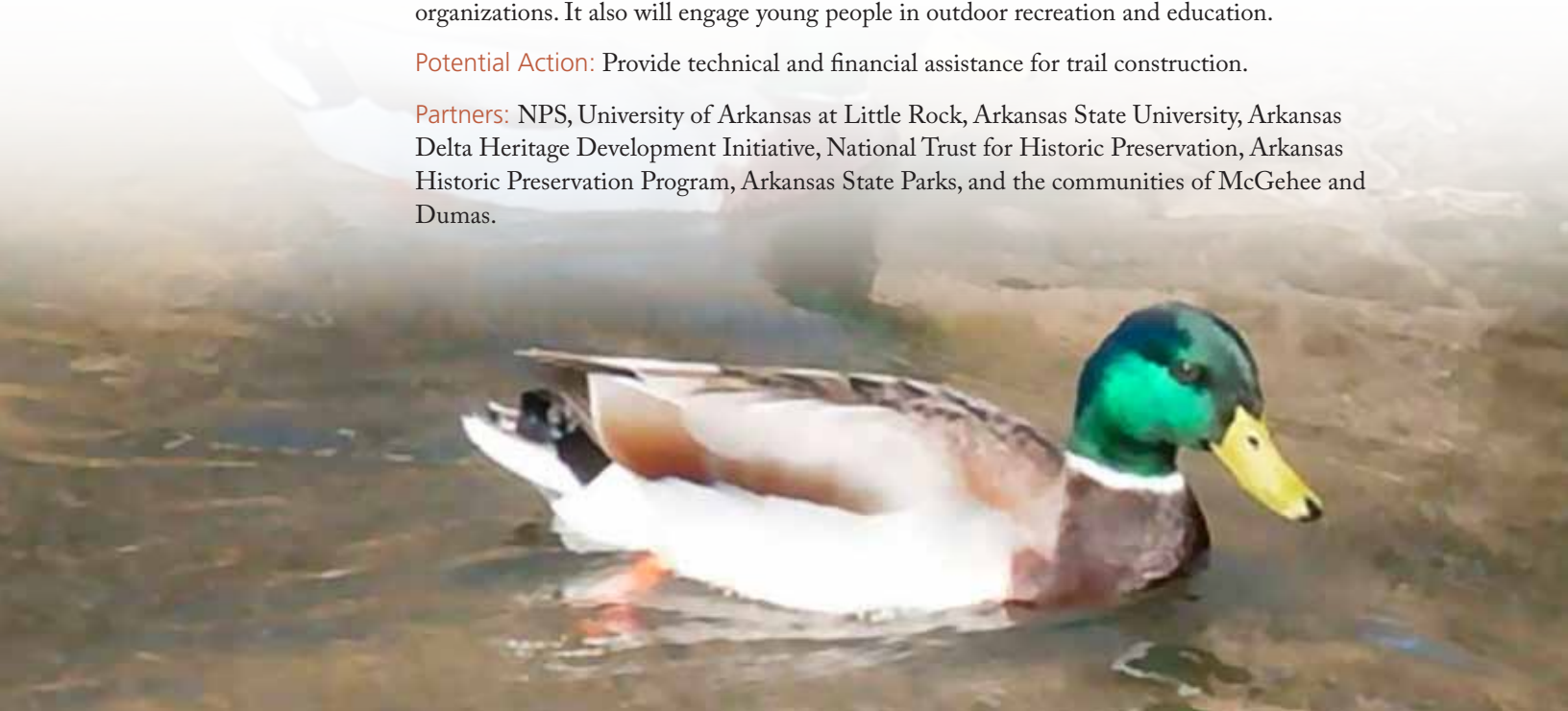
Project Description and Need: Arkansas State Parks acquired the Delta Heritage Trail in 1993 when the abandoned Union Pacific Rail line was converted to the “Rails to Trails” program. Ultimately, the state hopes to complete a 73-mile hiking and biking trail through the heart of the delta that would provide recreational access to a largely inaccessible area. The area includes vital habitat for 265 species of neotropical migratory and resident songbirds and is the most important wintering area for mallard ducks in the United States. Designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, the area includes the largest contiguous block of bottomland hardwood forest remaining on any tributary of the Mississippi River.

The state has now completed 14 miles of the trail, and there is an opportunity to build more. The trail skirts the White River National Wildlife Refuge and Rohwer Relocation Center Cemetery National Historic Landmark, part of the NPS Japanese American Confinement Sites Program. It also runs along the Osotuo Unit of Arkansas Post National Monument.

When completed, the project promises to provide greater opportunities for outdoor recreation, to increase public understanding of the diverse landscapes of the Arkansas delta, and to enhance partnerships between DOI, agricultural interests, state agencies, and environmental organizations. It also will engage young people in outdoor recreation and education.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance for trail construction.

Partners: NPS, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Arkansas State University, Arkansas Delta Heritage Development Initiative, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Arkansas State Parks, and the communities of McGehee and Dumas.



Arkansas River Trail

Urban Parks and Wildlife Areas

Downtown Little Rock, Arkansas to West Little Rock, Arkansas

Project Description and Need: Arkansas, “The Natural State,” takes pride in their connection to the outdoors. Already, a chain of parks, on both sides of the Arkansas River, links a complex of city trails and parks that runs from the Clinton Presidential Center in downtown Little Rock to the Big Dam Bridge in West Little Rock. The state and the communities envision the Arkansas River Trail reaching from downtown Little Rock to Pinnacle Mountain State Park (and the 225-mile Ouachita Wilderness Trail) on the southern shore, and from downtown North Little Rock to Cook’s Landing on the northern shore. These routes will directly connect city residents to the surrounding rural areas. A pedestrian bridge across Murray Lock and Dam and a renovated railroad bridge near the Presidential Library Center and Park will help create another 14-mile loop. All together this project will open approximately 24 miles of trail in central Arkansas.

While a great deal of progress has already been made in developing these trails and parks, another 12.5 miles of the Arkansas River Trail needs to be completed.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to acquire and complete the Arkansas River Trail.

Partners: NPS, State of Arkansas, and City of Little Rock.

California

San Joaquin River

National Blueway, Restoration, and Recreation

Friant Dam to Confluence at Merced River

Project Description and Need: In 2006, the San Joaquin River Restoration Program settled an 18-year lawsuit regarding the provision of sufficient water for fish habitat in the San Joaquin River. The program is a comprehensive, long-term effort to restore flows from Friant Dam to the confluence with the Merced River. It will re-establish vital habitat on an important stretch of river and achieve the conservation goals of both the state and AGO. Among the benefits are restoring large areas of desiccated habitat and reinstating salmon runs in the watershed while avoiding adverse impacts on water supply. Along today's San Joaquin River is a sparse, but vital, network of places where people can experience and enjoy the river. The San Joaquin River Partnership is a collaboration of 13 private, nonprofit organizations committed to seeing the river restored. Working with the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, and with other federal and state agencies, the Partnership has adopted a vision for a San Joaquin River National Blueway as a mosaic of parks, wildlife refuges, and other public-access areas that create recreational opportunities on land and water. The blueway is anticipated to become a regional and statewide asset that fosters health, strengthens community ties, enhances learning, and supports restoration and conservation efforts.

Potential Action: Support restoration flows to the San Joaquin River as well as the reintroduction of salmon. Support new recreation access to the river for exploring the San Joaquin River from headwaters to Delta. Designate the San Joaquin River as a National Blueway.

Partners: FWS, BOR, NPS, San Joaquin River Partnership, NOAA-NMFS, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Water Resources, Friant Water Users Authority, NRDC, and others.



Los Angeles River Trail & San Gabriel River Trail Improvements

Trails and Urban Park

Los Angeles, California Region

Project Description and Need: Almost 5.7 million people live within 10 miles of California's Los Angeles River Trail, and 5.5 million are within 10 miles of the nearby San Gabriel River Trail. These recreational trails along Los Angeles County's principal rivers connect urban residents to a network of the region's great parks and outdoor recreation areas, including Los Angeles State Historic Park, Griffith Park, the Arroyo Seco, and Angeles National Forest. Improvements to these trails will ensure they continue to provide healthy recreation, connect neighborhoods to existing outdoor recreation areas, and provide a non-motorized transportation alternative.

The City of Los Angeles has committed to connecting people to the rivers and trails through the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (LARRMP), which identifies over 240 potential projects to restore riverside habitat, increase public access to the river, and promote recreational opportunities around the river. Construction of these projects is expected to create as many as 19,000 new permanent jobs. Proposed projects include bike trails, parks, and wetland restoration. Federal support for the LARRMP through the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has already made possible several projects to restore ecosystems in the Sepulveda Basin and along the Arroyo Seco, conserving high-value wildlife habitat with up-to-downstream connections and links between in-channel riparian to outer-bank habitats. These actions will be greatly expanded with completion of the USACE LA River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, which proposes extensive habitat restoration along a 10-mile stretch of the river that includes the cities of Los Angeles, Burbank, and Glendale; connections to the Verdugo Wash and Arroyo Seco confluences, critical links between the river's soft-bottom Glendale Narrows habitat and upstream habitats in Griffith and Elysian Parks; and future development of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Trail.

Potential action: Provide technical and financial support for the parks, trails, and habitat restoration aspects of the LARRMP.

Partners: NPS, State of California, local governments, and many nonprofit partners.

Colorado



Rocky Mountain Greenway Urban Parks, Trails, and River Access Denver, Colorado Metropolitan Area

Project Description and Need: As a result of decades of private, local, state, and federal investment, significant areas of open land are now protected and available for public use in and around the Denver metropolitan area. This investment includes establishment of 40,000 acres of parks and open space, creation of over 140 miles of trails, and completion of water quality and recreation improvements within the Denver metro greenway system. There has been significant federal, state, and local investment in the cleanup and restoration of the Rocky Flats and Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuges, as well as private and public investment in the creation of Confluence and Commons parks in the Central Platte Valley in Denver. An investment of \$100 million in these environmental and recreational improvements has created an estimated \$10 billion of related economic benefits.

To maximize the benefit of these disparate assets, federal, state, and local partners want to create links to creeks, river corridors, and local, state, and federal parks and open space areas. The state and DOI are joining forces to create a “Rocky Mountain Greenway”—a system of uninterrupted trails linking the three national wildlife refuges in the metro region (Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR, Two Ponds NWR, and Rocky Flats NWR) and other trail systems in the Denver Metro Region. The NPS also will explore creating connections from Rocky Mountain National Park to the Denver metro area.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial support to connect the three national wildlife refuges in the metro region. Provide financial assistance for water quality and riparian habitat improvements and for work to extend trails and open space along the South Platte River and Sand Creek Greenway.

Partners: FWS, NPS, State of Colorado, local governments, and nonprofit and private sector partners.

Yampa River Basin

River Basin Conservation and Restoration;
Large Landscape Conservation
Northwestern Colorado

Project Description and Need: The Yampa River Basin in northwestern Colorado is one of the most hydrologically and biologically intact watersheds in the West. As the largest naturally flowing river in Colorado, the Yampa hosts high-quality recreational experiences for boaters and fisherman. It provides roosting and nesting habitat for the sandhill crane, blue heron, and bald eagle. The river is also vital winter habitat for Colorado's second largest elk herd, and large deer herds, making the area a world-class hunting destination.

Good stewardship and conservation of these lands and waters—both public and private—is critical to ensuring strong local economies built around ranching, wildlife, and recreation that contribute greatly to the economic and ecological health of the state of Colorado and the Colorado River basin as a whole. Two recent successes in the area include 61,485 acres of private land on 131 different properties that have been placed under conservation easement and extensive public and private investment in the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program. The creation of the Yampa River State Park, the reconstruction of important buildings at Dinosaur National Monument, and recreation improvements at Elkhead Reservoir are the first of many steps that will help spur tourism, recreation, jobs, and greater public use, all goals of AGO. The stronger and better coordination among governments at all levels and local communities afforded by AGO will help leverage current resources to increase the pace and scale of future accomplishments, including voluntary conservation of working agriculture lands, investment in forest management and wildlife corridors, and support for a diverse and sustainable outdoor recreation economy.

Potential action: Support the acquisition of conservation easements from willing sellers. Increase efforts to control invasive vegetation that seriously threatens important river values, and work at the headwaters of the river to conserve and promote important fisheries.

Partners: BLM, FWS, NPS, State of Colorado, county and local governments, land conservation groups, veterans organizations, and youth corps.

Connecticut

Connecticut River

National Blueway with Urban Park Connections

Hartford

Project Description and Need: Over the course of the Connecticut River's 410-mile journey from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound, the river ties together four New England states—Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. The river is also the centerpiece of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge that encompasses the entire watershed, including several federally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers in Connecticut. The river flows through Hartford where public agencies have made significant strides to reconnect residents to the river through new riverside parks, a new science center, recreational trails, and a highly successful urban youth rowing program.

Despite the success in developing varied recreational opportunities on the Connecticut River, there is still a need for more access points for water-based recreation and to draw citizens to the river. The goal is to continue to support local efforts to enhance river access. The state envisions new launch sites for canoes and kayaks, more trails along the river and its major tributaries (including the Farmington and Salmon rivers), added camping areas, hosting public events, and making further investments in open space near the river.

The state also is working in Hartford to expand the city park system and join it to the Connecticut River. Its centerpiece, the GreenWalk, is a one-mile chain of parks and plazas connecting the gold-domed Capitol in Bushnell Park to the Connecticut River waterfront.

Potential Actions: Provide technical and financial support to increase access to the Connecticut River. Designate a portion of the Connecticut River in Connecticut as a National Blueway.

Partners: FWS, NPS, State of Connecticut, City of Hartford, Riverfront Recapture, Friends of Conte Refuge, and other nonprofit partners.

Naugatuck River

National Blueway, Access, and Restoration

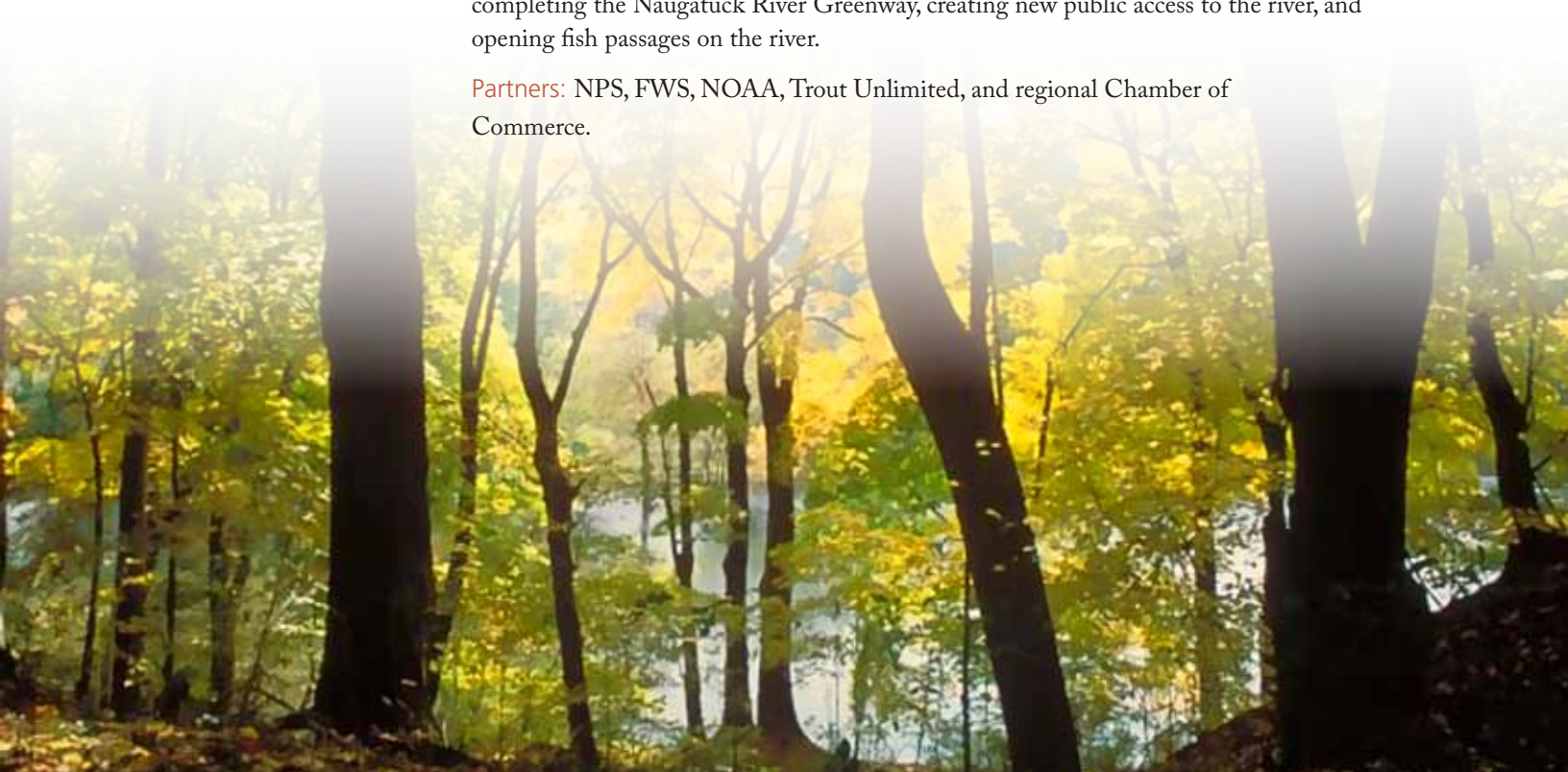
Western Connecticut

Project Description and Need: Western Connecticut’s Naugatuck River encompasses a 310-square-mile watershed that includes former heavily industrialized urban areas, including the City of Waterbury. Over the last decade, the river has undergone a rebirth with millions of dollars invested to improve water quality, restore habitat, and enhance recreational opportunities. The state has focused on upgrading treatment plants—including a \$100 million project in Waterbury—and removing dams and other structures.

Associated with the above efforts, the state has embarked on a comprehensive program to revitalize major urban areas along the river. The state envisions a multi-sector partnership with NPS, NOAA, Trout Unlimited, and the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce to help shape a comprehensive corridor initiative to enhance recreational access, increase fishing opportunities, restore and improve natural resources, and stimulate economic development along this National Blueway.

Potential Action: Help the state and communities to restore and enhance the river by completing the Naugatuck River Greenway, creating new public access to the river, and opening fish passages on the river.

Partners: NPS, FWS, NOAA, Trout Unlimited, and regional Chamber of Commerce.



Delaware



First State National Historical Park

Urban Parks and Historic Preservation

New Castle - Eastern Shore

Project Description and Need: Delaware was the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution and is now the only state with no National Park area. Designating a National Park area would boost tourism and provide urban outdoor recreation opportunities to residents and visitors. The purpose of the park would be to preserve and interpret resources associated with early Dutch, Swedish, and English settlements, as well as Delaware's role in the birth of the nation.

The concept is that the park connects four interpretative centers linked to sites across the state to tell a comprehensive story of Delaware's coastal heritage. In cooperation with state agencies and local governments, NPS would manage the centers and provide interpretation staff at various attractions. With this "hub and spoke" concept, park boundaries would be drawn loosely to include as many sites as possible that are representative of the themes.

The First State National Historical Park Act was introduced in 2009 and awaits Congressional approval. It is supported by the State of Delaware.

Potential action: Support Congressional approval of First State National Historical Park.

Partners: NPS, State of Delaware, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Delaware National Bayshore

Landscape Conservation

Eastern Shore, Delaware

Project Description and Need: The Delaware Bayshore is a widely recognized area of global ecological significance. Extensive coastal marshes, beaches, and agricultural lands annually support more than a half-million shorebirds during both spring and fall migration. This makes the Bayshore one of the best birding and hunting areas on the East Coast. More than half of the Bayshore region is protected as refuges, wildlife areas, agriculture preserves, parks, and cultural heritage sites.

The state seeks DOI's assistance to conserve, restore, and provide access to the Bayshore by leveraging federal, state, and private resources. Coordinated landscape-scale conservation among federal, state, and local agencies, private conservation organizations, private landowners, and local communities would ensure protection of diverse natural habitats and improve recreational opportunities for 30 million Americans who live within a three-hour drive of the Bayshore. Delaware would also like to partner with DOI to evaluate the potential for designating its eastern shore as America's first "National Bayshore."

This project aligns with many AGO objectives: landscape-scale conservation, enhancement of vital habitat, restoration of waterways, connection of local communities to the outdoors, and recreation.

Potential Action: Collaborate with Delaware to conserve and restore the Delaware Bayshore and to enhance recreation. Evaluate the possibility of designating the area as the first National Bayshore.

Partners: NPS, FWS, State of Delaware, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.



District of Columbia

Anacostia Riverwalk Trail

Recreation and Access

Project Description and Need: The Anacostia Riverwalk is a planned multi-use trail along the east and west banks of the Anacostia River in Washington, DC. The trail will provide a safe and convenient means for people to access the Anacostia Waterfront and enjoy Anacostia Park. Once completed, the Riverwalk will consist of a 48-mile trail system that will include 20 miles of trail along the Anacostia waterfront within the District of Columbia. The Riverwalk will connect 16 waterfront neighborhoods to the Anacostia Park and the Anacostia River.

District of Columbia residents and visitors will be able to walk and bike on the Riverwalk to several popular destinations, including the Fish Wharf, new baseball stadium, Poplar Point, Navy Yard, historic Anacostia, RFK stadium, Kingman Island, and National Arboretum. At either end, the trail will connect to the National Mall at the Tidal Basin and to Bladensburg Marina Park in Prince George's County, MD. Access points are being linked to neighborhoods and points of interest along the length of the trail.

Regionally, the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail will connect to the Fort Circle Trails, Bladensburg Trail, Mount Vernon Trail, and C&O Trail. Nationally, the Riverwalk Trail will provide access to the East Coast Greenway, a network of bicycle trails linking Maine to Florida. The District of Columbia's Metrorail system will interface with the Riverwalk Trail to create a full range of transportation alternatives in the region.

Many sections of the Riverwalk are now complete. The District of Columbia has been working with the NPS to complete sections located on NPS lands. Currently the NPS is working closely with the DC Department of Transportation to complete a missing section of the Riverwalk, which would connect the District of Columbia part of the Riverwalk to the Maryland part.

Potential action: Provide technical and financial assistance to complete missing links in the Anacostia Riverwalk.

Partners: NPS. Other partners include USDA for access to the National Arboretum, and CSX railroad for trail sections that traverse railway lines.

Florida

Shingle Creek Trail

Trails and River Access

Orlando, Florida

Project Description and Need: Shingle Creek Trail is a multi-use recreational trail being developed through cooperation between the local governments of Orange County, Osceola County, City of Orlando, and City of Kissimmee. When fully acquired, it will stretch 32 miles through one of Florida's heavily urbanized metropolitan areas. This trail will become part of an extensive trail network that extends from Kissimmee to Wekiwa Springs State Park and from Orlando to Mascotte. In its entirety, it will serve as a key north-south connector in a larger regional trails network that includes the West Orange Trail, South Lake Trail, Cross Seminole Trail, and Seminole Wekiva Trail. Completing the Shingle Creek Trail will significantly increase outdoor opportunities for bikers and pedestrians in urban central Florida. It will also connect the public to the growing areas of protected land along the Shingle Creek watershed. These parcels connect to form a regional linear open-space park, creating even more opportunities for recreation near the Shingle Creek water body—the northernmost headwaters of the unique Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades ecosystem.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to complete key sections of the Shingle Creek Trail.

Partners: NPS; State of Florida; local governments of Orange County, Osceola County, City of Orlando, and City of Kissimmee; South Florida Water Management District; The Trust for Public Land; Florida Communities Trust; Florida Department of Environmental Protection Division of Recreation and Parks; Office of Greenways and Trails; and other partners.

East Central Regional Rail-Trail Project

Trails

East Central Florida

Project Description and Need: The 50-mile East Central Regional Rail-Trail is the most extensive abandoned rail corridor purchased through Florida's Greenways and Trails acquisition program. The multi-use trail will link Lake Monroe on the St. Johns River to the City of Titusville on the Indian River Lagoon, mirroring a historic path of commerce and travel. The St. Johns River is an American Heritage River, and the Indian River Lagoon is considered North America's most biologically diverse estuary.

The East Central Regional Rail-Trail is envisioned as part of a larger 260-mile-long trail loop known as the St. Johns River to the Sea Trail Loop. Trail partners hope to complete the loop by 2013, to tie their celebration to the 500th Anniversary commemoration of the landing of Hernando de Soto in Florida. When complete, the trail will link the metro Orlando area, Kennedy Space Center, Canaveral National Seashore, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, and Daytona's beaches. It will provide recreational opportunities and better access to public lands in one of Florida's most populated and most visited regions.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance in designing and building the East Central Regional Rail-Trail. Assist the State of Florida in collaborating with Canaveral National Seashore and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge on planning and developing this project.

Partners: FWS, NPS, State of Florida, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.



ROBERT CLARK

Georgia

Get Outdoors Georgia

Recreation and Education

Georgia

Project Description and Need: The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 72 million American adults are medically obese and 40 percent do not exercise regularly. Georgia created a platform, Get Outdoors Georgia, to achieve a healthier population through outdoor activities. This program targets both youth and adult populations in urban and rural areas. Get Outdoors Georgia could benefit from a partnership with the NPS Healthy Parks Healthy People Initiative. This NPS program works with national, state, and local parks, as well as businesses, healthcare providers, scientists, foundations, and advocacy organizations to foster the health-related role that parks and outdoor spaces play in our society. In the Parks Prescription Program, for example, doctors prescribe activities like a daily walk in a park as a part of their treatment. Bringing NPS expertise to these issues could greatly benefit Georgia's program.

Potential Action: Partner with Georgia to demonstrate and promote health benefits of parks and to enhance recreational access and opportunities for urban youth.

Partners: NPS, State of Georgia, health care providers, and foundations.

Panola Mountain State Park

Greenway, Recreation, and Access

Atlanta Area

Project Description and Need: Just 20 miles from downtown Atlanta, Panola Mountain State Park is a recreational jewel for metropolitan Atlanta. Panola Mountain's designation as a National Natural Landmark recognizes its 100-acre granite outcrop that shelters rare plants of the Piedmont region. The park encompasses 1,635 acres of critical recreation and conservation lands and protects four miles of frontage on the South River. Neglected for decades, the South River needs improved water quality and riparian habitat. Because of its proximity to Atlanta, the park is accessible to millions of Georgians and visitors. Panola Mountain State Park connects with Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area and its sister granite outcrop, Arabia Mountain. The park also connects with eight local schools through a network of multi-use, paved paths weaving through a variety of ecosystems and across the South River.

The State of Georgia wants to extend the multi-use trail system as a regional network that would connect with adjoining partner agencies' and nonprofit partners' lands. It also wants to develop overnight camping areas and recreation access points along the South River.

Potential Action: Provide planning and technical assistance through the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance and National Heritage Areas programs.

Partner: NPS, State of Georgia, Monastery of the Holy Spirit, and DeKalb, Henry, and Rockdale counties.

Hawaii

North Kona-South Kohala Coastline / Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail

Greenway and Water Trail

Island of Hawaii

Project Description and Need: Thirty-one miles of coastline on the Island of Hawaii make up the North Kona-South Kohala Coastline String of Parks, beginning at Honokohau Small Boat Harbor and ending at Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site. Hawaii wants to connect these seven national, state, and county parks via aquatic and terrestrial trails interspersed with multi-use recreation facilities. The NPS Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail already provides land links through parks in coastal areas, and it could be linked by sea as well, via recreational boating opportunities.

In addition to providing recreation access, the North Kona-South Kohala Coastline has a rich cultural history, including ancient artifacts at sacred sites, and great potential for environmental education and interpretation. The NPS is working with a dozen local communities in the trail corridor to develop community-based trail management plans. The plans include an economic development component focused on creating jobs in the recreation and visitor services fields. This project meets AGO outdoor recreation goals and is supported by state and community entities.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to the Island of Hawaii to enhance the Ala Kahakai Trail and provide new access along the Kona Coast. Work with the state and local communities in greenway, water trail, and interpretive planning for 31 miles of the Kona Coast.

Partners: NPS, State of Hawaii, Island of Hawaii, local communities, and nonprofit organizations.

Wailua River National Blueway

National Blueway Restoration and Access

Island of Kaua'i

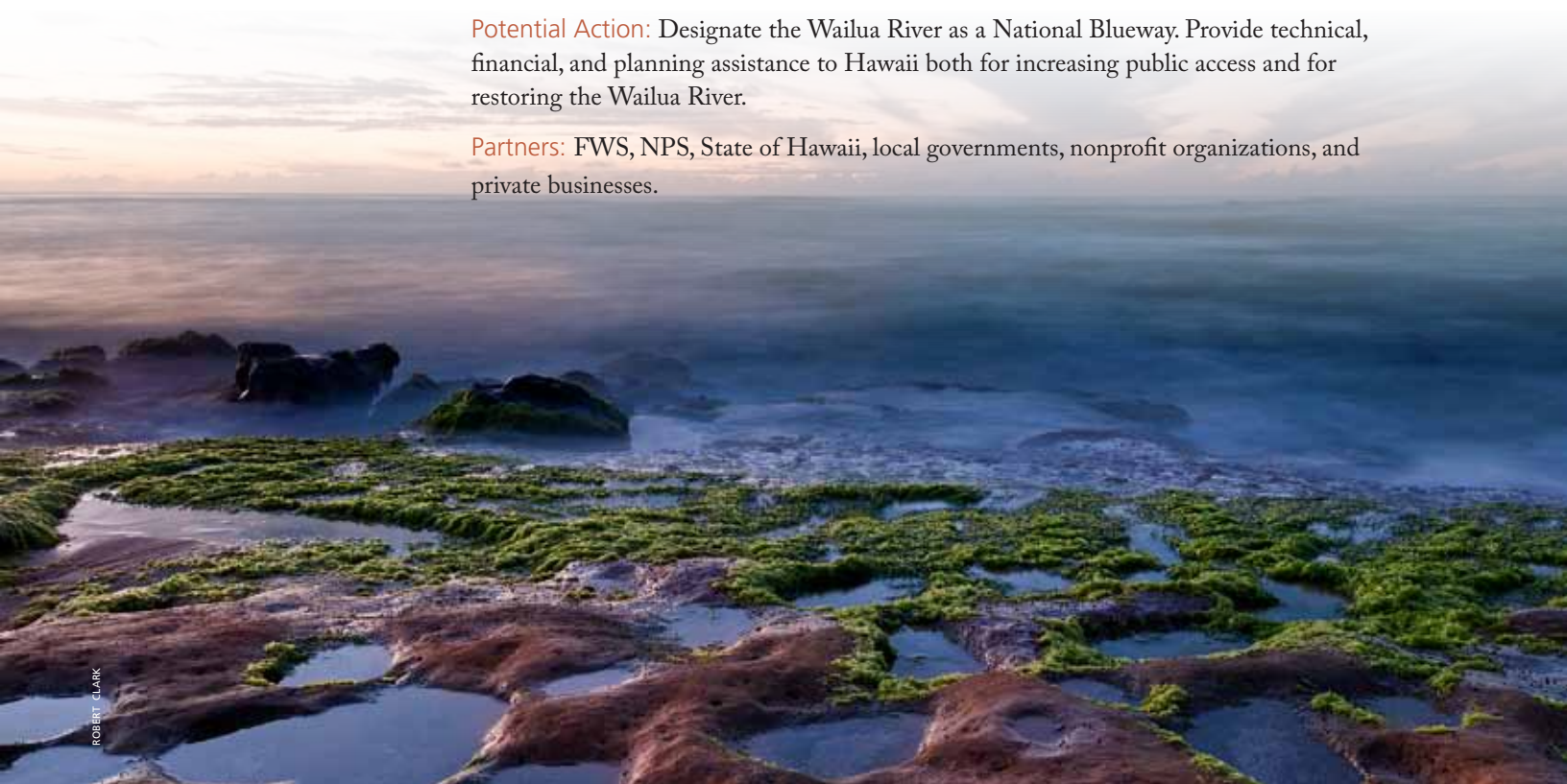
Project Description and Need: The slowly meandering Wailua River on the Island of Kauai is a heavily used recreational destination. Its culturally and historically significant features include the sacred Fern Grotto site, several Hawaiian Heiau, and ancient petroglyphs at the mouth of the river. Commercial tours and paddleboat entrepreneurs crowd the banks.

Managing the Wailua River's limited area presents the challenge of balancing its heavy recreational use with public safety and impacts on natural and cultural resources. The demand for public recreation access has increased, but an aging marina infrastructure must be addressed.

The state needs help with increasing the access to the river, enhancing existing facilities, and assisting in the conservation of the natural and cultural resources. The long-term goal is to manage river use sustainably to protect river values while increasing recreation use along the blueway.

Potential Action: Designate the Wailua River as a National Blueway. Provide technical, financial, and planning assistance to Hawaii both for increasing public access and for restoring the Wailua River.

Partners: FWS, NPS, State of Hawaii, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses.



ROBERT CLARK

Idaho

Boise River Greenbelt

Urban Park

Boise, Idaho

Project Description and Need: The Boise River Greenbelt offers over 22 miles of pathways on both sides of the river. A signature attraction of the city of Boise, it connects parks, historic features, residential areas, and the downtown area. This project will extend the greenbelt to 63 miles long, from Lucky Peak Dam to the confluence of the Snake and Boise rivers, creating a recreational expressway to Eagle Island State Park. Connecting pathways will provide recreation access and bicycle commuting to and from 10 cities in Idaho's Treasure Valley. The project also will clear barriers and provide portages for boating and increase access for fishing and wildlife viewing.

Some 1.5 miles of the Boise Greenbelt Trail have been built on Bureau of Reclamation lands in southeast Boise. BOR is part of the Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative. This coalition of federal, state, local, and private partners supports recreation and tourism, including the Boise River Trails and Parks Project. This project has substantial support in the area.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance for the extension of the Boise River Greenbelt. Extend an agreement allowing the existing Greenbelt Trail to remain on Bureau of Reclamation lands.

Partners: BOR, NPS, FWS, BLM, State of Idaho, City of Boise, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Owyhee Land Exchange

Landscape Conservation

Southwestern Idaho

Project Description and Need: The Owyhee Wilderness is a BLM-managed wilderness area in southwest Idaho along the Owyhee River. This landscape is defined by rivers cutting steep canyons out of high desert and sagebrush plateaus. Only rough roads provide access to empty, open land.

BLM and the State of Idaho have been working on a potential land exchange under the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009. The exchange would swap state-owned trust lands within the Owyhee Wilderness for BLM lands outside the area. This will result in more contiguous wilderness and provide the potential for more revenue for the new state trust lands. There are 32,538 acres of federal land and 38,440 acres of state of Idaho land included in this exchange, but it will not be executed until both BLM and the State of Idaho have completed several tasks.

Potential Action: Provide matching funds for cultural resource surveys, boundary surveys, market appraisal, and other work required to complete the land exchange.

Partners: BLM, State of Idaho, and nonprofit organizations.



Illinois

Calumet Millennium Reserve

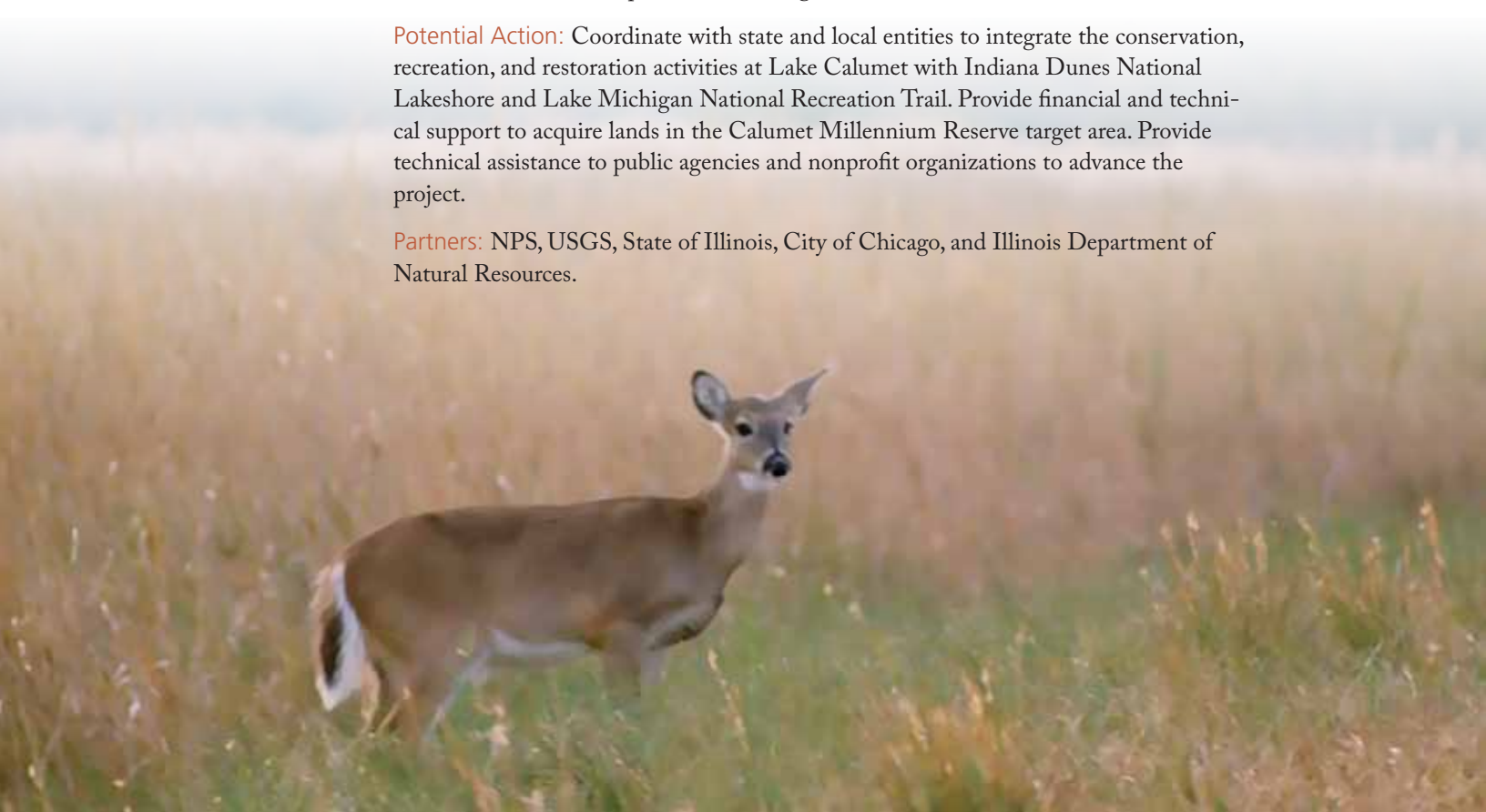
River Restoration and Recreation

Chicago, Illinois Region

Project Description and Need: The Calumet Millennium Reserve project will promote redevelopment of an underused industrial zone while rehabilitating wetlands habitat on Chicago's South Side. The project will restore drained wetland basins, historic prairie and forest habitats, and create a link to existing conservation lands. By acquiring and restoring brownfields, wetlands, streams, and coastline on the Calumet River, Lake Calumet, and Wolf Lake and in the Indiana Dunes region, this project will provide high-quality wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities in an urban setting. Chicago's Calumet Millennium Reserve Plan has slated over 4,000 acres to become part of the Calumet Millennium Reserve. The plan calls for extensive multi-use trails and other outdoor recreation opportunities in the metropolitan area. The City of Chicago continues to acquire environmentally important tracts of private land in the target area to become a state forest preserve or Chicago Park District natural area.

Potential Action: Coordinate with state and local entities to integrate the conservation, recreation, and restoration activities at Lake Calumet with Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Lake Michigan National Recreation Trail. Provide financial and technical support to acquire lands in the Calumet Millennium Reserve target area. Provide technical assistance to public agencies and nonprofit organizations to advance the project.

Partners: NPS, USGS, State of Illinois, City of Chicago, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources.



Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge

Landscape Conservation

Northeast Illinois

Project Description and Need: In 2010, the Governors, Senators, and Representatives of Wisconsin and Illinois requested a feasibility study for a potential new National Wildlife Refuge. The proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, on the western edge of the Chicago/Milwaukee metropolitan region, is now approaching final stages of planning within the FWS. Hackmatack's planned area encompasses over 60 public and private parks, preserves, and conservation areas whose natural ecosystems total about 23,000 acres and provide habitat for 109 species of concern, including 49 birds and 47 plants. The refuge would be the nucleus of disparate fragments of conserved land in a 350,000-acre study area, giving a cohesive picture of landscape-scale conservation. The refuge would also provide outdoor education opportunities to the estimated 3.5 million people within 30 miles of the project area. This includes hundreds of thousands of children and their families who otherwise lack ready access, with the next nearest Refuge 150 miles away. The state of Illinois has formally supported the plan. McHenry County, Illinois has expressed support for establishing the refuge and has open space conservation revenues that may be available to leverage protection of lands near the proposed refuge.

Potential Action: Establish Hackmatack as a National Wildlife Refuge. Work with state and local governments, private organizations, and landowners to expand the impact of the refuge through cooperative management of private and public lands. Continue coordination with the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to ensure that potential refuge conservation projects complement planning activities for parks and open space in southeast Wisconsin.

Partners: FWS, NPS, States of Illinois and Wisconsin, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners.

Indiana

Wabash River—Healthy Rivers Initiative

River Restoration

Central Indiana

Project Description and Need: The Wabash River is the largest undammed river east of the Mississippi. It forms the border between Illinois and Indiana for nearly 200 miles and has greatly diverse plant and animal life. The many creeks, streams, and rivers that feed the Wabash River have been ditched and tilled, significantly altering the natural flow of water. This contributes to more frequent and intense flooding from rainstorms. The June 2008 floods affected 1.4 million acres of Hoosier farmland, causing \$200 million in damages. Indiana is the second largest state source of phosphorus and nitrogen pollution in the Mississippi River system, which in turn contributes to the large dead zone (hypoxia) in the Gulf of Mexico. Six major stresses degrade the river: changes in natural water flow; high nutrient, herbicide, and insecticide levels; localized problems with pollution from cities; alteration of land adjoining the river; elimination of tree cover along the river; and invasive species. Strategic and science-based conservation and restoration action is needed, given the watershed's large size and the great complexity of the land it drains—from farmland and homes to cities and industrial sites.

Potential Action: Provide financial assistance to acquire strategic land parcels to provide flood relief to riparian land owners, protect critical threatened species and habitat, and provide a natural buffer and filter between agricultural fertilizers and the river. Work with public agencies and private landowners to expand investment that reduces runoff and creates wildlife habitat.

Partners: FWS, USGS, State of Indiana, The Nature Conservancy, and other stakeholders.



Indiana Dunes

Water Trail Access

Northwest Indiana

Project Description and Need: Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, in northwest Indiana, is managed by the NPS. It runs for nearly 25 miles along the southern shore of Lake Michigan, from Gary, Indiana to Michigan City, Indiana. The recently dedicated Lake Michigan Water Trail spans some 75 miles along the southern Lake Michigan shoreline from Chicago to New Buffalo, Michigan. The Water Trail increases public access to Lake Michigan shoreline and offers water-based recreation to more than nine million people. It provides otherwise inaccessible shoreline views, as well as exposure to unique ecological areas with rich, regionally characteristic biodiversity. Programs at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore introduce underserved populations of urban residents and youth to these special areas. For example, special-education and interpretive youth programs get young people out onto Lake Michigan in kayaks and canoes. The challenge now is to increase access to the Lakeshore's various public environmental education programs and facilities. One of the best ways to do this would be to extend the trail from Indiana Dunes to the Illinois border. This would not only create an additional amenity for Indiana citizens, but open up the opportunity to access a trail connection all the way to Chicago. Linking the Indiana Dunes more broadly to regional trails could also bring added economic benefits to the state of Indiana through increased recreation visits.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to increase local access to the National Lakeshore and to complete the trail from Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to the Illinois border.

Partners: NPS, State of Indiana, Save the Dunes, foundations, NW Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Lake Michigan Water Trail Association, Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association, and communities along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Iowa

Loess Hills

Rural Landscape Conservation and Recreation

Western Iowa

Project Description and Need: This 650,000-acre region is considered the best example of “loess” topography in the world, a rare geologic formation that provides habitat to 49 species of rare plants and animals. Hawks and other raptors are a common sight in this major migration corridor, and the area is also home to rare native prairie grasses that are quickly disappearing. The region also contains numerous cultural and historic landmarks. The Loess Hills National Scenic Byway, which runs through prairie, woodland, and farmland at the heart of the region, is one of the nation’s “10 most outstanding byways,” a reflection of the landscape’s natural beauty and scenic value. Thirty thousand acres of the Loess Hills are currently protected, mostly through conservation easements and inclusion in the Loess Hill State Forest. This area provides opportunities for youth engagement and recreation in seven counties. Furthermore, the Loess Hills area is within reach of Council Bluffs and Sioux City, the two urban areas in western Iowa and eastern South Dakota. A strong foundation for advancing this project has been laid with conservation organizations like the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to work with willing sellers of working lands to conserve the few remaining relatively undisturbed areas.

Potential Action: Provide financial support for strategic land protection, including acquisition of conservation easements on working lands. Explore the potential designation of the area as a national preserve. Provide technical and financial assistance to communities to better conserve and manage the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the Loess Hills.

Partners: NPS, State of Iowa, and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and other nonprofit organizations.



Southern Prairie Pothole National Wildlife Refuge

Wildlife Habitat Conservation

North Central Iowa

Project Description and Need: Glacially formed prairie potholes and their surrounding wetlands in north-central Iowa provide critical habitat for over 90 species of birds. They produce at least 50 percent of the North American continental duck population each year. This wetland landscape is also an important resource for flood control, water quality, and aquifer recharging. Iowa's Prairie Pothole region offers many outdoor recreation opportunities along the American Discovery Trail. To protect this unique landscape, the State of Iowa, local leaders, and nonprofit organizations seek to expand the existing Dunbar Slough/Willow Creek wetland complex by 5,000 acres and to establish the area as a National Wildlife Refuge. These partners also aim to develop a veteran-led youth conservation education pilot program.

In addition, this project would complement the Northern Plains Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative—a new NRCS initiative designed to enhance migratory bird habitat and improve the water quality and the health of grasslands in the Prairie Pothole Region of the Northern Plains. The Northern Plains Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative provides technical and financial assistance for restoring wetlands drained for agricultural uses, managing farmed wetlands in ways that reduce impacts on wildlife and water quality, and keeping unaltered wetlands in their current condition.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance in expanding the Dunbar Slough/Willow Creek Wetland Complex and designate the Southern Prairie Pothole National Wildlife Refuge.

Partners: FWS, NRCS, State of Iowa, national and local nonprofit organizations, and local government leaders.

Kansas

Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area

Rural Working Land Conservation

Eastern Kansas

Project Description and Need: Only three percent of the native-prairie grasslands that once stretched from Canada to Texas remain today. Establishing a new easement-based conservation area by working with key ranching community partners will protect up to 1.1 million acres of North America's last landscape-scale tallgrass prairie. The Flint Hills area is also an important part of the conservation and recreation agenda of the State of Kansas. Rolling prairies provide ample hiking, biking, river, and equestrian trails. The state has partnered with a variety of government and private organizations to secure over 70,000 acres of voluntary conservation easements in addition to 11,000 square miles that wind energy developers have agreed to conserve. The Flint Hills plan calls for construction of the Flint Hills Discovery Center in Manhattan, an education-focused visitor center for the NPS Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. The plan also calls for campsite and cabin improvements along the Flint Hills' trails, as well as development of a wetland-management plan to preserve crucial habitats. Kansas recognizes the importance of youth engagement and aims to create educational and interpretive opportunities throughout these facilities.

Potential Action: Establish a new easement-based conservation area; provide technical and financial assistance to the State of Kansas toward construction of the Flint Hills Discovery Center, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Visitor Center, and campsite improvements.

Partners: FWS, NPS, USGS, State of Kansas, and agricultural, recreation, and conservation organizations.



Kansas River Water Trail

Water Trail

Topeka, Kansas

Project Description and Need: The Kansas River, one of only three publicly navigable waterways in Kansas, flows for 170 miles through both urban areas and rural landscapes. The history of the Kansas River—sometimes locally known as the “Kaw”—includes significant events in the development and settling of the nation. Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery camped at the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers in 1804 and noted that the river was “navigable for 80 leagues.” The river valley provided a route for overland migration to California and Oregon. The United States military used the river route to establish Fort Riley and as a supply route between other frontier posts, like Fort Leavenworth. Significant riverside historic sites open for visitors include Fort Riley, The First Territorial Capital, Historic Lecompton, Topeka, Kaw Point Park in Kansas City, and the Kansas History Center. The Kansas River historically linked these sites.

The Kansas River is a unique natural resource for Kansas and provides an attractive regional recreational opportunity. Over two million people live in the various cities and towns along the river, from the Kansas City metro area west to Junction City. The designation and development of a “Kansas River Water Trail” is a high priority for the Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism, and would be the state’s first public water trail. Historically, the lack of river access sites has limited paddle sports in Kansas and forced people to travel to other states for these pursuits. Currently there are 17 developed public access points on the river and another under construction. Last year, Kaw River State Park opened to the public in Topeka. Even with these developments, there are gaps in desired access points, including one 37-mile segment, which is significantly more than the 10 to 15 miles required for day trips.

Potential Action: Designate the Kansas River Water Trail and provide financial and technical assistance to increase access to the river.

Partners: NPS, City of Topeka, State of Kansas, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Kentucky

Kentucky River Water Trail

Water Trail Extension

Lexington, Kentucky

Project Description and Need: The Bluewater Trails Program of Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources has designated 10 state water trails throughout the Commonwealth, including the Kentucky River Water Trail southeast of Lexington. A 19-mile section of the river was designated a State Water Trail and a National Recreation Trail on National Trails Day in 2011.

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Riverkeepers, and the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program are partnering to extend the water trail upstream with an eventual goal of a water trail along all 400 miles of the river. The water trail currently includes Pool 9 and will eventually reach Pool 14 in Lee County. The Commonwealth of Kentucky highlights this water trail as one of Kentucky's wild adventure tourism attractions.

Potential Action: Provide planning and technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Kentucky through RTCA to extend the Kentucky River Water Trail from Pool 10 to Pool 14. Designate this section as a National Water Trail. Provide financial support for the construction of boating infrastructure at access sites along the trail.

Partners: NPS, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, and Kentucky Riverkeepers.



Dawkins Line Rail-Trail

Trails

Eastern Kentucky

Project Description and Need: The proposed 36-mile-long Dawkins Line has the potential to become the Commonwealth of Kentucky's longest rail-trail, doubling the miles of rail-trail in the Commonwealth. This unused rail corridor stretches from West Van Lear in Johnson County, through Magoffin County, to Evanston in Breathitt County. It was named after the former Dawkins Lumber Company. This scenic, heavily wooded corridor features 35 trestle bridges and a pair of tunnels—the 662-foot-long Gun Creek Tunnel and the 1,555-foot-long Carver Tunnel.

The Commonwealth purchased the corridor from the R.J. Corman Railroad Group in spring 2011. Kentucky State Parks will manage the rail-trail and has some funds to develop the trail. Additional funds are needed to complete planning for the extension of the trail.

When completed, this rail-trail will bring tourism to Eastern Kentucky and provide invaluable recreational opportunities for residents in an area with a high rate of obesity, diabetes, and heart and vascular disease.

Potential Action: Provide planning and technical assistance through RTCA for the next phase of the Dawkins Line Rail-Trail.

Partners: NPS, Commonwealth of Kentucky, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Louisiana

Urban Waters Initiative

Urban Recreation Access

New Orleans, Louisiana

Project Description and Need: As one of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership's seven pilot locations, the City of New Orleans is collaborating with state agencies, local NGOs, and the federal government to revitalize and increase access to rivers, lakes, and streams in an area that has been damaged by recent natural disasters. Lake Pontchartrain, an estuary that connects to the Gulf of Mexico, continues to recover from lingering impacts of Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Spill. Notwithstanding these challenges, it has also become an important center for recreation and education opportunities. It covers over 630 square miles, serving six Louisiana parishes and 1.5 million people.

Urban residents rely on lakeshore access for important recreational opportunities. To that end, the Partnership is working on initiating the Lafitte Corridor Greenway, a multi-use recreational path that will link a network of parks, playgrounds, and community centers to the lake and to each other. Other Partnership projects include developing environmental and historical education programs on the area's ecology and maritime industry, improving water quality, rebuilding recreational facilities, and engaging local youth to design signage for completed projects. One specific project is the construction of a fishing pier in Big Branch National Wildlife Refuge. The pier will increase recreational opportunities and access for refuge visitors.

These efforts are community-generated and community-led, but they are supported by a wide variety of federal agencies and other partners.

Potential Action: Continue to provide technical and financial support for the Lafitte Corridor Greenway, construction of a fishing pier in Big Branch National Wildlife Refuge, and other projects through the Urban Waters Federal Partnership.

Partners: FWS, EPA, NPS, NOAA, USGS, USACE, City of New Orleans, and other conservation partners.

Restoration of Lake Pontchartrain Basin

Habitat Restoration

New Orleans, Louisiana Region

Project Description and Need: Over the past decade, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided recommendations and technical assistance regarding water quality and wetland restoration programs and projects in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. Using funds from the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, the FWS has also restored wetlands on Goose Point Marsh and on Big Branch National Wildlife Refuge. The next significant project in the Basin would create marshland in the Bayou Bonfouca, in St. Tammany Parish. Hydraulically dredged material from Lake Pontchartrain would be used to create and nourish 575 acres of marsh, providing valuable habitat. Crews will construct tidal creeks to provide tidal connectivity and access for marine organisms.

This project will create approximately 424 net acres over the 20-year project life. It is currently in the engineering and design phase and will require additional financial and technical assistance to be completed.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial support for Bayou Bonfouca Marsh Creation.

Partners: FWS and State of Louisiana.



Maine

Penobscot River Restoration Project

River Restoration

Central Maine

Project Description and Need: The Penobscot River and its tributaries flow from the North Woods through the heart of Maine into Penobscot Bay. Maine's largest watershed provides a critical link between fresh water and the sea and is also a valuable natural resource in energy production through hydroelectric dams. The Penobscot River Restoration Project (PRRP) is a landmark conservation effort to restore natural processes and ecological benefits to the watershed through dam removal.

As the result of a multi-party hydropower settlement agreement, the Penobscot River Restoration Trust purchased three dams owned by PPL Corporation, with plans to remove the Veazie and Great Works dams and to build a fish bypass at the Howland Project. This will restore hundreds of miles of migration and spawning habitat for 11 species of sea-run fish, including the endangered Atlantic salmon and shortnose sturgeon. This habitat includes the ancestral home and present-day reservation of the Penobscot Indian Nation, who will benefit both economically and culturally from the return of the fish. PPL will increase energy production at five existing sites on the river, so energy production levels will remain the same. PRRP has secured the permits necessary for dam decommissioning and removal. Great Works Dam removal is expected to begin in 2012, and removal of Veazie Dam will start in 2014. Although national, state, and local partners have raised \$25 million for the project, additional financial and technical resources are needed to complete the removal of both dams and to construct the fish by-pass. The project has a high priority for the FWS, which has invested \$2 million in the project in the past four years.

Potential Action: Continue to provide technical and financial assistance in support of the Penobscot River Restoration Project.

Partners: FWS, State of Maine, Penobscot River Restoration Trust, and Penobscot Indian Nation.

Keeping Maine's Forests

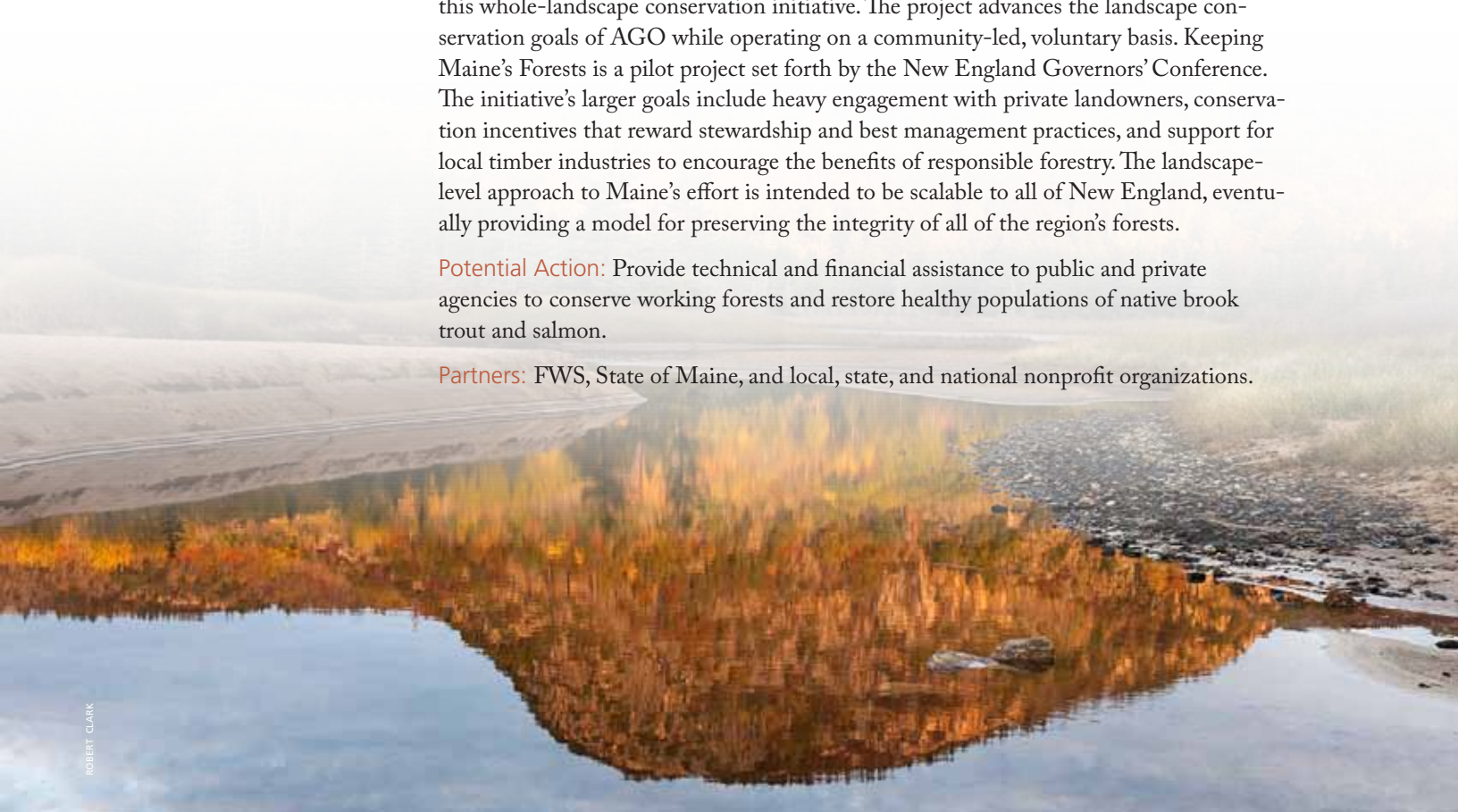
Landscape Conservation

Statewide

Project Description and Need: Keeping Maine's Forests is a partnership of forest landowners, recreationists, conservation and environmental organizations, and state and federal agencies working to demonstrate new ways of promoting forest stewardship. The group's goal is to enhance the forest-based economy in rural communities while preserving the wild, healthy nature of Maine's forests. Proposed pilot projects are already poised to have a significant impact on wildlife habitat across the state. The Downeast Project in eastern Maine builds on an existing base of conserved lands to protect white-tailed deer habitat and endangered Atlantic salmon rivers. In western Maine, the Western Mountains and Lakes Pilot Project will protect high-value recreation land central to the state's tourism industry. The project's holistic approach to forest conservation is advantageous for the entire state. Economics, recreation, and youth-engagement are the priorities in this whole-landscape conservation initiative. The project advances the landscape conservation goals of AGO while operating on a community-led, voluntary basis. Keeping Maine's Forests is a pilot project set forth by the New England Governors' Conference. The initiative's larger goals include heavy engagement with private landowners, conservation incentives that reward stewardship and best management practices, and support for local timber industries to encourage the benefits of responsible forestry. The landscape-level approach to Maine's effort is intended to be scalable to all of New England, eventually providing a model for preserving the integrity of all of the region's forests.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to public and private agencies to conserve working forests and restore healthy populations of native brook trout and salmon.

Partners: FWS, State of Maine, and local, state, and national nonprofit organizations.



Maryland

Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park

Historic Preservation

Eastern Shore, Maryland

Project Description and Need: The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park will trace Tubman's early life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where she was born, escaped from slavery, and then returned as one of the leaders of the Underground Railroad to lead others to freedom. In her later years, Tubman also recruited for the Union in the Civil War and was a nurse and spy. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources seeks to acquire four top-priority historic properties totaling 1,245 acres for the National Historical Park in Dorchester County. In addition to their connection with the Harriet Tubman story, these properties also fall within the boundary of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. The state has gathered all funding needed to construct the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, which will be jointly managed by the National Park Service and the Maryland State Park Service, should the park be designated by Congress.

Potential Action: Support designation of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park. Provide financial assistance for acquiring conservation easements for priority historic properties to enhance the historical park.

Partners: NPS, USFWS, and Maryland DNR.

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail National Blueway

Eastern Maryland – Chesapeake Bay Area

Project Description and Need: The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail follows the historic water routes of Smith's travels, based on his map and journals. The trail, which the NPS administers, includes some 3,000 miles in parts of present-day Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. It also connects with 16 National Wildlife Refuges, 12 National Park areas, and three National Trails. It offers opportunities for tourism, environmental and cultural education, conservation, and recreation. The multi-dimensional nature of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail makes it a model for a new system of National Blueways.

As a major partner with NPS, the State of Maryland is developing a comprehensive interpretive and trails plan for 4,600 acres of historic and ecologically significant lands (the recently acquired Maryland Province Properties). This land links the Captain John Smith Trail to the founding of Maryland, integrating cultural history with ecological protection and providing citizens access to unique natural areas. The plan will call for additional investment in land, restoration, historic preservation, recreation, and interpretation of the cultural and natural resources.

Potential Action: Support implementing the Captain John Smith National Historic Trail plan through investments in land, restoration, preservation, recreation, and interpretation. Designate the entire multi-state trail as a National Blueway.

Partners: NPS, BLM, and State of Maryland, with the support of several national and local entities, including The Conservation Fund.



Massachusetts

Blackstone River Valley Greenway

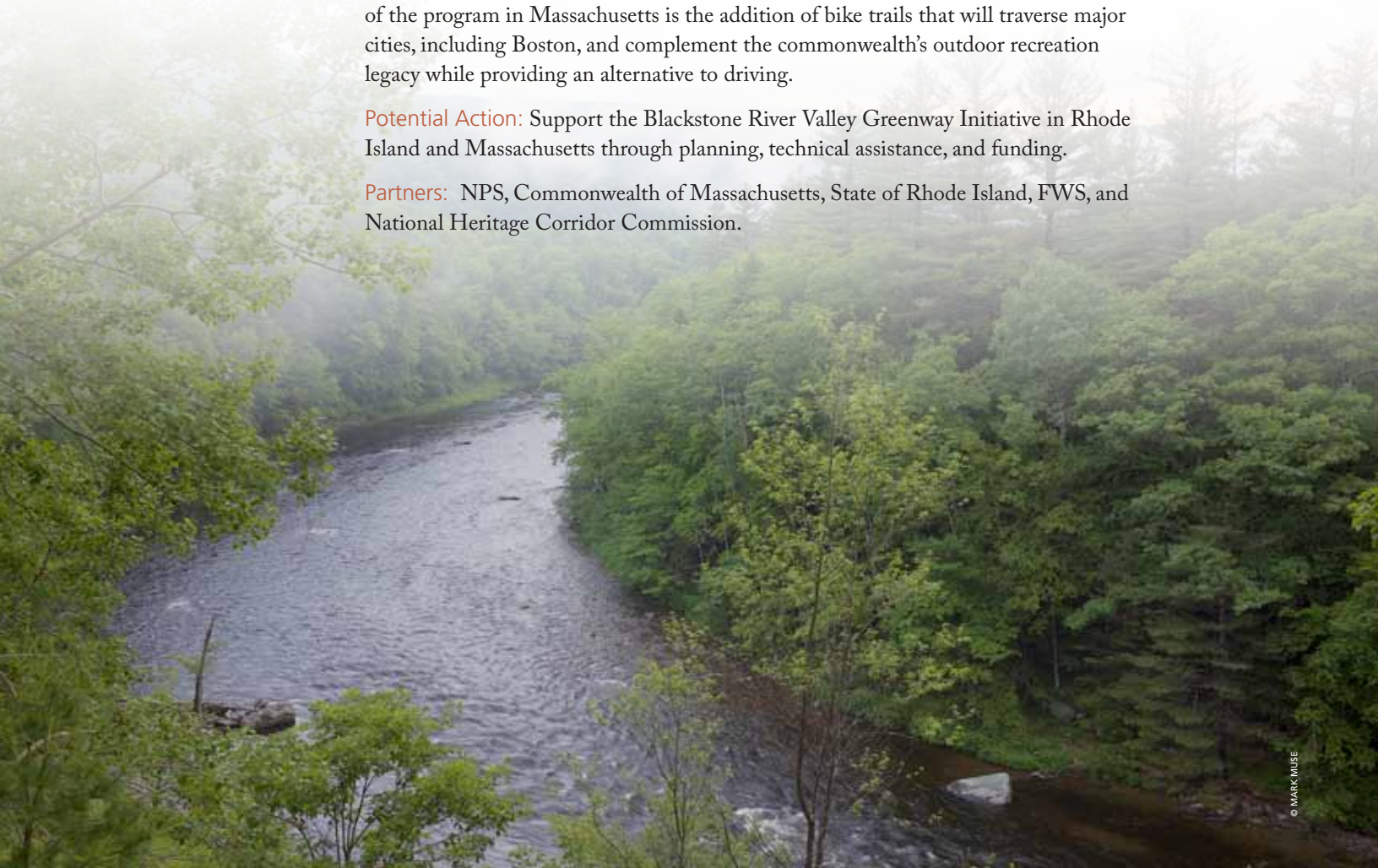
Recreation Trails

Central Massachusetts - East Coast

Project Description and Need: Massachusetts and Rhode Island have committed to work as partners to complete the Blackstone River Valley Greenway, which consists of the Blackstone River, historic Blackstone Canal, and a bike path. The Greenway runs the length of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, which extends from Worcester, Massachusetts, to Providence, Rhode Island. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is currently constructing a segment of the 50-mile bi-state greenway to connect these New England cities and link the Rhode Island border to the State Heritage Park in Uxbridge, Massachusetts. A major facet of the program in Massachusetts is the addition of bike trails that will traverse major cities, including Boston, and complement the commonwealth's outdoor recreation legacy while providing an alternative to driving.

Potential Action: Support the Blackstone River Valley Greenway Initiative in Rhode Island and Massachusetts through planning, technical assistance, and funding.

Partners: NPS, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, State of Rhode Island, FWS, and National Heritage Corridor Commission.



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Connecticut River

National Blueway

Western Massachusetts

Project Description and Need: Over the course of the Connecticut River's 410-mile journey from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound, the river ties together four New England states—Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. The river is the centerpiece of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, which encompasses the entire watershed. The FWS has invested in land conservation and habitat restoration activities throughout the watershed and is beginning to work with the states and other stakeholders in integrating the Refuge into a broader National Blueway project.

There are many communities in Massachusetts for whom the Connecticut River has been their lifeblood for commerce and recreation. Springfield, the major urban area in western Massachusetts that lies along the Connecticut River, is one of many communities needing more access points to and from the river to bring citizens to the waterway. Establishing a National Blueway will help to raise awareness of the river's recreational and natural resources and reconnect people to the water.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to the state and communities to develop access points along the river. Once the water trail is established in areas along the river, designate those portions of the Connecticut River in Massachusetts as a National Blueway.

Partners: USFWS, NPS, local and state agencies in Massachusetts, and Friends of Conte Refuge and other nonprofit organizations.

Michigan

Detroit River

Urban Park

Detroit, Michigan

Project Description and Need: The Detroit River goes along the U. S.-Canadian border and divides the major metropolitan areas of Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario, winding through an area home to 5.7 million people. This 32-mile long American Heritage River is an important natural resource amidst an urban environment. It offers outdoor recreation and wildlife access that local residents would not otherwise have. The Detroit River Restoration Project will connect parks throughout the riparian corridor via trails and an extended boardwalk, providing improved land-based recreational opportunities that will benefit underserved minority populations. In addition, the project aims to reopen the city's only access point for fishing and boating. The Detroit River Restoration Project will also focus on improving public access to the river and reestablishing water-based recreation in this area.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to improve access to the Detroit River and complete trail projects.

Partners: NPS, FWS, City of Detroit, State of Michigan, and other local and state partners.



Detroit River Restoration

River Restoration / Youth Engagement

Detroit, Michigan

Project Description and Need: The City of Detroit plans to engage youth, particularly in underserved minority communities, to help with waterfront and river restoration work. The Detroit River, which the State of Michigan identified as a critical place for restoration and improved access, provides the opportunity for employing underserved youth in communities near the river through the hiring of the local youth conservation corps.

This project would foster urban youth's appreciation of the Detroit River and help establish a new generation of river caretakers. Conservation jobs for young people provide them with real-world employment experience that prepares them to enter the job market. Through conservation work on the river, these young people may be inspired to consider jobs in natural resource conservation and recreation management. In addition, youth employment opportunities would build the capacity of the youth corps organizations in the region.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial support to engage youth on river restoration of the Detroit River.

Partners: NPS, FWS, City of Detroit, Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps, SCA, State of Michigan, and other local partners.

Minnesota

Upper Minnesota River Watershed

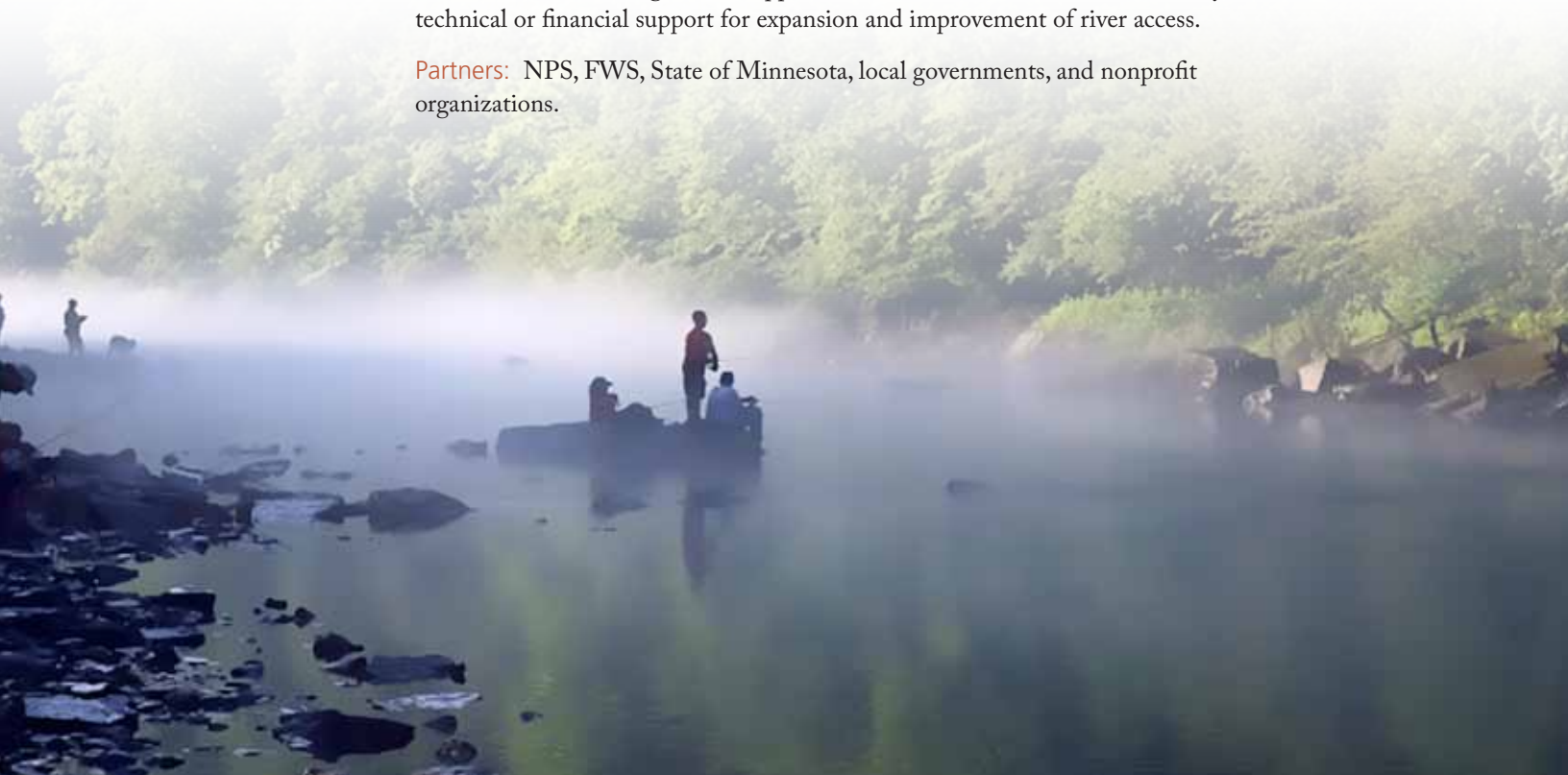
National Blueway, Restoration and Access

Southwestern and South Central Minnesota

Project Description and Need: The 335-mile-long Minnesota River flows through an agricultural watershed that encompasses 20 percent of the state. The upper Minnesota River Valley corridor has a high density of county and state parks, wildlife or aquatic management areas, natural areas, and a National Wildlife Refuge, Wild and Scenic River, National Scenic Byway, and Minnesota Water Trail. This corridor also has a rich natural and cultural history of regional and national significance. The area is a focus of numerous partnerships—between local governments, citizens, nonprofit organizations, and state and federal agencies—to plan and implement programs to connect people to the river. Supporting the expansion of the infrastructure in parks and trails along the river is a key component of this project that will help connect more people to the river. The Upper Minnesota Watershed project furthers AGO goals through the protection of additional critical natural areas for wildlife migration and expanding and improving access to the river for public use and enjoyment.

Potential Action: Designate the upper Minnesota River as a National Blueway. Provide technical or financial support for expansion and improvement of river access.

Partners: NPS, FWS, State of Minnesota, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.



Twin Cities Parks: Mississippi National River & Recreation Area

Urban Park and National Blueway

Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota Region

Project Description and Need: The confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers in the Twin Cities is an area of immense importance for conservation and recreation by virtue of the tremendous water, geologic, vegetative, and cultural resources there. The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, managed by the National Park Service, includes 72 miles of the Mississippi River stretching from the cities of Dayton/Ramsey through the heart of Minneapolis/St. Paul. State agencies, the NPS, Army Corps of Engineers, FWS, and many local governments and nongovernmental organizations have a presence along the river in this area. This area has potential for accelerated work that supports the goals of America's Great Outdoors to increase recreational access in an urban area, restore the natural systems, and engage young people and communities of color in activities along the river. Fort Snelling State Park and its historic and cultural resources could also be better integrated into the river experience. Partners believe that the federal government needs to take a leadership role in coordinating the restoration and management of, and increased access to the Mississippi River upstream, through, and downstream of the Twin Cities. Designating the Mississippi River in this region as a National Blueway could also benefit the region by helping to attract more tourists.

Potential Action: Create a Mississippi River recreation and wildlife coordinating body to maximize local, state, federal, and private partners' restoration, recreation, and education accomplishments. Designate the Mississippi River in this region as a National Blueway.

Partners: NPS, FWS, USACE, State of Minnesota, and other stakeholders.

Mississippi

Mississippi Coastal Heritage Trail

Recreational Trails

Coastal Counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson, Mississippi

Project Description and Need: The Mississippi Coastal Heritage Trail provides vital bikeway, water trail, and walking trail connections between people and destinations including Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Gulfport, Biloxi, Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, and Moss Point.

Through the leadership of the Gulf Coast Heritage Trails Partnership, local planners are working together to provide the public with quality recreation areas while protecting sensitive coastal habitat. The culturally rich area along the trail corridor includes Bay of Biloxi's fishing community and Turkey Creek's historical African American settlement.

With collaborative leadership by the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, local and regional planners have achieved a common vision of trail connectivity throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast that will eventually network throughout the State of Mississippi and the Southeast.

While planning for and providing a network connecting many recreation sites, waterways, islands, and forests, the opportunity also exists to provide conservation education to area residents and visitors. Building stewards who will protect the magnificent natural, cultural, and historical resources of the Mississippi Gulf Coast is critical to maintaining this area's integrity.

Potential action: Designate the Mississippi Coastal Heritage Trail as a National Historic Trail. Provide technical or financial support to expand and improve trail access and promotion.

Partners: NPS, State of Mississippi, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.



Pascagoula River National Blueway

National Blueway, Restoration, and Access

Southern Mississippi Region

Project Description and Need: The Pascagoula River is widely recognized as the last free-flowing river system in the contiguous United States. It also lies within the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. The 164-mile-long basin covers 9,600 square miles of southeast Mississippi and a portion of southwest Alabama. The basin features over 15,000 stream miles as well as key wetland habitats, including extensive hardwood bottomlands, river swamps, and extensive tidal marshes and swamps near the river mouth.

Upland habitats across the basin include the longleaf and southern mixed hardwood forest and a number of unique relict dune systems. These natural areas offer endless high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities. Although many of the public sites support recreational activities, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 destroyed much of the existing infrastructure. These communities need assistance in rebuilding recreational facilities and attracting recreational enthusiasts to their region.

Potential Action: Designate the Pascagoula River as a National Blueway. Provide technical assistance for restoration of the river and increasing recreation access.

Partners: NPS, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.



Missouri

Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Revitalization Urban Park

St. Louis, Missouri

Project Description and Need: Plans are underway to revitalize the NPS Jefferson National Expansion Memorial by improving connections to the city and expanding programming, facilities, and partnerships to enhance the visitor experience. Connecting the Arch with the Dred Scott Courthouse would link the National Park System area with downtown St. Louis. This would form a larger urban park, providing increased opportunities for outdoor recreation, and inviting more people to fully enjoy the natural beauty, culture, and history of the area. The CityArchRiver2015 project (CAR2015) is building a foundation for expansion into East St. Louis, Illinois, eventually to provide green space in an urban area by breaking down long-standing cultural and economic barriers of accessing safe and convenient parkland and trails. The CAR2015 project will also partner with Great Rivers Greenway and Mounds Heritage Trail to launch a comprehensive regional trail system.

Potential Action: Work with federal, state, and local agencies, Congress, and the private sector to secure financing to realize the vision of connecting the Arch with the Dred Scott Courthouse. Provide technical assistance to public and private entities to continue the project's positive momentum.

Partners: NPS, Great Rivers Greenway, City of St. Louis, CAR2015 Foundation, Bi-State Transit Authority, Missouri and Illinois Departments of Transportation, USACE, East-West Gateway MPO, and many other organizations and individuals.

Ozark Trail

Trail Development

Southwest of St. Louis, Missouri

Project Description and Need: A major conservation opportunity in Missouri is the completion of the Ozark Trail. Expanding the existing Ozark Trail in Missouri to the Ozark Highland Trail in Arkansas will enable hikers to walk over 800 miles from Arkansas to St. Louis. The majority of the existing Ozark Trail is southwest of St. Louis in numerous state parks and the Mark Twain National Forest. A major portion was recognized as a National Recreational Trail by the U.S. Forest Service in 2008. The long-term plan is to extend the Ozark trail system from its current reach north to downtown St. Louis through the southwest suburbs and then to the Ozark Mountains. This plan will require acquisition of conservation/recreation easements and trail construction to complete the 108-mile northern section and 125-mile southern section.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance for acquiring small land parcels and building the trail to complete gaps in the Ozark Trail.

Partners: NPS, State of Missouri, and nonprofit organizations.



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Montana

Crown of the Continent

Landscape-scale Conservation / Conserve Rural Working Lands
Northwest to North Central Montana

Project Description and Need: From the North Fork of the Flathead, through the Swan Valley and Blackfoot Valley over to the Rocky Mountain Front, the proposed Crown of the Continent Conservation Area possesses largely intact ecosystems and a strong cultural identity. Public-private partnerships are making significant progress in preserving one of the premier mountain ecoregions in the world. Approximately 40 percent of the area is protected public land, with the remainder in private ownership. Project areas with mosaics of private and public ownership are under the greatest threat from fragmentation and are in most need of conservation protection. Strategic use of conservation easements can link together existing protected areas to preserve wildlife corridors and significant habitat while protecting and preserving the ranching culture that has fostered responsible stewardship of this incredible ecosystem for generations.

Potential Action: Support the acquisition of conservation easements from willing sellers in the Swan Valley, Blackfoot River Valley, and Rocky Mountain Front, in cooperation with partners.

Partners: FWS, BLM, NPS, USFS, private landowners, and local and national organizations.

Fort Missoula Regional Park

Urban Park
Missoula, Montana

Project Description and Need: The Fort Missoula Regional Park plan will preserve open views, provide the community with outdoor sporting event facilities, improve public transportation accessibility, improve access to a cultural heritage center, and install interpretive signage on an expanded 246-acre park plot. Three miles of trails, a 26-acre natural area, fishing ponds, connectivity to regional attractions, and access to the Bitterroot River will all attract tourists to the area and bolster the local economy. The park's current 60-acre plot is an important asset to local schools, which use the fields for recreation and team practice.

Potential Action: Provide financial and technical assistance for the expansion of the park, construction of a cultural heritage center, and improvements to public access on the Bitterroot River.

Partners: NPS, Missoula Parks and Recreation Department, nongovernmental organizations, and local stakeholders.

Nebraska

Platte River Recovery Implementation Program

River Restoration

Central Nebraska

Project Description and Need: The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program is a basin-wide effort by DOI and the states of Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming to manage the Platte River, whose waters support multiple uses. The long-term objective is to use incentive-based water projects to provide sufficient water to and through the central Platte River to improve and maintain habitat for target species. Platte River habitat is essential to the recovery of the whooping crane, interior least tern, piping plover, and pallid sturgeon, all threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The program provides measures to help recover these species, thereby providing ESA compliance for existing water projects and certain new water projects in the Platte River Basin. The program has three main elements: (1) increasing stream flows in the central Platte River during relevant time periods through retiming and water conservation/supply projects; (2) enhancing, restoring and protecting habitat for target bird species; and (3) accommodating new water-related activities. Top priorities for Nebraska include increasing streamflow during relevant periods and making certain areas accessible to the public for recreation purposes.

Potential Action: Improve river flow for species recovery and provide financial support for habitat protection and recreation access.

Partners: BOR, USGS, and State of Nebraska.



Platte River Access

River Access

Central Nebraska

Project Description and Need: The Platte River in Nebraska drains a large part of the central Great Plains and eastern Rocky Mountains and is a significant river system in the Missouri River watershed. The States of Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming have partnered with DOI on the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP) to manage the river's multiple uses. The long-term objective is to use incentive-based water projects to provide sufficient water to and through the central Platte River habitat area to improve and maintain habitat for target species. To this end, it has acquired approximately 8,600 acres of habitat through sponsorship agreements, purchases, leases, or perpetual easements from willing sellers and partners.

This land is now also part of the Platte River Recreation Access (PRRA) program, a part of PRRIP that allows the public to access riverside habitat for recreational use, while still protecting targeted species. Currently, PRRA lands are open for limited activities in certain periods of the year. Deer and turkey hunting, fishing, bird watching, mushroom gathering, and hiking are permitted in winter and early fall, with certain times blocked out for migration season to protect native birds. At other times, only certain PRRA properties are open for recreational activities. With this initial limited-use policy PRRA is taking steps both to ensure continued conservation of habitat along the Platte River and to allow people to take advantage of the wildlife-rich open space. Eventually, people will be able to reserve access to the land through an online system.

Additional access and access improvements will allow for this program to expand and serve more people drawn to this landscape.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to support continuation and expansion of the PRRA program.

Partners: Bureau of Reclamation, FWS, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and partners.

Nevada

Lorenzi Park Renovation

Urban Park

Las Vegas

Project Description and Need: Lorenzi Park, built in 1921 in central Las Vegas, is one of the oldest parks in the city. Its 90 acres provide close-to-home recreational opportunities to thousands of residents in the Las Vegas area, and the park has received support from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act. With a walking path, playgrounds, and picnic facilities, the park is an important center for outdoor recreation in the community. The Sammy Davis Jr. Festival Plaza on the park's western side is an important community gathering area that hosts social and cultural events like the Las Vegas Festival Blues Festival, comedy shows, and a Filipino heritage celebration. Some park renovation has occurred since 2007, but more funds are needed to restore the lake shoreline, complete the landscaping, and upgrade other park amenities. When completed, the park will again be a major magnet in Las Vegas for families to enjoy the outdoors.

Potential Action: Provide additional SNPLMA funding to Las Vegas to complete phase II of the project.

Partners: BLM and City of Las Vegas.



Colorado River Heritage Greenway Park and Trails

Trails

Clark County

Project Description and Need: In 2000, the Bureau of Reclamation identified project lands in the Laughlin, Nevada and Bullhead City, Arizona area compatible for recreation use. Clark County, Bureau of Reclamation, and the NPS developed a proposal to restore the riverfront and plant native vegetation from the toe of Davis Dam to the townsite of Laughlin. As part of a larger effort, the BOR cooperatively developed a plan for a loop trail from Davis Dam to the Mojave River Indian Reservation and returning to Davis Dam on the Arizona side of the river. The project's first phase will be completed in February 2012. The project includes building 5.25 miles of trails, day-use areas, picnic sites, shade shelters, fishing piers, equestrian facilities, and a highway bridge overpass and underpass, and providing access to the Colorado River. The first phase of construction, totaling \$23,819,480, was funded by the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) along with \$2 million more from Clark County.

Clark County, BOR, and NPS will work on completing part of the trails system to finish a seven-mile loop and short interpretive trail. To complete both trails, part of the original concept for the entire Regional Park, will require more funding and matching in-kind support. This collaborative work will use agency staff and Youth Conservation Corps crews to meet trail and project construction goals.

Potential Action: Complete the seven-mile trail segment. Provide financial and technical support to hire a youth crew to complete two trail segments. Support the NPS Exotic Plant Management Team crew to eradicate invasive species.

Partners: NPS, BLM, BOR, and Clark County.

New Hampshire

Northern Forest

Landscape-scale Conservation / Conservation of Rural Working Lands
Northern New Hampshire

Project Description and Need: The Northern Forest covers some 30 million acres across New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, and New York. Its forests are diverse, ranging from the extensive broadleaf deciduous and mixed forests to montane and lowland spruce-fir and low-elevation forests of oak, pine, and hickory. Forests help define the region's character and are integral to its economy.

Federal partners have made notable investments in recent years through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Forest Legacy Program. Public-private conservation has enabled significant conservation in this region—conserved lands have increased from 4.3 million acres in 1997 to over 6.5 million acres today. Many opportunities remain to ensure that this largest remaining contiguous forest east of the Mississippi River continues to provide the products, outdoor recreation, and wildlife benefits that communities will continue to rely on for generations to come. In particular, conservation of land in and around national wildlife refuges in the region can contribute to the region's economic and ecological integrity. This project supports the AGO priorities of large landscape conservation and conservation of rural working lands.

Potential Action: Provide financial support to acquire land and conservation easements at Umbagog (Androscoggin River headwaters) and Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Mascoma River headwaters).

Partners: FWS and Friends of Conte Refuge.



Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Increasing Wildlife Habitat

Northern New Hampshire

Project Description and Need: The Connecticut River, New England's largest, flows 410 miles from its source at New Hampshire's northern tip to its mouth on Long Island Sound. Along the way the river drains a 7.2-million-acre watershed in four states: New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Federal areas include Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the only multi-state watershed unit in the National Wildlife Refuge System. To date, the Conte Refuge has protected 35,134 acres of land in targeted areas in all four states, including 7,400 acres in the Mohawk River and Pondicherry Divisions of northern New Hampshire. The Forest Legacy Program has also been a critical contributor to protecting land in the Connecticut Valley through working forest-conservation easements, most notably the 171,000-acre Connecticut Lakes project in New Hampshire, which protects the river's headwaters. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail traverses the Connecticut Valley, and NPS has acquired land and scenic easements along the trail corridor. NPS also manages the 150-acre Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish. The Connecticut Valley boasts many state, local, and private conservation lands, including Pisgah, New Hampshire's largest state park, and the 25,000-acre Connecticut Lakes Natural Area. Besides land protection, other efforts like the Fifteen-Mile Falls Mitigation and Enhancement Fund support local projects to restore the river and protect wetlands and shorelands.

Potential Actions: Provide funding for a New Hampshire project in the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge to promote connectivity in the Connecticut River watershed and Northern Forest. Designate parts of the Connecticut River in New Hampshire as a National Water Trail.

Partners: NPS, FWS, Friends of Conte Refuge, and State of New Hampshire.

New Jersey

Barnegat Bay

Landscape Preservation and Recreation

Central Eastern Shore

Project Description and Need: Landscape preservation in the Barnegat Bay watershed is part of a comprehensive effort to restore the coast of the nation's most densely populated state, New Jersey. As a point of access to nature for so many residents, Barnegat Bay has significant recreational value. A longtime center for commercial fishing, the bay is also popular with recreational boaters and holds great potential for further ecotourism. It is also close to a number of state parks containing valuable ecosystems and wildlife habitat. Increased public access along New Jersey's waterways is therefore a significant state interest, as it will allow residents increased environmental and recreational opportunities. To achieve this, the state has placed a priority on acquiring 18 parcels totaling 1,019 acres as valuable additions to Double Trouble and Bass River state parks, as well as to Colliers Mills and Turkey Swamp wildlife management areas. These lands will provide increased public access to recreation opportunities along New Jersey's waterways and wildlife management areas. These efforts will also improve the bay's health, further complementing AGO goals.

Potential Action: Provide financial assistance for critical land acquisition near Double Trouble and Bass River state parks and Colliers Mills and Turkey Swamp wildlife management areas.

Partners: FWS, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Barnegat Bay

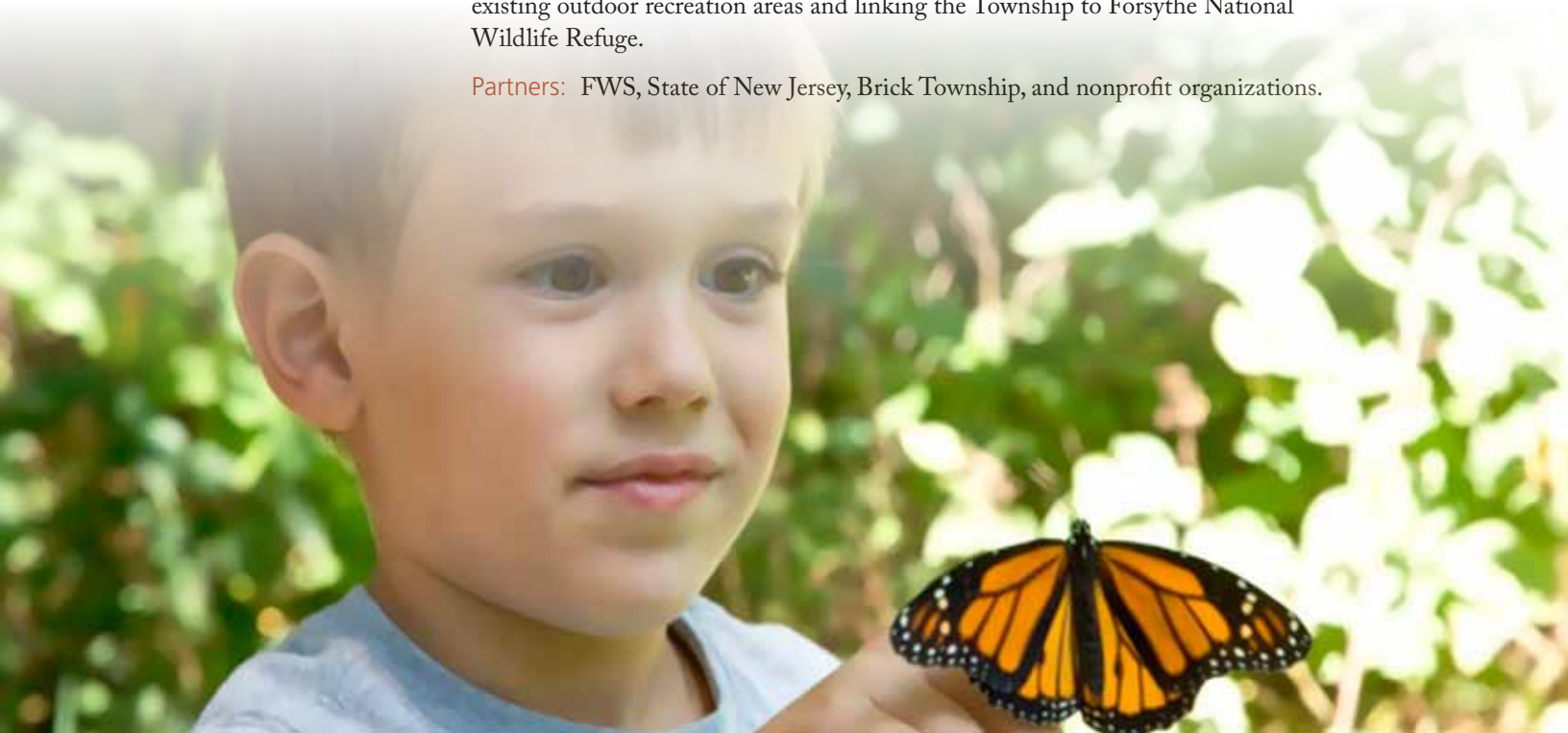
Water Access

Brick Township, New Jersey – Eastern Shore

Project Description and Need: Set along Barnegat Bay, Brick Township is a community of nearly 79,000 people. The State of New Jersey has designated it as an Urban Aid Community, indicating that it is a low-income, high-population center in need of state funds for further support and development. Barnegat Bay is a vitally important natural, recreational, and economic resource for New Jersey and is a state priority. The township is acquiring a 21-acre property for a park and recreation area that will provide much-needed public waterfront access and outdoor-recreation opportunities on the bay, as well as a link to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. The township has proposed improvements that include a boardwalk promenade along the bay, a kayak/canoe launch, a playground, a water-play area, and landscaping. These enhancements should be done with an environmentally friendly design to reduce storm water entering the Bay, which also presents an opportunity to educate users about storm water impacts on natural resources. This project supports AGO goals by increasing recreational access and providing close-to-home open spaces for underserved communities.

Potential Action: Provide financial assistance for creating new and enhancing existing outdoor recreation areas and linking the Township to Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

Partners: FWS, State of New Jersey, Brick Township, and nonprofit organizations.



New Mexico

Price's Dairy

Urban Wildlife Refuge

Albuquerque

Project Description and Need: Price's Dairy is in the South Valley of Albuquerque, New Mexico, five miles south of downtown, on North America's second largest river, the Rio Grande. At 570 acres, this former dairy is one of the largest remaining farms in the Middle Rio Grande Valley and the largest agricultural property in the Albuquerque metro region. The City of Albuquerque is among the fastest growing urban areas in the United States. Its development footprint contributes to a loss of history and culture and significantly stresses the natural resources of the valley and Rio Grande.

The property's size and location has made it the target of various development schemes as well as efforts by various federal, state, and local agencies to preserve and protect it. The Secretary of the Interior recently announced that a proposed urban National Wildlife Refuge in this location has been approved. Protecting the property as a refuge will greatly bolster environmental education for students and provide a gateway to the larger regional NWR system. It would also protect the property's natural-resource values that would be lost through development. Also, because of its significant water rights, protecting this property would add to the health and vitality of the adjacent Rio Grande, which struggles not only to support the people who depend on it for water but the wildlife living in and around it.

As one of the last undeveloped parcels along the Rio Grande, Price's Dairy is an important refuge and waypoint for migratory birds like sandhill cranes, Arctic geese, and varied duck species, migrating along the river from summer-breeding grounds in the North to wintering havens in the South. While supporting this critical flyway, the river corridor also provides an opportunity for hiking and biking along the state-planned Rio Grande Trail.

Potential Action: Establish an urban Middle Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge.

Partners: FWS, BOR, State of New Mexico, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, nonprofit organizations, and private sector interests.

Aztec Ruins National Monument

Trails

Northwestern New Mexico

Project Description and Need: Ancestral Pueblo structures dating back to the 11th century offer historical insight and educational opportunities within close reach of the town of Aztec, New Mexico. The Aztec Ruins General Management Plan calls for collaboration with the city on a joint trail system to connect the monument and town via a pedestrian bridge across the Animas River. This increased access would further connect local residents to their nearby history, enhancing public engagement and enjoyment. The monument has already begun to collaborate with state, federal, and local agencies to create the trail and bridge. Using a National Park Foundation grant and a technical assistance grant from RTCA, strategic planning is well underway. The city has collaborated with the New Mexico Department of Transportation on bridge construction, and the monument is making appropriate adjustments to pedestrian traffic and river corridor access in preparation for the bridge. However, the project still requires a significant amount of planning and funding before it can be completed.

Potential Action: Provide funding and technical assistance for building a bridge and trail to Aztec Ruins National Monument.

Partners: NPS, Los Alamos County, and Jemez Mountain National Scenic Byway.



New York

Harlem River/Roberto Clemente State Park

River Access and Restoration

The Bronx, New York

Project Description and Need: Roberto Clemente Park is in the middle of a developing greenway along the Harlem River. The state-run park serves an economically challenged community—including a low-income apartment building with 3,000 residents on the park border—and hosts over one million visitors annually. Unfortunately, there is no public access to the Bronx side of the Harlem River because the only historic access in the park to the river is closed. Many park facilities—fields, docks, boat launches, and trails—need significant upgrades. Specific capital needs at the park include acquiring access to the riverfront, developing and improving park facilities, and building trail connections to the New York City greenway system.

The Harlem River is also a pilot site for the Urban Waters Federal Partnership. The partnership aims to support river restoration in seven U.S. cities. On the Harlem River, NPS, FWS, ACE, EPA, and USDA are assessing ways to both restore the river and increase public access to it.

The state and New York City would like to partner with the federal government on this project to: (1) connect the park to a waterfront greenway and to the historic High Bridge. The High Bridge project would restore the connection between the Bronx and Manhattan for cyclist and pedestrians; (2) work with USDA to develop urban gardens; (3) work with EPA to implement stormwater management infrastructure; and (4) expand opportunities for neighborhood youth to engage in outdoor activities and learn about the outdoors.

Potential Actions: Provide technical and financial support for project elements related to river access and restoration, youth engagement, trail development, and open space acquisition. Engage other federal agencies on urban gardens and storm water management.

Partners: State of New York, New York City, NPS, Harlem River Alliance, EPA, HUD, USFS, and FWS.

Finger Lakes Trail and Water Access Improvements

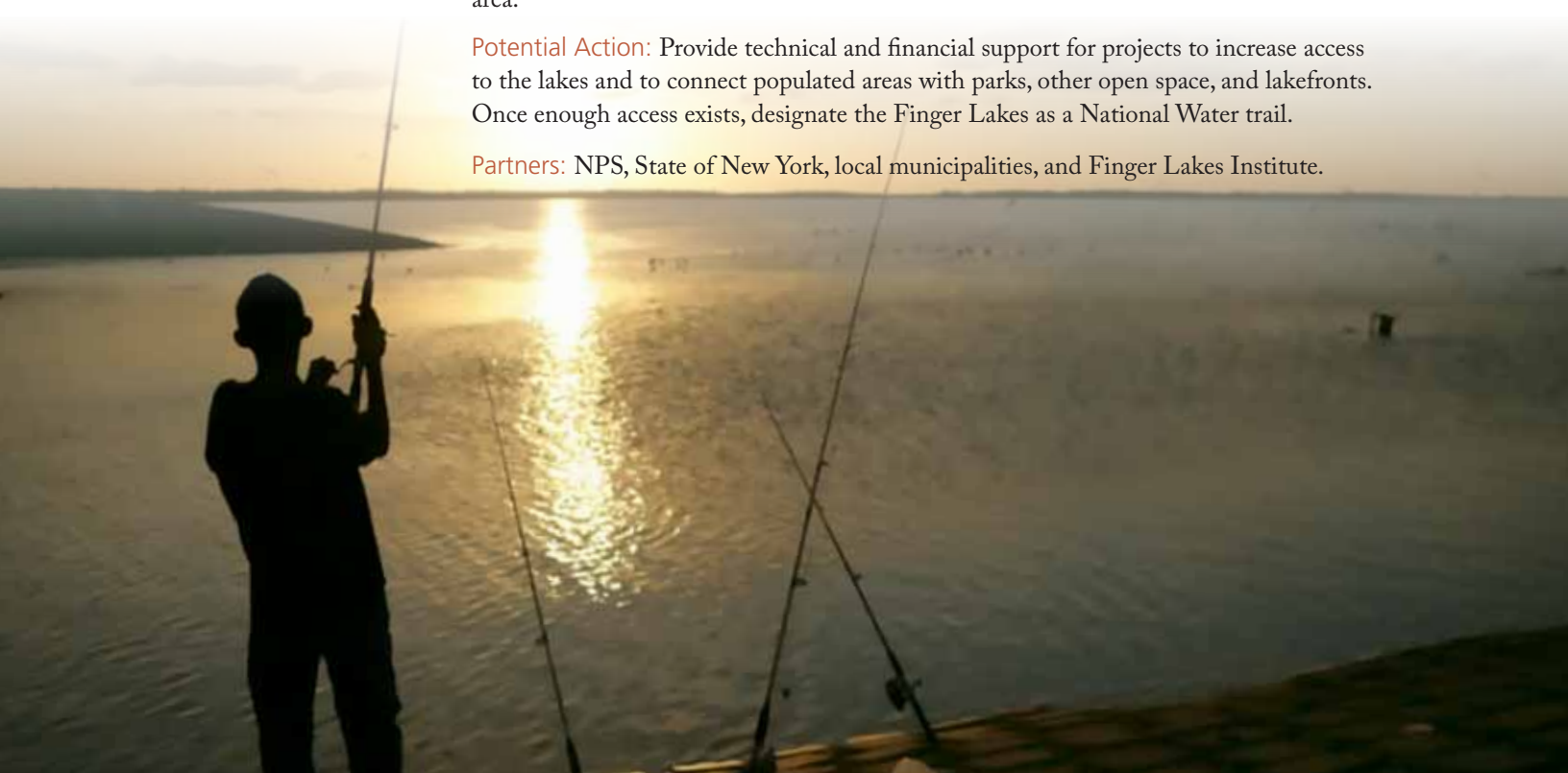
Water Trail

Upstate New York

Project Description and Need: New York's Finger Lakes are in west-central upstate New York and include 11 bodies of water. Cayuga Lake and Seneca Lake—the two longest lakes—are among the deepest in America. The lakes are nationally recognized as a unique natural and cultural resource. The lakes and land surrounding them are also a significant open-space resource next to and accessible from major upstate New York metropolitan areas—Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany. Annually, the lakes receive up to five million tourists, who spend some \$90 million on hunting, fishing, birding, and recreation. The NPS Erie Canalway National Heritage Area at Seneca Lake and the FWS Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge are important federal holdings in the area. Because only a small part of the lakes is accessible to the public, many local governments would like to develop more recreational access points. Skaneateles Lake, (another of the Finger Lakes), for example, has only one public-access site that allows swimming along the 32 miles of lake shoreline. Once more access points were established, creating a water trail along the Finger Lakes would attract more people to water-based recreation in the area.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial support for projects to increase access to the lakes and to connect populated areas with parks, other open space, and lakefronts. Once enough access exists, designate the Finger Lakes as a National Water trail.

Partners: NPS, State of New York, local municipalities, and Finger Lakes Institute.



North Carolina

Waccamaw River National Blueway

National Blueway

Southeastern North Carolina

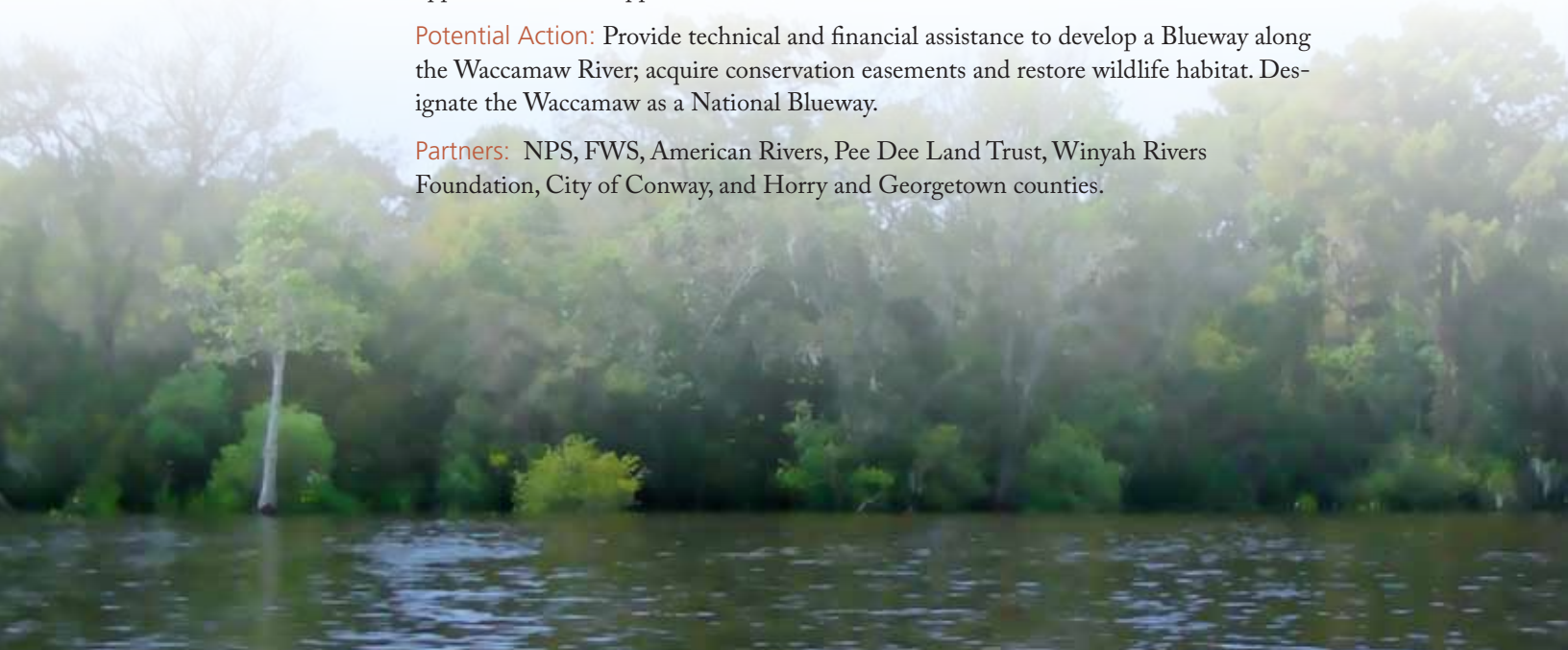
Project Description and Need: Creating a National Blueway along the Waccamaw River in North Carolina would preserve critical floodplain, protect an important wildlife-migration corridor, provide many recreational opportunities, and support new adventure-tourism businesses. Linked with the Waccamaw River Blue Trail in South Carolina, the National Blueway would create a two-state water trail from its source at Lake Waccamaw in North Carolina to Winyah Bay in South Carolina.

The 60,000-acre Waccamaw River floodplain in southeastern North Carolina stretches south to the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina, as one of the largest contiguous wildlife habitats in the southern coastal plain. Significant features include three endemic natural communities, one endemic plant, and 11 endemic animals, including the federally listed Waccamaw silverside, Waccamaw darter, and Waccamaw killifish. These three fish exist only in Lake Waccamaw or the Waccamaw River.

The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission have identified this corridor as a top state conservation priority for 20 years. Two counties along the corridor, Brunswick and Columbus, have expressed support for the Waccamaw River Blueway, which can provide multiple recreation opportunities and support new businesses.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to develop a Blueway along the Waccamaw River; acquire conservation easements and restore wildlife habitat. Designate the Waccamaw as a National Blueway.

Partners: NPS, FWS, American Rivers, Pee Dee Land Trust, Winyah Rivers Foundation, City of Conway, and Horry and Georgetown counties.



Elk Knob—Long Hope Valley

Large Landscape Conservation

Western North Carolina

Project Description and Need: Long Hope Valley supports 10 high-quality natural communities, 37 rare plants, and eight rare animal species. The 2,200-acre natural area is one of the most important unprotected natural areas in the Southern Appalachians. It also contains 23 Southern Appalachian bogs, the highest concentration and highest quality bogs known in the South. The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program has identified this area as a top conservation priority for over 30 years, and it recently became available for purchase for its conservation values. Conservation of this tract will supplement previous land-conservation, which includes a state park, plant-conservation preserve, Nature Conservancy preserve, and state game land. In total, this area would be over 50,000 acres of contiguous habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified this site as a potential component of the newly authorized Southern Appalachian Mountain Bog National Wildlife Refuge.

Potential Action: Provide financial support for habitat conservation. Evaluate the property for addition to the Southern Appalachian Mountain Bog National Wildlife Refuge.

Partners: FWS, North Carolina Nature Conservancy, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and High Country Conservancy.

North Dakota

Dakota Grasslands

Large Landscape Conservation / Conservation of Working Lands
North and South Dakota

Project Description and Need: The Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area's millions of acres of depressional wetlands constitute one of the world's richest wetland systems. These "prairie potholes" and surrounding grasslands are highly productive and support a great diversity of bird life. Once a vast grassland, the Prairie Pothole Region is now dominated by cropland. But three million acres of wetlands and large tracts of native prairie remain. The Prairie Pothole Region is one of the most altered—yet also most important—migratory-bird habitats in the Western Hemisphere. It is the backbone of North America's "duck factory" and critical habitat for many wetland- and grassland-dependent migratory birds.

The FWS will seek to acquire easements from willing sellers on some two million acres of native-prairie habitat to benefit wildlife and support traditional economic activities, specifically livestock production. The proposal will expand land protection that the National Wildlife Refuge System already provides through several wildlife refuges and wetland-management districts in the area.

This project joins the federal government with agricultural communities and other partners in the Dakotas to conserve wildlife and its habitat while ensuring continuation of the regions' agricultural heritage.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to acquire conservation easements to protect up to 1.7 million acres of critical grassland habitat and 238,000 acres of associated wetlands.

Partners: FWS, USGS, NRCS, State of North Dakota, and nonprofit organizations.



Missouri River Forest Restoration Project

Landscape Conservation and Recreation

Central North Dakota

Project Description and Need: Over the next three years, the Missouri River Forest Restoration Project will restore and protect riparian floodplain forests along the 75-mile expanse of the Missouri River between Lake Sakakawea and Lake Oahe. The cottonwood forests in the Missouri River floodplain are in poor condition as a result of progressive mortality of mature trees and the absence of natural regeneration.

Restoration will provide important public benefits, including bank stabilization and reduced sedimentation, added food and cover in wildlife habitat, improved river water quality, and enhanced outdoor recreation and conservation education. Tree and shrub plantings are proposed on three state-owned or managed sites and adjacent private lands along the Missouri River flood plain. The Missouri River Forest Restoration Project supports AGO goals by conserving working forest landscapes and habitat while creating youth engagement and recreation opportunities.

Potential Action: Provide financial and technical assistance for the planning, supplies, and labor of replanting trees and shrubs along the Missouri floodplain. Collaborate with youth corps for project work.

Partners: FWS, North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department, North Dakota Forest Service, North Dakota Soil Conservation Districts, and private land owners.

Ohio

Ohio to Erie Trail Connections

Urban Parks and Water Trail

Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio

Project Description Need: The Ohio to Erie Trail is intended to be a continuous trail from Lake Erie to the Ohio River, linking lands that railroads and canals formerly used. When completed, it will connect Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati as well as many other communities. By closing two gaps in the system in Columbus, the route will be completely connected for 160 miles. The proposed trails, Alum Creek and Camp Chase, travel through low-income neighborhoods and would give access to 18 city parks and connect with the Battelle Darby Creek and Big Darby Creek national scenic rivers. This effort would support AGO goals by increasing access to urban green spaces. Both trail projects are construction-ready and have ample support locally and from the state. The Cleveland component proposes to create new urban parks along the mouth and shoreline of Cuyahoga River. To increase recreational access, the project proposes a new launch area for canoes and kayaks and allows for the establishment of a Water Trail along the Cuyahoga River.

Potential Action: Provide financial support for acquiring the land to complete gaps in the trail system in Columbus and for acquiring land for two urban parks and creation of public river access in Cleveland.

Partners: NPS, FWS, Columbus Recreation and Parks, Cleveland Metroparks, local nongovernmental organizations, and youth corps.

Grand Lake St. Marys Watershed Wetland Development

Environmental Restoration

Western Ohio

Project Description and Need: Grand Lake St. Marys, a 13,500-acre lake in west central Ohio, is a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy boating, fishing, and swimming. In recent years the lake's health has suffered from nearby development and heavy agriculture. High levels of phosphorus both from within the lake and from the watershed have produced harmful algal blooms that threaten public health, wildlife, and natural habitat.

The State of Ohio and local partners seek to restore habitat and to improve recreational access to the lake. Reestablishing wetlands along the lake's southern side, where the watershed feeds into the lake, will help filter some phosphorus, thereby improving the quality of water entering the lake.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance for environmental restoration and recreation access.

Partners: NPS, USGS, FWS, Ohio Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



Oklahoma

Honey Springs Battlefield Park

Recreation, Historic Preservation, and Urban Parks

Southeastern Oklahoma

Project Description and Need: Some 1,200 acres of Oklahoma Historical Society-owned land makes up Honey Springs Battlefield Park, the site of the largest Civil War engagement in Oklahoma. Multi-cultural Civil War soldiers, including American Indians, fought side by side on Honey Springs Battlefield. Preserving the region's remarkable cultural history is of state and national significance. The Honey Springs Battlefield Park project complements AGO goals by preserving this important historic landmark for both educational and recreational purposes. Increased access and improved park infrastructure are the project's highlights. These will draw more tourism and enhance the visitor experience. Guests can learn about the war's profound effect on the American Indian population. They can explore Oklahoma's wildlife while traversing the park along miles of hiking and biking trails. McIntosh and Muskogee counties and the Oklahoma Historical Society support improving the park, as do local stakeholders.

Potential Action: Support designation of Honey Springs as a National Battlefield Park.

Partners: NPS, McIntosh and Muskogee counties, Oklahoma Historical Society, and Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield.

Blue River

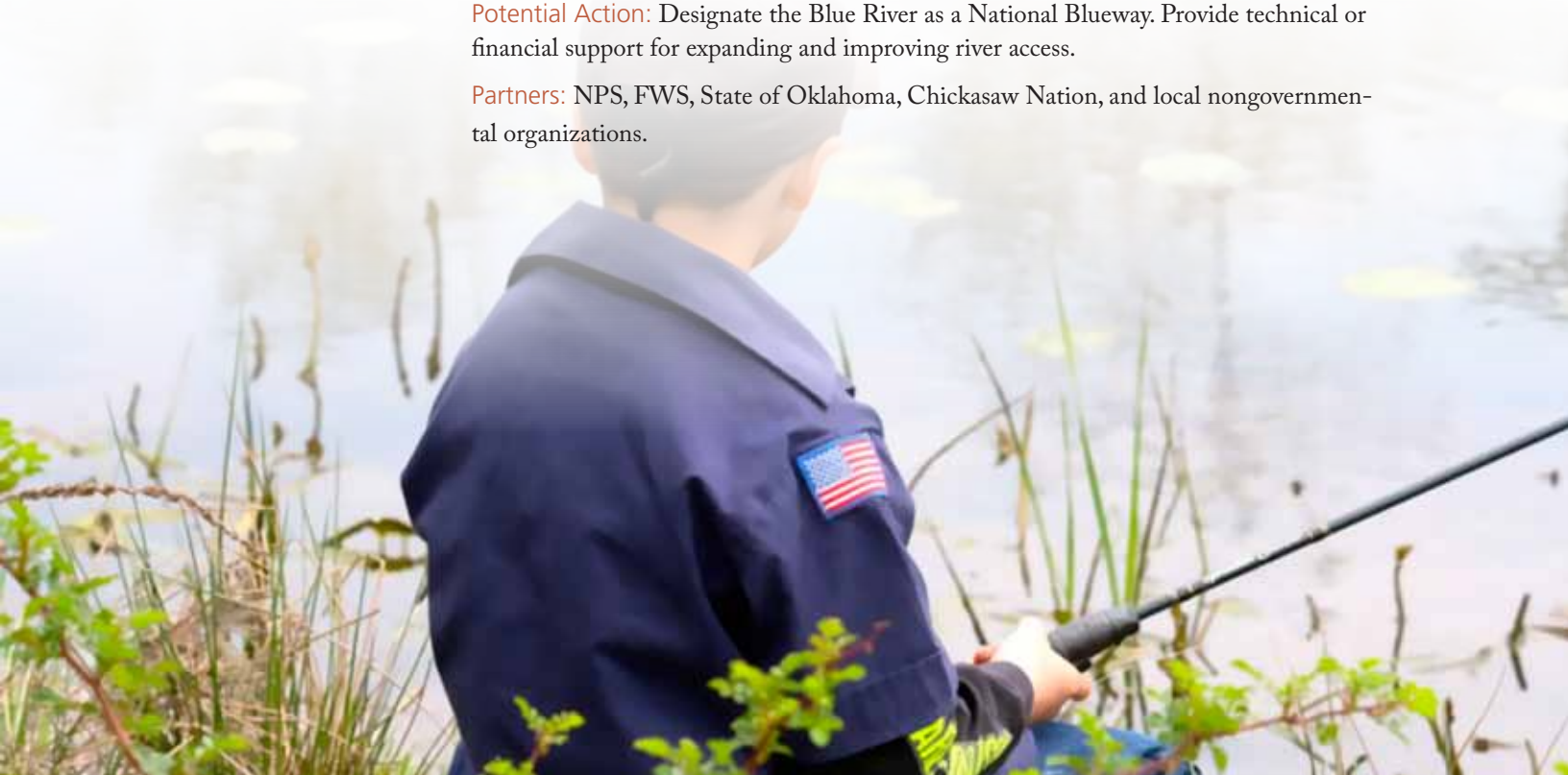
National Blueway

South Central Oklahoma

Project Description and Need: The 141-mile-long Blue River, one of Oklahoma's few remaining free-flowing rivers, lies within jurisdictional boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation Indian Tribe and is also part of the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer. It is within 150 miles of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and 175 miles of Oklahoma City and their large, diverse urban populations. Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge, and Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery are all nearby and would benefit from watershed-protection measures for the river. Blue River Wildlife Management Area is next to the river, and the river corridor offers abundant recreational opportunities, including hiking, camping, hunting, canoeing, and fishing. Trout are stocked in the stream, and in cooler winter months the Blue River is a premier Oklahoma trout-fishing destination. It is also a significant smallmouth bass fishery year-round. The Blue River project furthers AGO goals through the protection of additional critical natural areas for wildlife migration and expanding and improving access to the river for public use and enjoyment.

Potential Action: Designate the Blue River as a National Blueway. Provide technical or financial support for expanding and improving river access.

Partners: NPS, FWS, State of Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation, and local nongovernmental organizations.



Oregon

Table Rocks

Landscape Conservation

Southwest Oregon

Project Description and Need: The Table Rocks are twin volcanic buttes that rise above the north bank of the Rogue River. The lands are managed by The Nature Conservancy (3,584 acres) and Bureau of Land Management (1,280 acres). Over 30 years ago, The Nature Conservancy purchased land on the Table Rocks and created their first preserve in the Rogue Valley. In 1984, the BLM designated 1,280 acres as the Table Rocks Area of Critical Environmental Concern to protect critical habitat for special status plant and animal species, unique geologic and scenic values, and to provide environmental education opportunities.

The people of Oregon, especially those in the Rogue Valley and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, have an enduring relationship with this special place. The 7.5 million-year-old landforms have been important to pioneers, residents, and visitors to the Rogue Valley and to Native Americans who called this area home. Every year some 45,000 visitors hike through oak savannas to reach the open grassland and vernal pools on the mesa summits and to look out over the Rogue Valley toward the Cascade Range and Siskiyou Mountains. In the spring, BLM-led field trips to the tops of Table Rocks are a staple of the outdoor education and science curriculum for over 4,000 Rogue Valley school children.

In 2009, FWS and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board invested \$1.8 million in protecting the Table Rocks by supplying funds to buy additional lands from The Nature Conservancy. The state needs funding to acquire more land to guarantee public access for hiking, to provide educational opportunities, and to protect the special biologic, geologic, and cultural values of the Table Rocks. The BLM, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and The Nature Conservancy recently signed an agreement to coordinate resources and pursue funding for acquiring key lands from willing sellers, to help protect the values of the Table Rocks, and to cooperatively manage these lands as the Table Rocks Management Area.

Potential Action: Provide funds to buy adjacent land for more continuous ownership and cooperative land management to protect the cultural, historical, educational, and recreational values of the Table Rocks.

Partners: BLM, The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, and Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Willamette Valley Conservation Plan

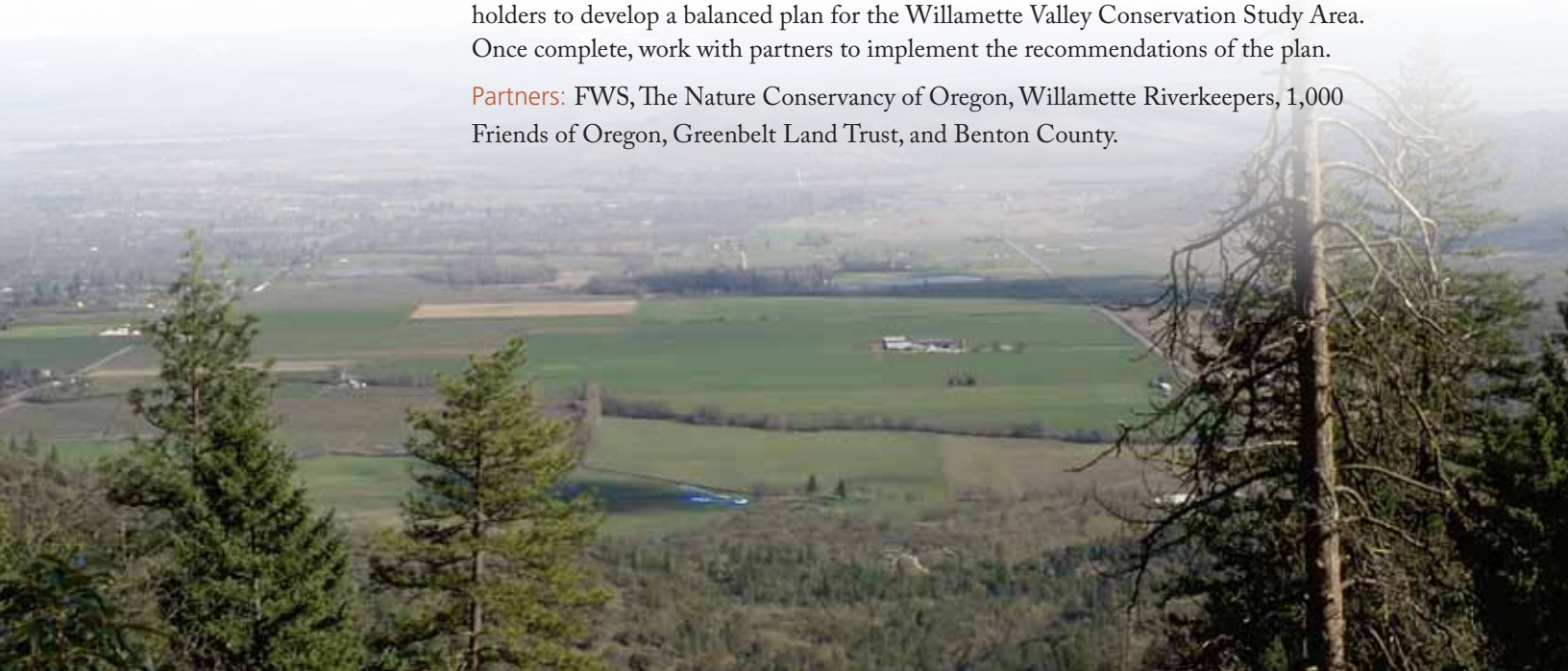
Landscape Conservation

Eugene to Portland

Project Description and Need: The Willamette Valley Conservation Study Area is a landscape-scale habitat-conservation effort that protects and restores rare habitats, aids the recovery of threatened and endangered species, and connects people with nature by providing wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities. Though it still supports a diverse assemblage of native species, the Willamette Valley has experienced tremendous changes as human populations have increased. The valley's population is expected to double within the next 50 years, which adds a sense of urgency to conservation-planning efforts. The valley is also an important agricultural production area, and the federal government needs to find a balanced approach to improving the health of the basin and to engage the agricultural community as a partner. One significant challenge is the goose depredation of farms. The valley's refuges and grasslands, which farmers provide under cooperative agreements, cannot sustain the increasingly large populations of geese. To address this challenge, the Willamette Valley Conservation Study Area will use community-based collaboration, with many stakeholders from both public and private sectors, to develop conservation alternatives. The Willamette Valley Conservation Plan advances AGO landscape-conservation goals and objectives.

Potential Action: Work with the State of Oregon and other public and private stakeholders to develop a balanced plan for the Willamette Valley Conservation Study Area. Once complete, work with partners to implement the recommendations of the plan.

Partners: FWS, The Nature Conservancy of Oregon, Willamette Riverkeepers, 1,000 Friends of Oregon, Greenbelt Land Trust, and Benton County.



Pennsylvania

Lower Susquehanna Landscape Initiative

Large Landscape Conservation and Recreation

Middle Pennsylvania

Project Description and Need: The Susquehanna River's 27,500-square-mile watershed covers nearly half of Pennsylvania and supplies 50 percent of the Chesapeake Bay's fresh water. As the longest U.S. river with no commercial boat traffic, the Susquehanna is a popular recreation destination and important link to Pennsylvania's outdoors, river towns, and cultural heritage. Investments in river access on the lower Susquehanna will further AGO goals of building youth and community connections to this resource, providing education and recreation opportunities, and enhancing networks of water trails. As part of this large landscape initiative, enhancements are needed to Columbia Borough's Riverfront Park along the lower Susquehanna in Lancaster County. These enhancements will meet visitor needs and serve as a gateway to the river. They will also educate people about Columbia's historic connection to the Chesapeake Bay. Completing a high-trestle bridge and five-mile section of the Manor Rail Trail will link to 23 more miles of trails traversing Lancaster County. In addition, the ongoing relicensing of major hydropower dams on the Susquehanna creates an opportunity for shoreline management, recreation planning, and access development. The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership has applied for designation of the Susquehanna River as a connecting Water Trail to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enthusiastically supports the designation and the Landscape Initiative projects.

Potential Action: Provide financial assistance for improvements to the Riverfront Park in Columbia Borough. Designate the Susquehanna as a connecting Water Trail to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

Partners: NPS, FWS, and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Urban Greening

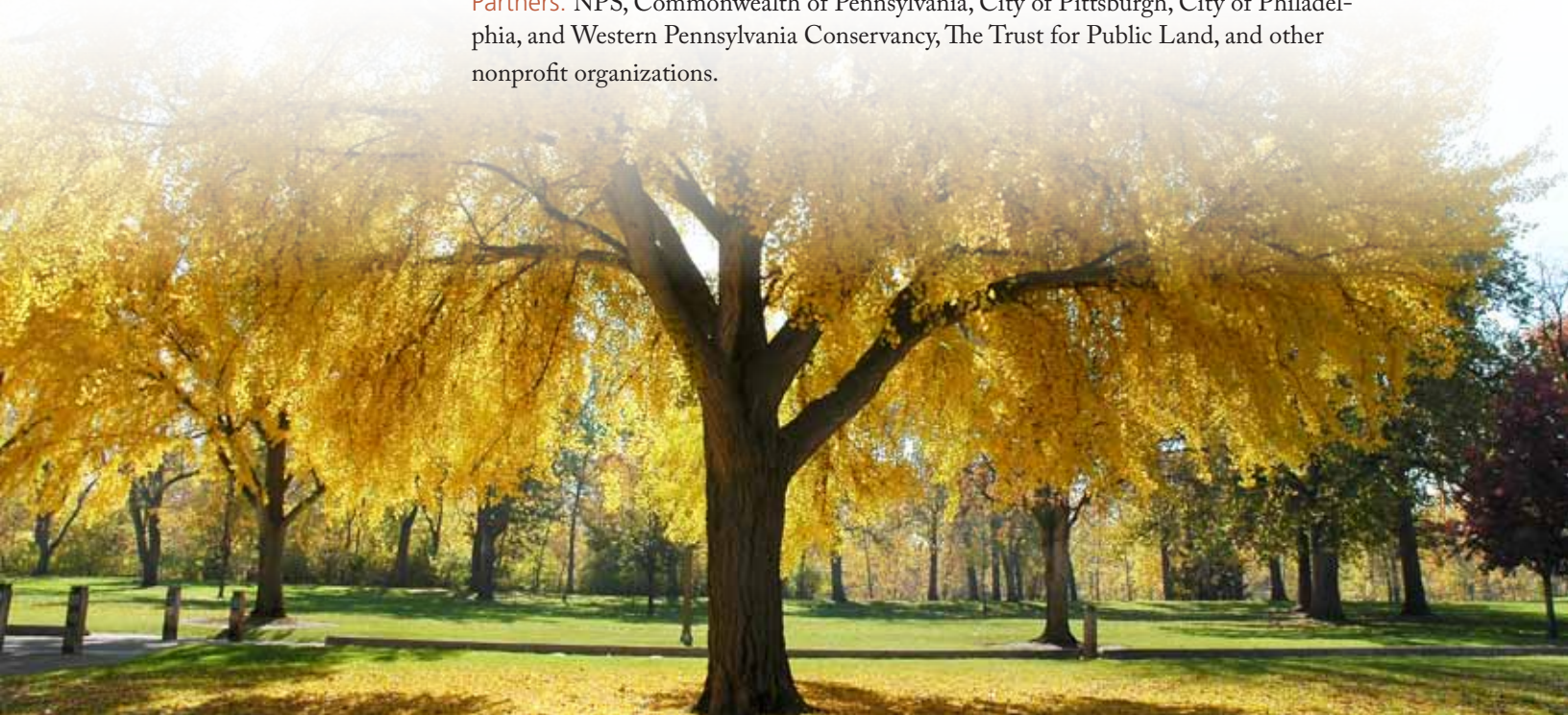
Urban Parks

Philadelphia and Pittsburgh

Project Description and Need: Pennsylvania's largest cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, are engaged in work designed to bring conservation, recreation, and economic value to neighborhoods that lack parks and trees. Philadelphia prioritized improvement of public schools and parks in underserved neighborhoods in the first tier of the Green 2015 campaign. In Pittsburgh, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy is targeting neighborhoods for a focused greening initiative and has raised considerable funds from the city and other local partners to implement it. These tailored greening projects in Pennsylvania's two most populous cities will enhance outdoor-recreation opportunities for all age groups, make the cities more attractive tourist destinations, and provide underserved neighborhoods with the plethora of advantages parks offer. By actively engaging communities in the beautification of their own neighborhoods, by planting trees or learning effective storm-water management techniques, this project creates a collective investment in and further enjoyment of outdoor shared spaces.

Potential Action: Provide Pittsburgh and Philadelphia with financial and technical assistance to support AGO-related projects of their urban greening initiatives.

Partners: NPS, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, City of Pittsburgh, City of Philadelphia, and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and other nonprofit organizations.



Rhode Island

Blackstone River Valley Greenway

Urban Parks and Recreation

Providence, Rhode Island to Worcester, Massachusetts

Project Description and Need: The Blackstone River Valley Greenway Project will give urban and semi-rural communities access to a range of recreational experiences. These will include a water trail and bike trail along a patchwork of cityscapes, old mill villages, water features, and farmlands. The area is part of the NPS Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, which tells the story of people's historic connection to the river, including its important role in the Industrial Revolution. The state hopes to revitalize distressed and underserved communities in the watershed by highlighting the Blackstone River Greenway as a medium for other activities like ecotourism and environmental education. The project's goals match those of AGO by preserving nationally significant historical landmarks and cultural and natural landscapes, creating quality recreation and educational opportunities, and boosting local commerce with ecotourism. The project will also build on existing, successful partnerships developed over the 25-year existence of the National Heritage Corridor. The State of Rhode Island features this project as its primary AGO priority and has gathered considerable local support.

Potential Action: Support the Blackstone River Valley Greenway Initiative in Rhode Island and Massachusetts through planning, technical assistance, and funding.

Partners: FWS, NPS, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and State of Rhode Island.

Blackstone River Valley Project

Environmental Education

Providence, Rhode Island to Worcester, Massachusetts

Project Description and Need: The 50-mile Greenway between Providence, Rhode Island, and Worcester, Massachusetts, offers a unique opportunity to protect the nationally significant land, water, and cultural resources along the Blackstone River. Environmental-education and resource-management programs centered on this project will boost Rhode Island's Great Outdoors Pursuit program, among others, which connects children and their parents to the outdoors. These programs not only offer benefits to families but help to foster a new generation of river keepers. The project meets AGO goals by preserving a river of historical significance while engaging youth and empowering the community.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance toward the creation and management of public programming for the project.

Partners: FWS, NPS, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, State of Rhode Island, and nonprofit organizations.



South Carolina

Longleaf Pine Focal Area

Large Landscape Conservation

Southeastern South Carolina

Project Description Need: Longleaf pine was once a dominant species on 90 million acres of forests stretching from Virginia to Texas. Today just over three percent of this historic longleaf Pine ecosystem remains, on public and private lands supporting 29 federally listed threatened and endangered species and over 400 endemic plant species. The FWS, NPS, and USFS are submitting a collaborative Land and Water Conservation Fund proposal—the South Carolina Longleaf Pine Focal Area—to expand and preserve this natural resource. The State of South Carolina fully supports the project and is excited about the momentum it could give other current conservation efforts. This project would support AGO goals by conserving a large-scale landscape that will protect habitat for a significant number of species.

Potential Action: Support funding for the South Carolina Longleaf Pine habitat conservation project.

Partners: FWS, NPS, USFS, State of South Carolina, and nonprofit organizations.

Three Rivers Greenway

Urban Park / Trail

Columbia, South Carolina

Project Description and Need: The City of Columbia's Three Rivers Greenway provides 8.5 miles of pathways along the Broad and Saluda rivers where they meet the Congaree River. This Greenway is a phenomenal public-private partnership between the city and the River Alliance. Project partners hope to expand the Greenway to over 13 miles of trail and river parks. Winding through Columbia, West Columbia, and Cayce, the Greenway provides recreational access and connects urban residents to the rivers, aligning with AGO goals. In addition, some of South Carolina's best fishing waters are along the greenway, which also offers access points for canoeing, kayaking, and whitewater rafting.

Potential Action: Provide planning and technical assistance through RTCA to help extend the Greenway.

Partners: FWS, NPS, City of Columbia, State of South Carolina, and nonprofit organizations.

South Dakota

Blood Run National Historic Landmark

Historic Preservation and Recreation

Sioux City

Project Description and Need: Blood Run National Historic Landmark, one of the oldest sites of long-term human habitation in North America, is a culturally significant area to both South Dakota and Iowa. The landmark offers residents of Sioux Falls—South Dakota’s most populous city—important outdoor-recreation opportunities. Located a few miles southeast of the city along Big Sioux River are 300 acres of undeveloped native-forest habitat adjacent to the landmark that the state wants to acquire. The state considers acquiring and protecting the land around the site critical because of the owner’s circumstances and the interest of commercial developers. NPS identified the landmark in 2000 as a worthy national park area. Acquiring the land and designating a park would advance AGO goals by conserving a historic, undeveloped landscape and providing urban residents with nearby outdoor recreation opportunities.

Potential Action: Provide financial support to acquire a 300-acre section of land for Blood Run National Historic Landmark.

Partners: NPS, State of South Dakota, and nonprofit organizations.



Dakota Grasslands

Large Landscape Conservation / Conserving Working Lands

North and South Dakota

Project Description and Need: The Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area's millions of depressional wetlands constitute one of the world's richest wetland systems. These "prairie potholes" and surrounding grasslands are highly productive and support a great diversity of bird life. Once vast grassland, the Prairie Pothole Region is now dominated by cropland. But three million acres of wetlands and large tracts of native prairie remain. The Prairie Pothole Region is one of the most altered and yet also most important migratory-bird habitats in the Western Hemisphere. It is the backbone of North America's "duck factory" and critical habitat for many wetland- and grassland-dependent migratory birds.

The FWS will seek to acquire easements from willing sellers on some two million acres of native-prairie habitat to benefit wildlife and support traditional economic activities, specifically livestock production. The proposal will expand land protection that the National Wildlife Refuge System already provides through several wildlife refuges and wetland-management districts in the area.

This project joins the federal government with agricultural communities and other partners in the Dakotas to conserve wildlife and its habitat while ensuring continuation of the regions' agricultural heritage.

Potential Action: Support the use of conservation easements to protect critical grassland habitat and associated wetlands.

Partners: FWS, USGS, NRCS, State of South Dakota, and Ducks Unlimited and other nonprofit organizations.

Tennessee

Paint Rock River Watershed

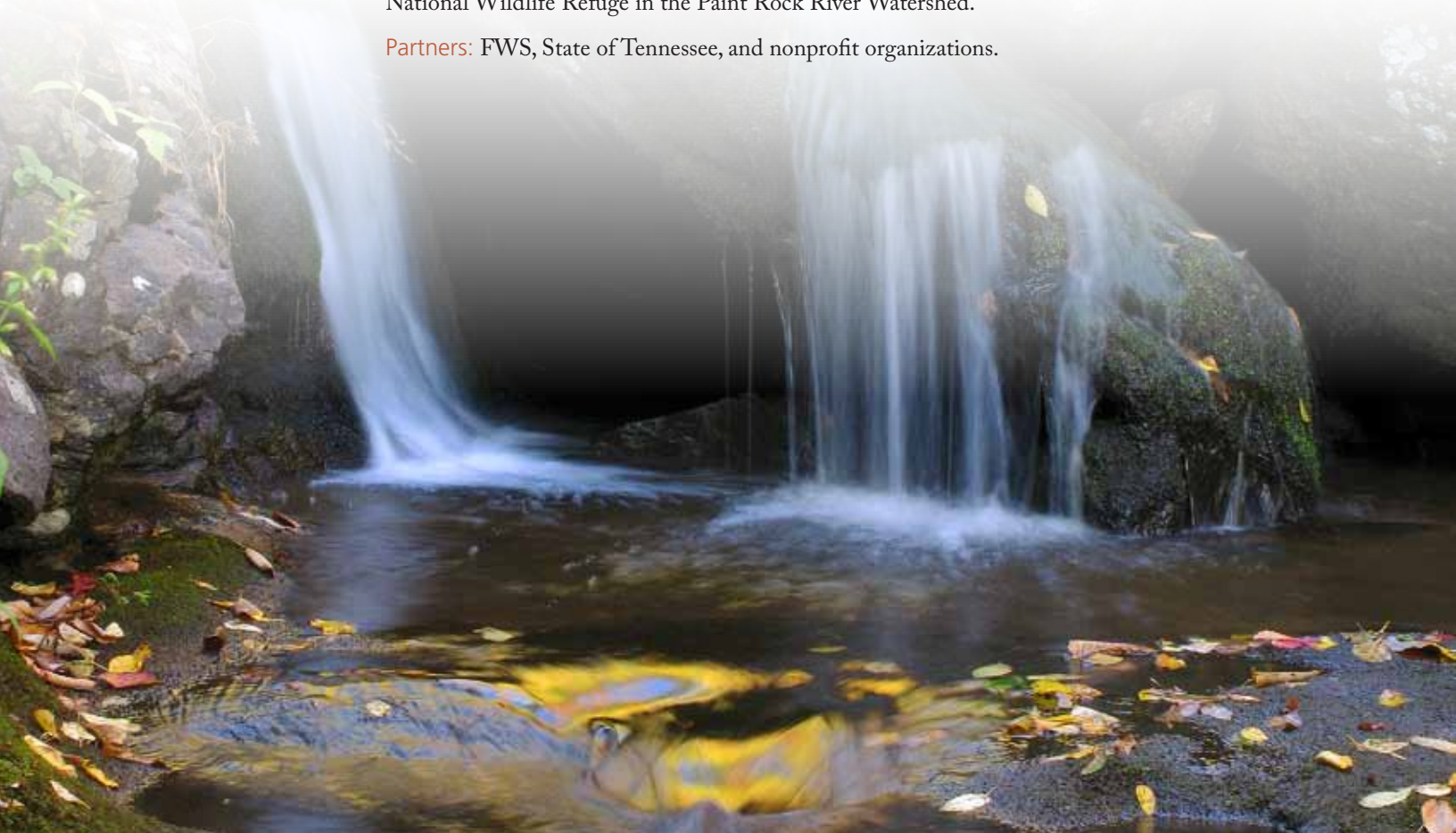
Large Landscape Conservation

Tennessee – Alabama Border

Project Description and Need: The Paint Rock River Watershed in Tennessee and Alabama, one of the most biologically diverse freshwater systems in the world, is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s top priority for a new national wildlife refuge in Tennessee. Some strategic landholdings in the headwaters region have been conserved, but considerable work remains to connect these properties in a cohesive network of public lands protecting the natural and cultural resources of the area. Many NGOs and state government agencies are partnering in support of a new National Wildlife Refuge for the watershed. This project aligns with several AGO goals, including large landscape conservation, enhanced river access, and support for creative public-private partnerships.

Potential Action: Work with state, local, and nonprofit partners to establish a new National Wildlife Refuge in the Paint Rock River Watershed.

Partners: FWS, State of Tennessee, and nonprofit organizations.



Tennessee Riverpark's Chattanooga Riverwalk

Blueway and Urban Park

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Project Description and Need: Hamilton County and the City of Chattanooga have worked for the past 20 years to develop a 20-mile-long Greenway along both banks of the Tennessee River. Over 13 miles of the Tennessee Riverpark are built, and partners are working to finish the next section of the award-winning Riverwalk. This Greenway has helped Chattanooga build a closer relationship with the Tennessee River and its natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The Riverwalk's focus on protection of and education about wildlife and riparian ecosystems has been a catalyst in the community's environmental awakening and has helped make Chattanooga an environmental and outdoor recreation showplace in the Southeast.

The Riverwalk extension will stretch from downtown at Ross's Landing to the base of Lookout Mountain, crossing a number of industrial and blighted properties, and helping reclaim brownfields that currently greet visitors to the community. This new Greenway extension will connect many economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and diverse users to the Greenway and help address issues with diabetes and obesity in adults and children in West Chattanooga.

Potential Action: Provide planning and technical assistance through RTCA to help extend the Greenway. Designate the Tennessee River as a National Water Trail.

Partners: NPS, City of Chattanooga, State of Tennessee, and nonprofit organizations.



ROBERT CLARK

Texas

Rio Grande Watershed

Landscape Conservation

Southern Texas

Project Description and Need: From El Paso to Brownsville, the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo River winds its way through some of the most culturally, ecologically, and topographically diverse lands in Texas. Conservation of the river is a longstanding, shared concern for state and federal agencies, private landowners, nonprofit organizations, water managers, recreational interests, and a host of other stakeholders. The watershed encompasses some of the most important state and federal recreational and conservation lands in the Southwest. These include Big Bend National Park, Black Gap Wildlife Management Area, Franklin Mountains State Park (the largest urban park in the contiguous 48 states), and Laguna Atascosa and Lower Rio Grande Valley national wildlife refuges. The area also includes expansive tracts of private lands under conservation stewardship that protect important spawning and refuge areas for imperiled fish species. Through conservation easements, habitat-stewardship projects, and other collaborative work, this project will build on existing efforts to improve watershed health along selected reaches of the Rio Grande. The initiative supports AGO priorities, including conserving rural farms and ranches, enhancing recreation opportunities and outdoor recreation-based economies, and protecting and renewing rivers.

Potential Action: Provide financial support for acquiring conservation easements and for habitat stewardship projects.

Partners: FWS, NPS, State of Texas, and nonprofit organizations.

West Galveston Bay

Habitat Restoration

Galveston

Project Description and Need: Galveston Bay, on the eastern shore of the Texas Gulf Coast, is fed by a 24,000-square-mile watershed that stretches from Dallas/Fort Worth to Houston. Human activities have profoundly affected the estuarine systems of the bay throughout this massive watershed. The conservation efforts of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and its many public and private partners in West Galveston Bay have resulted in restoration of thousands of acres of intertidal marsh and seagrass meadows and miles of shoreline habitats. Successful restoration of brown pelican nesting sites at North Deer Island Bird Rookery earned the Coastal America Wetlands Restoration Award. Upcoming projects in the bay will build new breakwaters via beneficial reuse of dredged materials to protect and enhance critical marsh and open-water nursery habitats. This project advances the goals of AGO by restoring and conserving imperiled habitat.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial support for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's restoration of estuarine nursery habitat in Galveston Bay.

Partners: FWS and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Utah

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

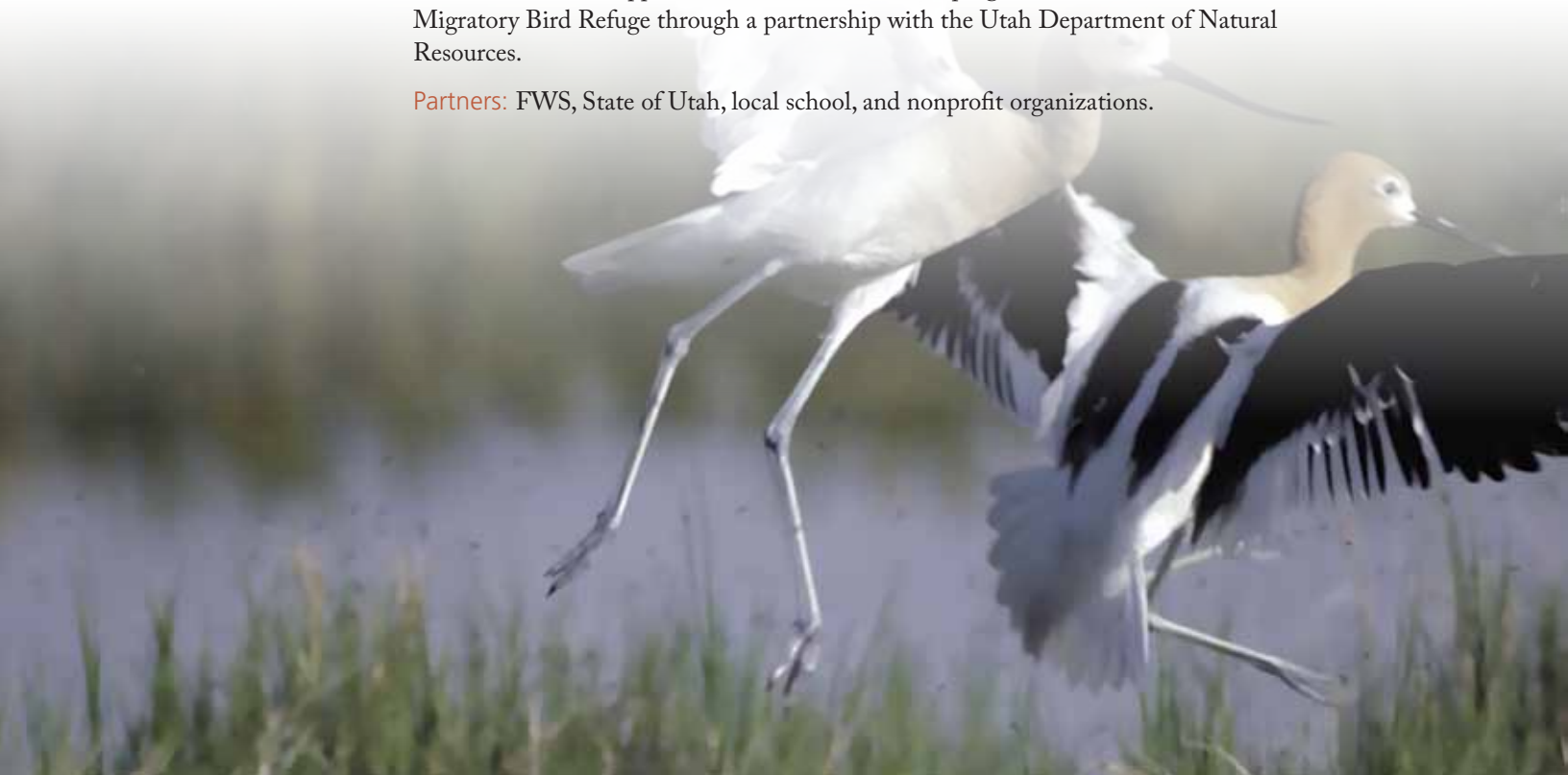
Environmental Education and Youth Engagement

Northern Utah

Project Description and Need: The Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge is in northern Utah where the Bear River flows into the Great Salt Lake. Its protected marshes are the largest freshwater components of the Great Salt Lake ecosystem, and the refuge offers many educational programs for Utah residents and youth. Environmental education and interpretation is the primary focus of programs for preschool children, fourth-graders, and young adults (through a Youth Conservation Corps). Programs emphasize watershed health, water quality, water conservation, and natural resource stewardship. Students engage in conceptual learning through field-trip experiences in the out-of-doors and carry conservation messages home to facilitate enhanced stewardship in their own backyards. A variety of groups support these programs, including the state Division of Wildlife Resources and the Cache/Logan County School District. Program content is correlated with Utah's Core Curriculum and has the support of teachers and the state education system.

Potential Action: Support environmental education programs at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge through a partnership with the Utah Department of Natural Resources.

Partners: FWS, State of Utah, local school, and nonprofit organizations.



Jordan River Parkway

Trails

Salt Lake City, Utah

Project Description and Need: Jordan River Parkway is a continuous, non-motorized, paved trail system next to the river, which flows over 50 miles from Utah Lake to the Great Salt Lake, crossing three counties. To complete the parkway, four gaps in the system must be filled—a total of 3.5 miles in three municipalities: Salt Lake City, West Jordan, and Bluffdale. When these projects are completed, 66 miles of trails will link three counties along the river corridor.

This parkway project will develop trails and help restore and enhance the environment. It will connect diverse populations to the metro area's most significant green-space corridor via alternative transportation and provide educational and recreational opportunities. The NPS RTCA program is currently supporting the city of West Jordan (located 10 miles south of Salt Lake City) and their partners through a community-led partnership focused on planning for the parkway trail and an environmental-enhancement project involving the FWS, Utah Reclamation and Mitigation Conservation Commission, and Army Corps of Engineers.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to complete the four missing segments in the Jordan River Parkway.

Partners: NPS, FWS, ACE, Salt Lake City, West Jordan, Bluffdale, and State of Utah, Utah Reclamation and Mitigation Conservation Commission.

Vermont

Winooski River Watershed Project

Riparian Corridor Conservation

Burlington – South Burlington, Vermont

Project Description and Need: The project will bring together state, regional, and local partners and stakeholder groups to conserve private working lands and provide flood control. The Winooski River watershed is in Vermont's most populous areas, and several major cities and towns rely on it for public drinking water. This past spring, parts of the Winooski River rose to historic levels, and floodwaters washed out roads, damaged structures, over-ran wastewater treatment facilities, and caused significant nutrient and sedimentary pollution, some of which ended up in Lake Champlain. The watershed is also home to many important working farms and forests and wildlife habitat.

A major initiative of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is to help communities protect their riparian corridors by taking advantage of the natural protection from flood damage. This project will help protect communities from the real economic burdens of future flooding, enhance recreational opportunities that connect people to water and the land, stimulate economic development, and create green jobs. The project will target critical watershed and floodplain protection areas for acquiring conservation easements. It will also provide technical and financial assistance to farmers and forest landowners to incorporate best management practices and develop watershed-management plans.

Potential Action: Provide financial and technical support to the wildlife habitat conservation and recreational access aspects of the project.

Partners: FWS, USGS, and State of Vermont.

Connecticut River

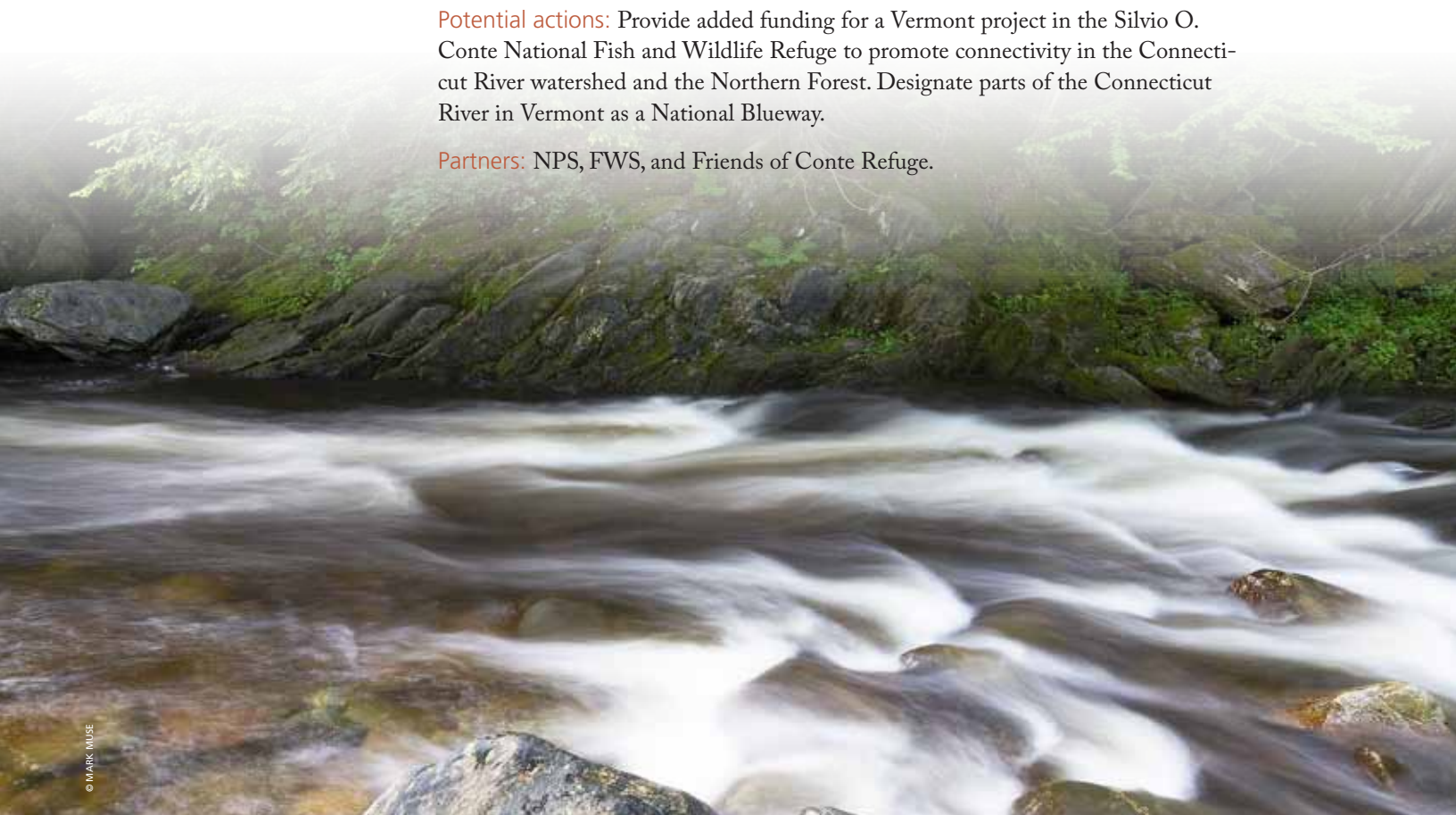
National Blueway

Eastern Vermont

Project Description and Need: The Connecticut River's 410-mile journey from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound links four New England states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. The river is the centerpiece of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge that encompasses the entire watershed, and many Vermont towns and cities are clustered along the stream. Vermont is working to increase environmental awareness and recreational use of the river. Fishing and boating are popular on Vermont's stretch of the Connecticut River. Creating new access points and promoting connectivity between the river and other nearby natural areas will better enable residents and visitors to engage in these water-related activities. Designating the Connecticut River as a National Blueway will also help draw more visitors to the area.

Potential actions: Provide added funding for a Vermont project in the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge to promote connectivity in the Connecticut River watershed and the Northern Forest. Designate parts of the Connecticut River in Vermont as a National Blueway.

Partners: NPS, FWS, and Friends of Conte Refuge.



Virginia

Fort Monroe National Historical Park

Historic Preservation

Hampton – Southeast Virginia

Project Description and Need: Fort Monroe and Old Point Comfort in Hampton have played significant roles in America’s history, dating back to the arrival of the first English colonists. Settlers of Jamestown built a fort at the site in 1609, and the first enslaved Africans in America arrived at the fort in 1619. Over two centuries later, Fort Monroe was the site of Gen. Benjamin Butler’s 1861 “Contraband Decision,” during the Civil War. That action provided a pathway to freedom for thousands of enslaved people who reached the fort. In part it was also a forerunner to President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Fort Monroe and environs played important parts in both the beginning and end of slavery in America. The fort was an active Army post until September 15, 2011.

The local community and a bipartisan group of elected state officials, including the governor, local congressional delegation, and both senators, favor creating a national park to preserve these important lands and their history. Virginia proposes to develop, in concert with the NPS, a first-class historic and natural destination that integrates significant youth-education focused on both environmental and outdoor recreation. The proposal would stabilize the walls and moat around the fort, enhance water access to Chesapeake Bay, and develop a youth-training initiative. Virginia also proposes to restore natural landscapes and habitat along the bay front for waterfowl.

With its proximity to Newport News and Norfolk, Fort Monroe provides a close-to-home outdoor space for urban residents of the area, aligning with AGO goals.

Potential Action: Support designation of Fort Monroe as a National Historical Park.

Partners: NPS, Commonwealth of Virginia, and City of Hampton.

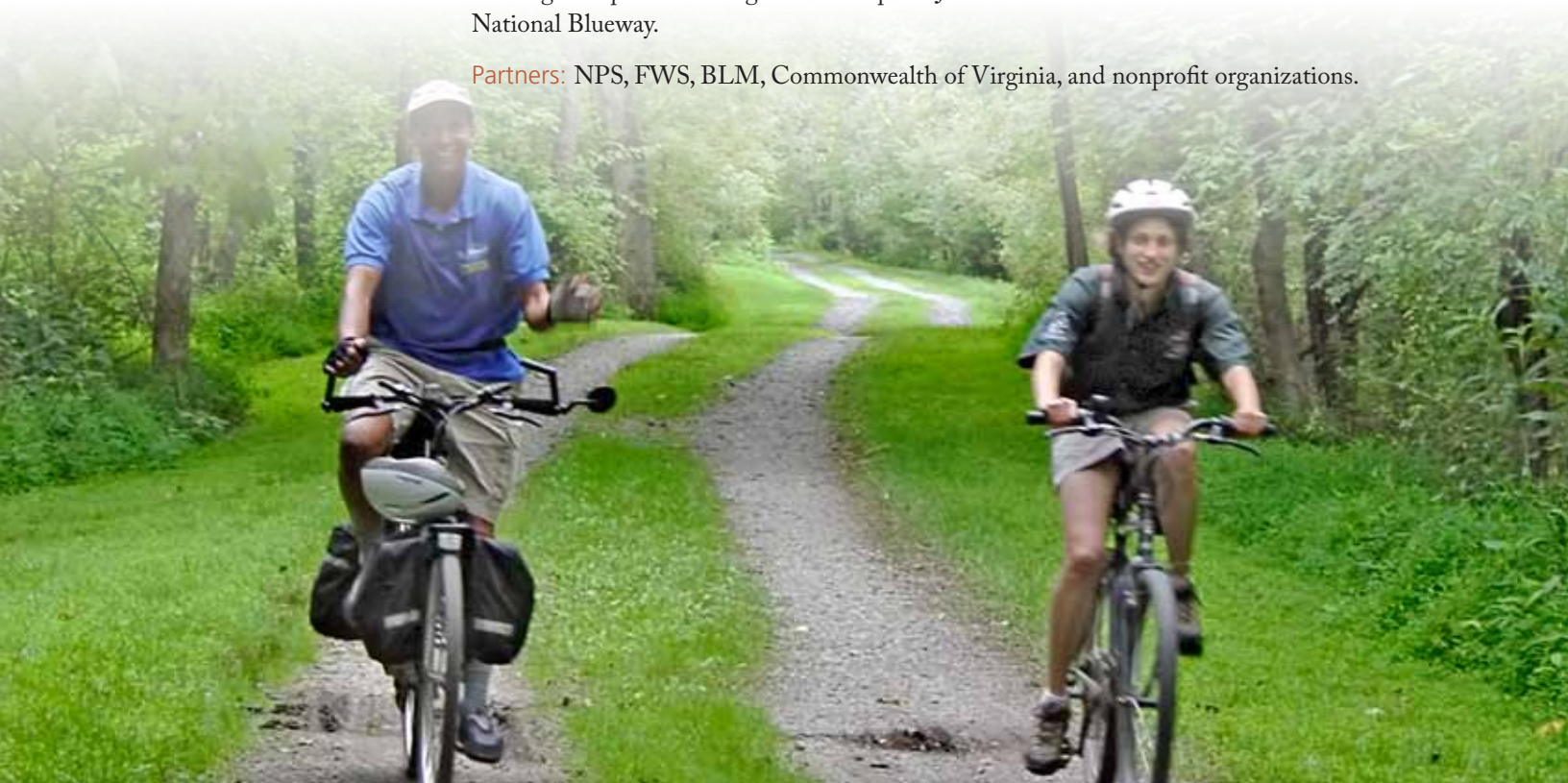
Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail National Blueway

Eastern Virginia

Project Description and Need: The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail follows the historic water routes of Smith's travels. The trail stretches about 3,000 miles through parts of present-day Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia and connects with 16 national wildlife refuges, 12 national park areas, and three national trails. It offers opportunities for tourism, environmental and cultural education, conservation, and recreation. The multi-dimensional nature of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail makes it a model for a new system of National Blueways. The Commonwealth of Virginia is active in development of the trail and seeks to collaborate with the NPS to enhance access to the trail and to develop and improve interpretive signage. Virginia plans to work with nonprofit groups to improve access to connecting trails as well.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to expand recreation access to the Captain John Smith National Historic Trail and to develop interpretative signage for Virginia's portion. Designate the Captain John Smith National Historic Trail as a National Blueway.

Partners: NPS, FWS, BLM, Commonwealth of Virginia, and nonprofit organizations.





ROBERT CLARK

Washington

Pacific Northwest Trail – Olympic Discovery Trail Convergence

Recreational Trails

Glacier National Park to Pacific Coast of Washington

Plan Description and Need: Along 1,200 miles of recreational pathways that begin in Glacier National Park and culminate on the Pacific Coast of Washington state, the Pacific Northwest Trail ties together national, state, and local trails, including the 120-mile Olympic Discovery Trail, built along the historic route of the Pacific Railroad line. Traversing the lowlands of the northern Olympic Peninsula and ending near Cape Alava on the Pacific Coast, the Olympic Discovery Trail now has about 40 miles of paved surface. This segment already provides outstanding recreational opportunities for hikers, bicyclists, and, in some areas, equestrians. It runs over railroad trestles, through agricultural land, and along the saltwater coastline, giving users access to a number of different outdoor environments and connecting the cities of Sequim and Port Angeles to the Sequim Bay Area. An additional six-mile stretch of hard pack gravel trail connects Port Townsend with the larger trail network. In the long term, the state plans to acquire and build out the entire 120 miles of the trail. This will provide residents all along the trail system access to more outdoor recreational opportunities in more parts of the state.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Transportation, recreation and conservation organizations, and tribes to define, design, and acquire key segments of the trail.

Partners: NPS, State of Washington, local tribes, and nonprofit organizations.

Lower Columbia Water Trail

Blueway

Bonneville Dam to Baker Bay

Plan Description and Need: The Lower Columbia River Water Trail is a well-established paddleboat trail stretching from the Bonneville Dam to the Pacific Ocean along 146 miles of one of North America's longest rivers. The trail is managed by the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership—a stewardship organization focused on coastal habitat restoration and environmental education programs. Negotiations are underway for another Water Trail upstream along part of the Columbia between Chief Joseph Dam and Rocky Reach Dam. The ultimate goal is a Water Trail along the Columbia River's entire length through Washington. The state champions the Water Trail extension and supports using Dalles, John Day, and McNary dams as portage routes for boaters along the trail. Designation of the Lower Columbia as a National Water Trail would raise its profile, draw more tourists and recreationists, and accelerate its completion.

Potential Action: Designate the Lower Columbia Water Trail as a National Water Trail.

Partners: NPS, FWS, Lower Columbia River Estuary Program, and State of Washington.

West Virginia

Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Landscape Conservation

Northern West Virginia

Project Description and Need: West Virginia is the heart of the Central Appalachians, home to one of the healthiest, most biologically diverse temperate broadleaf forests on Earth and some of the largest intact forest blocks in the eastern United States. These forests shelter cool headwater streams that deliver clean water to larger rivers, like the Potomac and Ohio, and ultimately millions of people. And these forests are at the doorstep of the urban East Coast—within a day’s drive of Washington, Baltimore, and New York City. Collaborative conservation efforts to connect federal, state, and private land are essential to protecting critical wildlife migration corridors and ultimately to sustaining a network of healthy land and waters that will provide the full range of benefits to people.

In West Virginia, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge is one of several federal and state conservation areas. Others include the Monogahela National Forest, Gauley River National Recreation Area, New River Gorge National River, and Bluestone National Scenic River. The Appalachian Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture, and others are working cooperatively to develop a management strategy to enhance the natural and recreational values of these related sites.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to acquire inholdings and buffers in the Canaan Valley and to create greater connectivity among protected lands. Work with partners and local, state, and federal agencies to conserve and manage public lands in this region more thoughtfully to enhance their natural and recreation values.

Partners: FWS, NPS, State of West Virginia, Appalachian Landscape Conservation Cooperative, and Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture.

New River Gorge National River

Youth Engagement

Southern West Virginia

Project Description and Need: The New River Gorge National River offers an unparalleled opportunity to acquaint young Americans with some of the best natural environments in the eastern United States. The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has purchased 10,000 acres next to the New River Gorge National River for the permanent home of their national jamboree, as well as a High Adventure base camp. The BSA plans a sustained volunteer program to support the NPS and estimates that boys and girls attending the jamboree and camp could provide over 800,000 hours of service annually. The volunteer work would lead to further improvements in water quality and access to water-based outdoor recreation, like fishing and boating in the gorge, to benefit not only park visitors but the outdoor programming of the BSA. This proposed BSA-NPS partnership aligns well with the park's new management plan and with AGO objectives for youth engagement and outdoor education.

Potential Action: Establish a partnership between the NPS and Boy Scouts of America to use hundreds of thousands of youth volunteer hours to implement the trails and river access elements of the New River Gorge National River general-management plan.

Partners: NPS, Boy Scouts of America, and State of West Virginia.



Wisconsin

Lake Michigan Water Trail

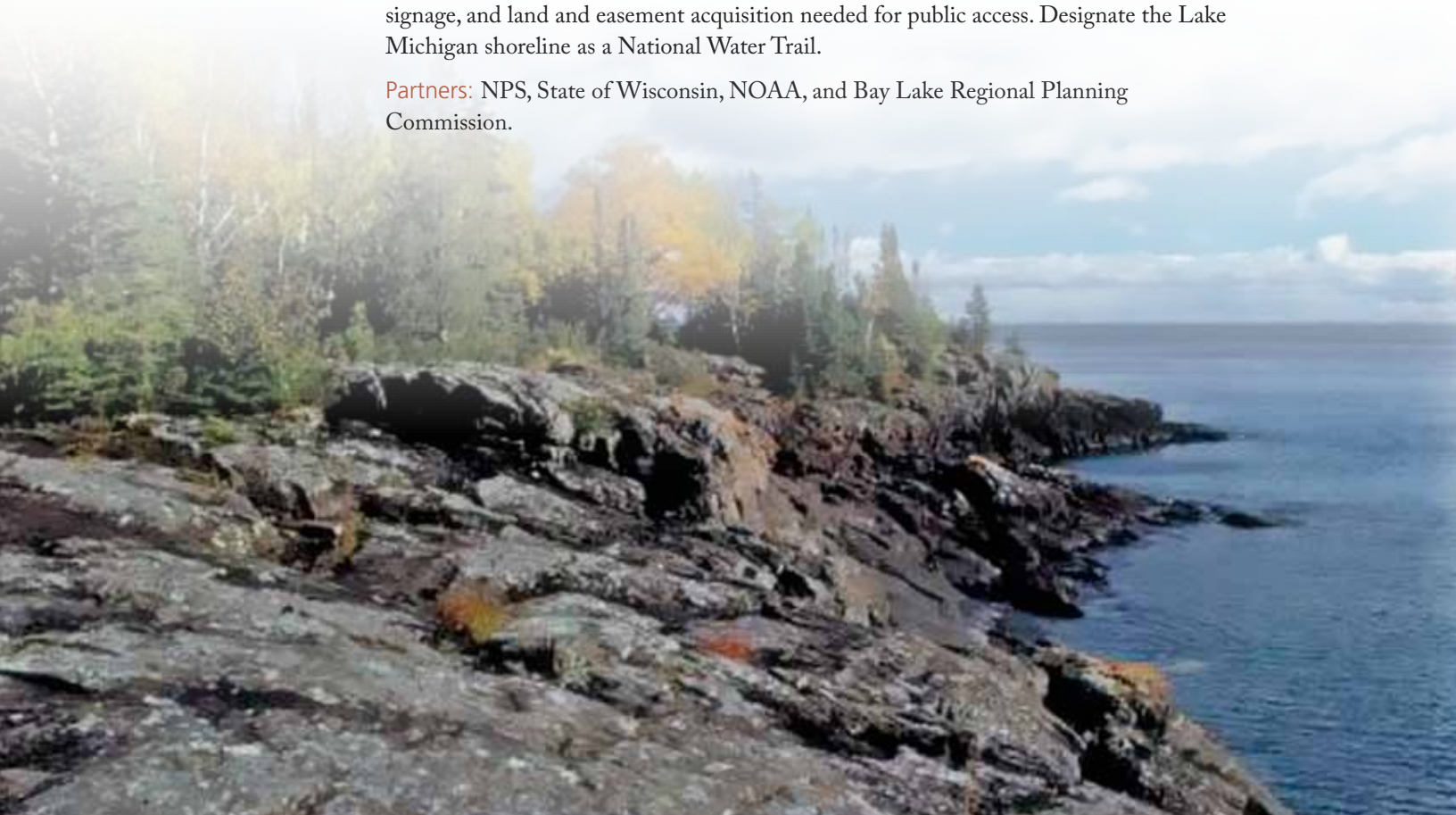
Trails

Lake Michigan Shoreline

Project Description and Need: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is working with the NPS, other federal agencies, and the Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission to develop a new, 450-mile Water Trail along the Lake Michigan shoreline. This trail will become the state's second longest and will increase public access to the trail and along the shoreline. A campaign to start in 2012 will engage local communities and private affiliates to help acquire land for and to build the new trail. The four states bordering Lake Michigan are also working to expand on the national recreation trail designation that exists on part of the lake. The partnership would support AGO priorities by enhancing recreational access and opportunities and engaging citizens in conservation and the great outdoors.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance for site development, signage, and land and easement acquisition needed for public access. Designate the Lake Michigan shoreline as a National Water Trail.

Partners: NPS, State of Wisconsin, NOAA, and Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission.



Ice Age Trail

Trails

Central Wisconsin

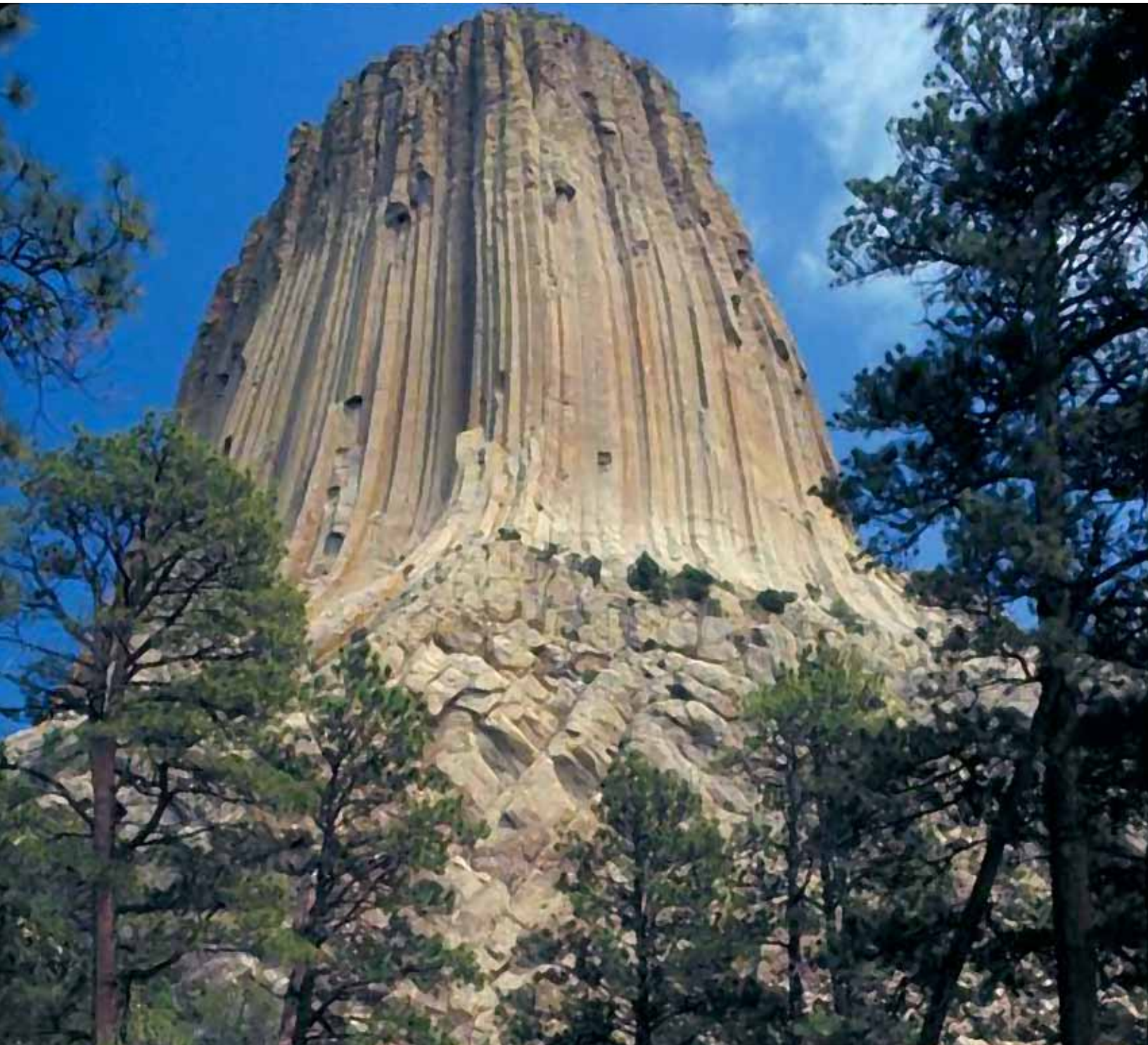
Project Description and Need: The variety of recreation options within a one-hour drive of Madison—the state capital—make the Baraboo Hills/Devil’s Lake area a hub for outdoor activity that serves over 1.7 million visitors a year. The area combines unique geologic features, diverse fauna, prehistoric effigy mounds, historic Civilian Conservation Corps buildings, and spectacular scenery.

The Baraboo Hills, long recognized as ecologically unique and valuable, host many preserves, state natural areas, and two state parks. The NPS designated the southern range of the Baraboo Hills as a National Natural Landmark in 1980. Various organizations, including the University of Wisconsin, Baraboo Range Preservation Association, and Wisconsin DNR have formed a strong conservation partnership and protected thousands of acres through acquisitions and easements.

One such partnership is the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, a collaboration between the NPS, State of Wisconsin, and Ice Age Trail Alliance. They work together on trail management and development for the Ice Age Trail. One of only 11 National Scenic Trails in the United States, Ice Age Trail stretches for 1,200 miles across Wisconsin. State and local partners are working to connect trail segments through strategic conservation easements. This project supports several AGO goals, including large landscape conservation, preservation of natural and culturally significant areas, and support for creative public-private partnerships.

Potential Action: Expand the Ice Age Trail through strategic conservation easements.

Partners: Wisconsin DNR, NPS, Ice Age Trail Alliance, and nonprofit organizations.



Wyoming

Devils Tower Conservation Easement

Conserving Working Lands

Northeastern Wyoming

Project Description and Need: Ranches and other working lands surrounding Devils Tower National Monument provide important ecological and economic benefits for northeastern Wyoming. The opportunity exists to work with willing sellers of conservation easements on lands next to the monument to maintain traditional ranching and farming activities and to reduce land fragmentation around sensitive public lands. The Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust is a partner with the NPS in the preliminary stages of this effort.

This project would support AGO goals by helping to conserve and protect a natural and cultural icon while preserving traditional ranching and agriculture.

Potential Action: Engage local stakeholders in dialogue about conserving working lands in northeastern Wyoming. Work with partners to acquire conservation easements from willing sellers on lands adjacent to Devils Tower National Monument.

Partners: NPS, State of Wyoming, and Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust.

Grand Teton National Park Multi-Use Pathways Program

Trails

Northwest Wyoming

Project Description and Need: Grand Teton National Park is building 16 miles of completely accessible multi-use pathways for walking, biking, and skating. The first, eight-mile phase opened in 2008. When completed this year the six-mile second phase will connect to the larger network that Jackson Hole Community Pathways is building outside the park. The park pathway will be completely accessible by standards set under the Americans with Disabilities Act. When phase two is complete, the park will immediately begin design for phase three, a two-mile spur to a road loop popular for biking near the eastern park boundary. The State of Wyoming supports this project.

Potential Action: Provide technical and financial assistance to complete phase three of the project.

Partners: NPS, State of Wyoming, and local partners.

Appendix A: Youth Engagement

21st-Century Conservation Service Corps

The objectives for Secretary Salazar’s 50-state initiative were to increase states’ and key stakeholders’ knowledge of America’s Great Outdoors and to solicit specific project ideas to advance the primary, place-based goals of AGO—urban parks, rivers, and landscapes. While the conversation was centered on project ideas related to these goals, officials and stakeholders in most states also cited the importance of engaging young people in the outdoors. They suggested projects designed to draw more young people to outdoor spaces or as stand-alone projects involving youth employment (through a conservation corps) or environmental education. Specific projects presented by states related to youth employment focus on conservation and construction work like stream restoration, trail maintenance, or building a visitor center. Other projects stress outdoor leadership for young adults by encouraging them to take responsibility for the environment. These suggestions align well with the AGO objectives to engage, educate, and employ young people.

The following examples of youth projects illustrate the diversity of ideas presented by states and stakeholders where the Department could partner with public and private organizations to advance the youth and education goals of America’s Great Outdoors.

- The Montana Conservation Corps, with Habitat for Humanity, The Nature Conservancy, and others, have “shovel ready work” to improve access and restore the confluence of Clark Fork River and Rock Creek, western Montana’s blue-ribbon trout stream. Youth can help build access sites, clear interpretive trails, and even build educational facilities for a day camp where even more young people can come to experience the outdoors.
- The Maryland State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Partnership for Children In Nature and the No Child Left Inside Coalition, has augmented the state’s curriculum with a requirement calling for annual meaningful outdoor experiences for every student at all grade levels. Maryland State Parks provide venues for off-site excursions where youth can experience firsthand the benefits of outdoor exploration and recreation. These early experiences create young stewards of the land and encourage a conservation ethic. Visits emphasize the importance of family outdoor time in order to foster a culture throughout the state of taking families outdoors.

- The California Conservation Corps provides youth with jobs and an opportunity to connect with the outdoors. One California Conservation Corps project in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area would draw inner-city youth from areas where access to the natural world is almost non-existent. These young people would gain outdoor experience in the NRA's 150,000 acres, which include state and local parks. Their work on maintenance and construction of trails and other facilities will contribute to the area's recreational value while simultaneously helping these youth develop valuable, productive skills.
- Participants in Conservation Corps of Minnesota's Youth Outdoors program go a step further by engaging their whole community in conservation activities. Students get a stipend for spending Saturdays and after-school hours revitalizing park infrastructure in St. Paul. Their duties involve leading volunteers in giving back to the community, and they are encouraged to engage their family in the work too. This allows youth to act as a community's "gateway" to outdoor recreation and volunteer work. Community partners for this project include Habitat for Humanity, North Country Trail Association, and the Prairie Island Indian Community.



Appendix B: MULTI-STATE PROJECTS

While Secretary Salazar's request of Governors was to learn about their state's priorities related to landscapes, rivers and urban parks, we discovered that some projects were regional in scale and identified as priorities by more than one state. Ecosystems, wildlife and river corridors, and large working landscapes do not conform to state borders, and many states already work together to conserve these lands and waters. Because the federal government's work transcends state boundaries, states have sought our help on a variety of projects of regional significance. The following multi-state AGO projects include both new projects and projects highlighted earlier in this report:

Mississippi River Bluffs

Landscape Conservation

Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin

The Mississippi River Bluffs are part of the largest international bird migration corridor in the nation. They contain exceptional ecosystems—from algal talus slopes to hillside bluff prairies and rare forests. The State of Iowa has partnered with Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and local nongovernmental organizations to promote the Mississippi Bluffs region as an ecotourism destination. The Bluffs connect people and communities with the outdoors while protecting regional heritage. In addition, the Mississippi River Bluffs partnership aims to protect water quality and reduce flooding by conserving targeted lands.

Connecticut River

Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut

Spanning 410 miles through four New England states, the Connecticut River has long been an important commercial link between Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Today, it provides valuable recreational opportunities for the numerous surrounding communities and has the potential to offer even more widespread public access. The river itself, its wildlife and surrounding ecosystem, are among the most promising resources for accomplishing important AGO conservation and recreation goals.

This significant potential prompted the New England Governors' Council to include the Connecticut River in its River and Heritage Corridors National Demonstration Project. In this collaborative initiative, the four states have committed to improving access to and promoting opportunities offered by the Connecticut River. This includes constructing more access points and recreational facilities along the river and designating it as a National Blueway. Also, New Hampshire is stepping up conservation efforts for the valuable ecosystems in the Connecticut River watershed through projects in the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, a unique resource that spans the whole of the watershed.

Dakota Grasslands

North Dakota and South Dakota

The Dakota Grasslands project exemplifies the AGO commitment to collaborative solutions. State and federal agencies, through partnerships with conservation organizations, are working with private landowners to conserve, voluntarily, approximately two million acres of economically and ecologically valuable landscapes. The Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area supports a unique system of “prairie pothole” wetlands and surrounding grassland that constitute significant migratory bird habitats. The land is also an important resource for farmers and ranchers, and through a multi-state commitment to conserving working landscapes, its continued use will benefit the agriculture economies of North Dakota and South Dakota. Conservation easements that permit continued agricultural use, but limit or prohibit commercial development on protected land, will allow the grasslands, as well as the wildlife and livelihoods that they support, to thrive.

Blackstone River Greenway

Massachusetts and Rhode Island

Urban and semi-rural communities in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island will benefit from this initiative to revitalize the recreational resources along the Blackstone River Greenway. The greenway contains, among other features, a water trail, bike path, old mill villages, and farmlands. Its path along a historically significant river that played a vital role in the American Industrial Revolution is lined with culturally significant landmarks that tell the story of the region. Connecting urban centers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island to the Greenway will allow more communities to explore ecotourism and foster environmental education and conservation awareness.

Long Leaf Pine Ecosystem

South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama

The North American longleaf pine ecosystem once covered nearly 90 million acres; now only three million acres remain. Species dependent on this habitat, like the gopher tortoise and black pine snake, have also seen a rapid decline and are now endangered. This multi-state partnership is essential to rehabilitating the presence of an ecologically valuable species that has a trickle-down effect on the health of other at-risk species. In this initiative, federal agencies partner with private landowners to plant longleaf pine and commit to sustainable land management practices that will allow the trees to flourish. Efforts are already successfully underway in Georgia, where the project restored 1,426 acres, but collaboration among all four states will be essential to success in this landscape-scale conservation endeavor.

Indiana Dunes

Illinois and Indiana

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is situated near the Illinois-Indiana border close to a number of underserved urban communities. The Lakeshore's Lake Michigan Water Trail already provides water-based recreation opportunities to over 9 million people, allowing them access to unique ecosystems and enhancing their outdoor experiences. In particular, young people benefit from interpretive programs that get them out on the lake in canoes and kayaks, allowing them to experience the natural world in new ways. In order to expand the reach and impact of the valuable resources at Indiana Dunes, DOI will work with Illinois and Indiana to create and improve trail systems linking communities from Chicago to the National Lakeshore. This initiative benefits both states by enhancing recreation and environmental education opportunities for their residents.

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia

The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail follows the historic water routes of Smith's travels. The trail stretches some 3,000 miles through parts of present-day Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia, and connects with 16 national wildlife refuges, 12 national park areas, and three national trails. It offers opportunities for tourism, environmental and cultural education, conservation, and recreation. The multi-dimensional nature of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail makes it a model for a new system of National Blueways.

Maryland and Virginia are both partnering with NPS and various nonprofit organizations to enhance the recreational and scenic value of the trail. Both are actively engaging in trail development and signage to make the trail more accessible to the public, and Maryland has undertaken a comprehensive plan to connect visitors with 4,600 acres of historic and ecologically significant lands. Both states are also improving recreational access and engaging in river restoration.

Pennsylvania is also engaged in landscape conservation along the lower Susquehanna River, a proposed connector trail to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The state is improving access and enhancing a network of land and water trails to connect the public to this 27,500-square-mile watershed, which supplies 50 percent of Chesapeake Bay's fresh water.

Appendix C: GLOSSARY

Designations:

American Heritage River: Rivers of natural, economic, historical, or cultural value are maintained by local communities through an EPA partnership program.

Greenway: A greenway is a scenic trail or route set aside for recreational activities and often frequented by pedestrians and bikers. Greenways are typically vegetated, linear, and multi-purpose. They often provide links between urban centers and open spaces as well as offering inherent recreational benefits.

National Battlefield: This general title includes National Battlefields, National Battlefield Parks, National Battlefield Sites, and National Military Parks. In 1958, an NPS committee recommended national battlefield as the single title for all such parklands.

National Blueway: A National Blueway designation refers to the area on and around a waterway that has significant recreational as well as ecologic value. Blueways offer many access points and recreational opportunities as well as pristine natural environments.

National Conservation Area: America's 16 BLM-designated National Conservation Areas are recognized for their exceptional ecological, cultural, historical, and recreational values. These public lands are under the control of the Bureau of Land Management, which protects their recreational and scientific worth through various restrictions, like limited motorized vehicle access.

National Heritage Area (NHA): These natural and human-made sites are culturally and historically significant enough to constitute nationally important landscapes. NHA managing partnerships focus on conservation, education, and fostering stewardship ethics. Areas can vary in designation, like National Heritage Trail or National Heritage Corridor.

National Historic Park: This designation generally applies to historic parks that extend beyond single properties or buildings.

National Historic Sites: These sites usually contain a single historical feature that was directly associated with its subject. Derived from the Historic Sites Act of 1935, a number of historic sites were established by Secretaries of the Interior, but most have been authorized by acts of Congress.

National Lakeshore: National Lakeshores, all on the Great Lakes, closely parallel National Seashores in character and use.

National Memorials: These sites commemorate a historic person or episode; they do not need to occupy a site historically connected with the subject.

National Monument: The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorized the President to declare by public proclamation landmarks, structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest on lands owned or controlled by the government to be National Monuments.

National Natural Landmark: National Natural Landmarks are designated as such by the NPS because of their outstanding biological and geological features. Landmarks are not protected by law, but their owners are urged to conserve them for their extraordinary natural qualities.

National Parks: National Parks are generally large natural places with a wide variety of attributes, at times including significant historic assets. Hunting, mining, and consumptive activities are not authorized.

National Parkway: Parkway refers to a roadway and the parkland paralleling the roadway. All were intended for scenic motoring along a protected corridor and often connect cultural sites.

National Preserves: These areas have characteristics associated with national parks, but Congress has permitted continued public hunting, trapping, and oil/gas exploration and extraction. Many national preserves, without sport hunting, would qualify for national park designation.

National Recreation Area (NRA): Twelve NRAs are centered on large reservoirs and emphasize water-based recreation. The other five NRAs are near major population centers. Such urban parks combine scarce open spaces with preserving significant historic resources and important natural areas where they can provide outdoor recreation for large numbers of people.

National River: There are several title variations to this category: national river and recreation area, national scenic river, wild river, etc. The first was authorized in 1964 and others were established after passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968.

National Scenic Byway: These roads are designated by the Department of Transportation in recognition of their cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic significance. They operate under corridor management plans designed to preserve and enhance these values and allow the public to take advantage of them.

National Seashore: Ten national seashores have been established on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts; some are developed and some are relatively primitive. Hunting is allowed at many of these sites.

National Trail: National Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails are titles given to these linear parklands of scenic or historical significance (over 3,600 miles) authorized under the National Trails System Act of 1968. Trails that connect people to local resources and improve their quality of life by providing recreational opportunities are designated under the Act as National Recreation Trails.

National Water Trail: This relatively new designation is given to water trails of great historical, cultural, or ecological significance.

Partnership Wild and Scenic River: These rivers under the Wild and Scenic Rivers System are managed more collaboratively among adjacent communities, state governments, and the NPS.

Ramsar Wetland of International Importance: Countries participating in the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands produced an intergovernmental treaty designating Wetlands of International Importance and calling for the conservation and sustainable use of these sites. Wetlands of International Importance are so designated for the significance of their ecology, botany, zoology, limnology, or hydrology in preserving global biological diversity.

State Parks: State parks are state-run, protected natural areas containing a diversity of landscape and ecosystem features.

Water Trails: Water Trails are routes on rivers, lakes, bays, and other waterways with a network of public access points and promoted by broad-based community partnerships. Water Trails connect communities to their water resources and natural environment close to home.

Wild and Scenic River: Rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped but accessible in places by roads, are given this title to indicate their unique scenic and ecological value. Such designation does not protect rivers from development or give the federal government control over private property, but it does restrict government from actively supporting actions like dam construction that would harm the river's free-flowing condition and scenic value.

Wilderness Area: First designated by the National Wilderness Preservation System established by the 1964 Wilderness Act, Wilderness Areas are essentially undisturbed natural environments. They retain a primeval character and are shaped primarily by the forces of nature, free of human influence. They are managed by the BLM, FWS, USFS, and NPS to preserve natural landscapes and maintain the habitat of many wildlife species.

Wildlife Management Area: These state-managed conservation areas are dedicated to preserving and managing high-quality habitats for a variety of fish and wildlife species. They are, therefore, popular recreation spots for wildlife-based outdoor activities, like fishing and hunting.

List Of Terms:

Conserving Rural Working Farms, Ranches, and Forests Through Partnerships and Incentives:

Successful joint use agreements allow for multipurpose landscapes, which relieve private landowners of liability issues in return for opening their lands for public use. State foresters, in partnership with local communities and the USFS, provide technical assistance on the management, protection, and wise use of the non-industrial private forest and the nearly 100 million acres of urban and community forests. State conservationists, working with state technical committees and the USDA provide assistance on the management, protection, and use of agricultural land.

Corps programs: Around the country, Corps programs engage thousands of youth and young adults in natural resource-based work on projects that address unmet conservation needs. Many states have funded Corps programs for decades, and local communities frequently turn to Corps to train and prepare young people for employment. Corps members gain abilities that last a lifetime, including work readiness, educational advancement, and civic engagement, and provide lasting benefits to natural resources and people in their communities.

The Corps Network: Established in 1985, The Corps Network is the voice of the nation's 143 Service and Conservation Corps. Operating in 45 states and the District of Columbia now, Corps Network members enroll over 30,000 young men and women in service every year to improve communities and the environment.

Friends groups: This term refers to local organizations dedicated to the interests and preservation of a natural site. They can provide needed financial, expert, and volunteer support for federal, state, and local parks, open spaces, trails, and outdoor recreation activities.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): The LWCF acquires new federal recreation lands as grants to state and local governments. For discussion purposes, the LWCF program is often divided into the "state side" grants to state and local governments and the "federal side" portion of the LWCF that buys land in new forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and other recreation areas owned by the federal government.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act: Administered by the FWS, this act provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.

Public Lands Service Coalition: Founded by the Student Conservation Association, The Corps Network, and the Southwest Conservation Corps, the Public Lands Service Coalition is an alliance of over a dozen national, regional, and local nonprofit organizations dedicated to promoting youth service jobs and career development on public lands.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: This nonprofit organization's mission is to create a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for recreationists.

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA): RTCA is the community assistance arm of the NPS. RTCA supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to communities so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA): This act allows the BLM to sell public land within a specific boundary around Las Vegas, Nevada. Some of the revenue derived from land sales goes to DOI initiatives like maintenance of parks, trails, and natural areas, landscape conservation, and wildfire prevention.

Student Conservation Association (SCA): SCA provides situations for college and high school students to connect with nature, render hands-on service, gain new skills and perspectives, and launch a lifetime of stewardship. SCA programs include conservation internships, conservation corps, summer and year-round training and service opportunities.

Urban Waters Federal Partnership: This program will work to revitalize urban waters and the communities that surround them. By transforming overlooked urban assets like rivers, streams, and wetlands into treasured centerpieces, the partnership will help drive urban revival. This is a community-based effort, and federal partners will help support community priorities to restore polluted, forgotten urban waterways.

Appendix D: ACRONYMS

AGO	America's Great Outdoors
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DOD	Department of Defense
DOI	Department of Interior
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey



