

# Land & Water Conservation Fund

## 2009





**D**efenders of Wildlife is a leading conservation organization recognized as one of the nation's most progressive advocates for wildlife and its habitat. Defenders uses education, litigation, research and promotion of conservation policies to protect wild animals and plants in their natural communities. Founded in 1947, Defenders is a 501 (c) (3) organization with over 500,000 members and supporters nationwide and headquarters in Washington, D.C.

© Defenders of Wildlife 2008  
1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.682.9400  
[www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)

# Land and Water Conservation Fund 2009



For more information:

**Mary Beth Beetham**

Director of Legislative Affairs  
[mbeetham@defenders.org](mailto:mbeetham@defenders.org)  
202-682-9400, ext. 231

**Noah Kahn**

Federal Lands Associate  
[nkahn@defenders.org](mailto:nkahn@defenders.org)  
202-682-9400, ext. 127

**Brianne Smith**

Federal Lands Associate  
[bsmith@defenders.org](mailto:bsmith@defenders.org)  
202-682-9400, ext. 171

Defenders of Wildlife  
1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-682-9400  
[www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) is a visionary law enacted by Congress in 1964 through bipartisan recognition of the importance of safeguarding special places and providing outdoor recreation opportunities. Chances are the average American has never heard of LWCF. But most Americans are probably more familiar with its benefits than they realize. The LWCF has been a vital source of funding for creating and protecting parks, playgrounds, open space, wetlands, and wildlife habitat, increasing the quality of life of every American.

In a 1962 letter to Congress by President John Kennedy supporting the passage of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the President stated:

“Actions deferred are all too often opportunities lost, particularly in safeguarding our natural resources. I urge the enactment of this proposal at the earliest possible date so that a further significant step may be taken to assure the availability and accessibility of land and water-based recreation opportunities for all Americans.”

Now, 46 years later, these words are truer than ever. Although authorized at \$900 million from revenues generated from federal offshore oil royalties, the LWCF has only been fully funded once. According to a recent Forest Service report, “Cooperating Across Boundaries – Partnerships to Conserve Open Space in Rural America,” the U.S. loses 6,000 acres of natural land per day. The administration has repeatedly cut LWCF funding by increasingly greater amounts each year, and although the unspent balance in the Fund exceeds \$16 billion on paper, proposed just \$50 million for FY 2009, or more than 67 percent below FY 2008.

**For fiscal year 2009, Defenders of Wildlife recommends Congress increase the LWCF budget to at least \$403 million -- \$278 million for federal land acquisition and \$125 million for grants to states.**

Habitat loss is one of the main current threats to wildlife and will be greatly exacerbated by climate change. In a race to save species habitat before it is lost, Defenders of Wildlife evaluated scores of National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management land acquisition projects to determine some of the highest priority needs for wildlife conservation. All chosen projects are within approved unit boundaries, have completed the necessary planning, and have willing sellers. All they need is funding. Projects were evaluated based on their importance to threatened and endangered species, nexus with the State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program’s State Wildlife Action Plans that identify priority habitats for special attention and conservation, and their degree of threat.

**Defenders of Wildlife recommends Congress specifically fund the following 10 projects totaling \$27.5 million identified in the table below.** These projects should be viewed as illustrative of the overall enormous need.

| Project                     | Description  | Agency | State | Funds           |
|-----------------------------|--|--------|-------|-----------------|
| Bayou Sauvage NWR           | Hosts 340 bird species and provides prime aquatic nurseries for many fish species, crabs and shrimp<br><br><u>THREAT</u> : coastal development, which will render the currently intact shore line unrecoverable  | FWS    | LA    | \$1,106,200     |
| Cape May NWR                | Provides habitat for unparalleled concentrations of migratory birds, including the imperiled Red knot<br><br><u>THREAT</u> : sprawl and continuing development, including roads, strip malls, and housing  | FWS    | NJ    | \$1.1 million   |
| Cascade Checkboard          | Secures vital wildlife migration corridors for the greater Cascade Mountain area<br><br><u>THREAT</u> : habitat fragmentation from sprawl and rampant population growth in the vicinity of the Forest  | NFS    | WA    | \$2.2 million   |
| Crane Meadows NWR           | Protects habitat for waterfowl, greater sandhill cranes, bald eagles, unique and diverse plant communities, and many nongame species<br><br><u>THREAT</u> : mounting pressure from residential, recreational and agricultural development  | FWS    | MN    | \$1.25 million  |
| Leslie Canyon NWR           | Provides vital habitat for endangered fish and imperiled birds, including Southwest willow flycatcher, golden eagles, and migratory songbirds<br><br><u>THREAT</u> : habitat loss due to human alteration of aquatic habitat, including water source manipulation and groundwater pumping that alter spring and stream flows | FWS    | AZ    | \$1.7 million   |
| Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR | Protects over 500 species of birds and at least seventeen federally listed species<br><br><u>THREAT</u> : explosive population growth that is converting natural habitat into housing and commercial developments; border wall fragmenting or destroying wildlife refuge tracts  | NWR    | TX    | \$1.575 million |

| Project                                | Description  | Agency | State | Funds           |
|--|--|--------|-------|-----------------|
| Pacific Crest Trail<br>– Tejon Ranch   | Ensures a relatively unfragmented corridor between the southern Sierra Nevada and adjacent mountains, and preserves the integrity of undeveloped lands and critical habitat for 20 critically imperiled species<br><br><u>THREAT:</u> habitat fragmentation from several sprawling industrial and residential projects   | NFS    | CA    | \$12 million    |
| Suwannee River<br>Wildlife Corridor    | Protects important habitat and migration corridors for the imperiled Florida black bear, American alligator, FL sandhill cranes, and the Federally-endangered wood stork and gopher tortoise<br><br><u>THREAT:</u> habitat loss and fragmentation from development and highways, as well as mining, logging and swamp draining   | NFS    | FL    | \$2.4 million   |
| Appalachian<br>Trail/Roan<br>Highlands | Contains more nationally or regionally rare species than any other site in Southern Appalachia, including 16 Federally-endangered and threatened animals, and is home to the best examples of three high elevation threatened ecosystems: grassy balds, red spruce/fraser fir forests, and granite cliffs and outcrops<br><br><u>THREAT:</u> landowner has secured county approval for a development project, which would disrupt the viewsheds of two nationally-significant trails, the Appalachian Trail and the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail | NFS    | NC    | \$1.875 million |
| Rappahannock<br>River Valley NWR       | Provides nesting and feeding areas for shorebirds, neotropical migrants, raptors and marsh birds, including large densities of Bald eagles<br><br><u>THREAT:</u> housing developments and roads will soon encroach on refuge lands   | FWS    | VA    | \$2.25 million  |

NWR=National wildlife refuge, NFS=National Forest Service, FWS=Fish and Wildlife Service



# Land & Water

Conservation Fund

FY 2009

# Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge

Louisiana

## FY 2009 Project

2,027 acres

\$1,106,200

This project supports Louisiana's  
State Wildlife Action Plan

### Habitat

A variety of habitat types are found on the refuge, including freshwater and brackish marshes, bottomland hardwood forests, lagoons, canals, burrow pits and bayous.



American alligator

### Wildlife

A total of 340 bird species have been found on the Refuge. Each fall and winter, 75,000 waterfowl, such as mallards, gadwall, green-winged teal, and northern pintails, make good use of the wetlands. River otters and American alligators also live on the refuge and the marshes along Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne provide nurseries for a variety of fish, crab and shrimp.



*Brown pelican*

### Importance

Bayou Sauvage is the largest wildlife refuge within an urban area in the United States. Located within the New Orleans city limits, Bayou Sauvage attracts thousands of visitors and is an important cornerstone in tourism and the Louisiana fishing industry. The refuge boasts a wide variety of habitat types, including brackish and freshwater marshes, bottomland hardwood forests, lagoons, cheniers (former beach fronts) and natural bayous. These habitats are home to river otters and alligators, and 340 species of birds throughout the year. Freshwater lagoons, bayous and ponds serve as habitat for largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill and catfish.

**Brazilier Island, the tract now available for acquisition, contains some of the only remaining shoreline along Lake Pontchartrain still in a natural condition.** This marshland is key habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl and the lake provides prime estuarine nurseries for many fish species, crabs and shrimp. The imperiled brown pelican can be found on the refuge throughout the year and bald eagles often use the area during migration.

## Public use opportunities

Although portions of the refuge were damaged by Hurricane Katrina, there are still a number of activities available to visitors, including canoeing, hiking, bird watching, fishing, and wildlife observation.



Bayou Sauvage Wildlife Refuge



Egrets at Bayou Sauvage Refuge

## Threats

A portion of this land is under threat of development. Once developed, this intact shoreline will never recover and the New Orleans area will be more susceptible to storm surges, sea level rise, and coastal erosion. Acquisition of this parcel is critically important to guard against these threats, and to preserve water quality. Protecting Brazilier Island will also conserve ever-shrinking habitat for migratory waterfowl, songbirds, and many other species.

## Support

This project is also supported by the Trust for Public Land.

## *Defenders of Wildlife*

1130 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)



For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Noah Kahn, Federal Lands Associate (ext 127)



# Land & Water

Conservation Fund

FY 2009

# Cape May National Wildlife Refuge

New Jersey

## FY 2009 Project

14 acres

\$1.1 million

This project supports  
New Jersey's  
State Wildlife Action Plan

Virtually the entire North American Red knot population gathers along the Delaware Bay each May to rest and fuel up on horseshoe crab eggs before continuing their long migration to Arctic breeding grounds. Red knots rely heavily on horseshoe crab eggs as many, incredibly, stop only once on their flight from South America. Recently, human overfishing has caused horseshoe crab egg numbers to crash, causing a precipitous decline in Red knots.



juvenile Little blue heron



Red knot with ruddy turnstones

## Importance

An amazing variety of habitats are found within Cape May National Wildlife Refuge, including salt marsh, upland forests, forested wetlands, vernal pools, tidal ponds, Atlantic Ocean beachfront, bogs, shrub/scrub, and grasslands. The 5 miles of Delaware Bay shoreline is incredibly valuable for countless migratory birds, including red knots, plovers, sandpipers, herons, terns, songbirds, and hawks, eagles, and falcons. Cape May is known internationally for its unparalleled concentrations of migratory birds. Visitors from across the globe gather to witness this spectacle each fall. However, many of these same birds rest and feed on the Cape May peninsula each spring during their long northbound migration to Canada or the Arctic.

Because nearly 80 percent of some bird species populations rely on it, the Delaware Bay shoreline is recognized internationally as a major shorebird staging area in North America, second only to the Copper River Delta in Alaska. In 1992, the Delaware Bay Estuary was designated a Wetland of International Importance under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, otherwise known as the Ramsar Convention.



Federally-threatened piping plover

The refuge is home to a variety of New Jersey state-listed species including osprey, short-eared owls, barred owls, red-shouldered hawks, grasshopper sparrows, little blue herons, red-headed woodpeckers, sedge wrens, yellow-crowned night-herons, northern harriers, black rails, southern gray tree frogs, Eastern tiger and mud salamanders, corn snakes and northern pine snakes. Federally listed wildlife includes peregrine falcons, piping plovers, and swamp pink, a unique lily.



Delaware Bay

### ***Defenders of Wildlife***

1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)



Horseshoe crab

## **Threats**

Sprawl and continuing development, including roads, strip malls, and housing threaten habitat all along the Jersey Shore. The majority of the refuge is surrounded by forests and emergent wetlands that are considered top priorities by New Jersey's State Wildlife Action Plan.

Connecting intact habitat, especially wetlands that are important to migratory birds, through land acquisition is essential to sustaining healthy wildlife populations for years to come. Acquisition of this parcel is a critical part of this connectivity as it will join Refuge lands with a property to be acquired in June 2008.



For more information  
Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Noah Kahn, Federal Lands Associate (ext 127)

# Land & Water

Conservation Fund

FY 2009

# Cascade Checkerboard

## Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

### Washington

### FY 2009 Project

**830 acres**

**\$2.2 million**

This project supports  
Washington's State Wildlife  
Action Plan



USFS

The proposed lands include the headwaters of the Green River, which provides habitat for both migrating salmon and steelhead.



Threatened Northern spotted owl

Acquisition of these lands will protect habitat for many of the Forest's endangered, threatened and sensitive species, like this Northern spotted owl.



Mt. Baker

Photo courtesy of National Parks Service

## Importance

The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is located in northwestern Washington, extending more than 140 miles along the Cascade Mountains from the Canadian border to Mt. Ranier National Park. The two proposed land parcels are along the crest of the Cascade Mountains in the National Forest. One of the most visited national forests in the country, the forest provides important habitat for many endangered, threatened, and sensitive species such as the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, grizzly bear, steelhead, salmon, bull trout, and mountain lion. The rich biodiversity is supported by diverse habitats, including glaciers, tundra, alpine lakes, old-growth forests, volcanoes, wild and scenic rivers, and mountain meadows.

In addition to providing valuable habitat for fish and wildlife, the proposed lands create vital connectivity within a "checkerboard" pattern of protected lands. Not only do wildlife suffer from fragmented habitat, but fragmented forestlands are more difficult and expensive to manage with respect to fire suppression, invasive species control, public access, and protection of natural resources and wildlife. Thus, acquisition of the current project areas have long been a Forest Service priority.



Endangered marbled murrelet

### Public Use Opportunities

include wildlife observation, rafting, horseback riding, mountain climbing, hiking, hunting, camping, and fishing.



Bobcat

While public support for the National Forests is a definite positive, the roads and highways that provide access to enthusiasts are also significant barriers to wildlife passage and migration, and are therefore sites of frequent road-kills. Additional fragmentation of the area must be avoided.

### *Defenders of Wildlife*

1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)



Mountain lion

### Threat

The project areas lie within Kittitas and King counties, the latter being the 12<sup>th</sup> most populous U.S. county with 1.7 million people. It is also within a 70- mile drive for 3.5 million residents, or 62% of the state's population. An additional 1.5 million residents of Vancouver, British Columbia also have easy access to the National Forest. Explosive population growth over the last 20 years has created high demand for the beautifully forested areas of the Cascade Mountains. If not acquired by the Forest Service, the proposed lands will be subdivided and developed, which will further fragment forest lands and wildlife habitat. Private development of these lands will also place people and private property at risk from catastrophic wildfires, which will be more challenging and expensive to suppress. Acquisition of these lands will also provide protection for large areas of valuable old-growth forests and watersheds that supply drinking water to millions of people.



For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Brianna Smith, Federal Lands Associate (ext 171)

# Land & Water

Conservation Fund

FY 2009

# Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Minnesota

## FY 2009 Project

400 acres

\$1.25 million

This project supports  
Minnesota's State Wildlife  
Action Plan

### **Habitat:**

Oak savanna habitat once covered 10% of Minnesota but now comprises less than 1% of the state. At least eleven species of plants historically found in oak savannas are now threatened and have drastically reduced ranges.



Badger, courtesy of FWS

### **Wildlife:**

Sandhill cranes are one of the most striking birds on the refuge. Blandings turtle, a state-threatened species, also lives here alongside many species of migratory waterfowl, 21 species of reptiles and amphibians, 40 fish species, red fox, badger, and many more.



Sandhill Cranes

## **Importance**

Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge is located in central Minnesota and provides a wide range of habitat, from deciduous forests to grasslands and wetlands. The refuge is within Rice-Skunk lakes wetland complex, one of the largest unaltered wetlands in Minnesota. The area was identified by the Fish and Wildlife Service as a nationally significant wetland complex in 1990, and a Regional Wetlands Concept Plan developed by 8 states in the upper Midwest described this area as important for waterfowl, greater sandhill cranes, unique and diverse vegetation communities, and many nongame species.

Most importantly, Crane Meadows protects some of the last remaining areas of two of the most threatened plant communities in all the Midwest: tallgrass prairie and oak savanna habitat. Compared to their original range, less than 1% of these communities remain in Minnesota. Several unique species rely on these rare habitats, and protection of these relic communities benefits entire suites of animals and plants.

**Public use opportunities:**

The Platte River Trail runs through the Refuge and is open to hikers and a section of the trail is paved for access for those people with disabilities. The trail is an ideal place for wildlife observation and photography throughout the year.



Restored oak savanna habitat

***Defenders of Wildlife***

1130 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)



Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

**Threats**

Crane Meadows Refuge was established in 1992 with the authorization to ultimately acquire 13,540 acres. Due to a lack of acquisition dollars, only 1,800 acres have been purchased to date. The wetland complex of which the refuge is a part is experiencing pressure from residential, recreational and agricultural development on adjacent lands within the acquisition boundary. Development of cabins and vacation homes threaten the wetlands in this area while larger farms are also being sold and sub-divided into single family home plots, increasing the urgency of acquiring more land within the acquisition boundary. Many willing sellers sit waiting, unfortunately, for Crane Meadows Refuge to acquire much needed and long overdue acquisition dollars.

Restoration of rare oak savanna habitat is currently ongoing at Crane Meadows Refuge and there is potential to expand these efforts to other upland areas within the acquisition boundary. However, these efforts are threatened because residential and second home development restricts restoration opportunities. Clearing land for agricultural purposes is a threat to the few remaining areas of oak savanna, while decades of fire suppression and invasion by exotic species also threaten this rare ecosystem.

For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Noah Kahn, Federal Lands Associate (ext 127)

# Land & Water

Conservation Fund

FY 2009

## FY 2009 Project

10,000 acres

\$1.7 million

This project supports Arizona's  
State Wildlife Action Plan



Endangered Yaqui chub

Yaqui topminnows were restored to Leslie Creek in the 1970s and the population is now one of only eight in the entire United States. Leslie Canyon NWR protects unique Arizona habitat from many harmful uses that led to the extinction of several species in the last century.



Gray fox

# Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuge

Arizona



Yellow warbler

## Importance

Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1988 to conserve scarce waters in this arid region and provide habitat for endangered fish. The refuge also protects a rare velvet ash-cottonwood-black willow forest and contains rough mountainous terrain dominated by shrubs and desert grasses. Especially important is Leslie Creek, which provides a dependable water source in the middle of the refuge's arid environment, and gives life to the unique and irreplaceable riparian forest. The refuge is vitally important to endangered fish, including Yaqui chub and Yaqui topminnow, and imperiled birds, including Southwest willow flycatcher, golden eagles, and countless migratory songbirds.

The proposed acquisition includes an important riparian area in the southeast corner of Arizona and happens to be the last piece of the planned acquisition for this refuge. The land would become the northern part of the refuge.



Jackrabbit

### Public Use Opportunities

Leslie Canyon Refuge is well-known as one of the best bird watching areas in the nation. Visitors also engage in hunting, nature photography, and wildlife observation and study.



Southwest willow flycatcher

### *Defenders of Wildlife*

1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)



Mule deer

### Threat

In the late 1800's, farming, mining, and livestock production outcompeted eight native fishes for the area's limited water. These uses lowered the water table and entire ecosystems were quickly and dramatically altered, driving many species into extinction. Leslie Canyon Refuge now protects the remaining habitat from further destruction.

The current threats to the Yaqui topminnow and Yaqui chub include habitat loss due to human alteration of aquatic habitat, including water source manipulation and groundwater pumping that alter spring and stream flows. The acquisition would greatly benefit these endangered fish and the countless other plants and animals that depend on reliable water sources, riparian forests and other rare habitats in southern Arizona.



For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Noah Kahn, Federal Lands Associate (ext 127)



# Land & Water

Conservation Fund  
FY 2009

# Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Texas

## FY 2009 Project

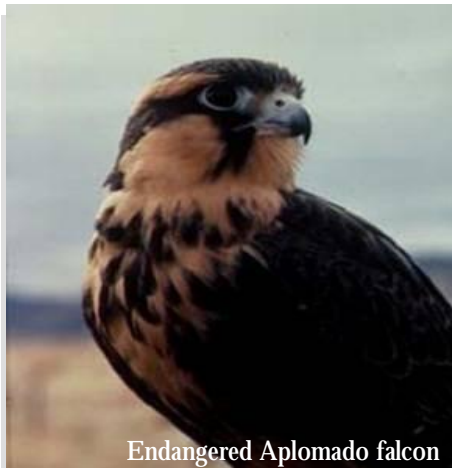
450 acres

\$1.575 million

This project supports Texas's  
State Wildlife Action Plan



*Federally endangered Ocelot; only found in south Texas in the U.S.*



Endangered Aplomado falcon

**Endangered & Threatened Species** at the refuge include the ocelot, jaguarundi, piping plover, aplomado falcon, peregrine falcon, Wilson's plover, reddish egret, loggerhead sea turtle, Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, and many others.



The Lower Rio Grande Valley Refuge exists as 115 distinct parcels, totaling 90,000 acres. With the goal of connecting fragmented habitats along the last 100 miles of the Rio Grande River, the refuge must acquire another 35,000 acres.

## Importance

The South Texas National Wildlife Refuge Complex, including the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) Refuge, Laguna Atascosa Refuge and Santa Ana Refuge, contains one of the most biologically diverse regions in the continental United States.

In fact, the LRGV Refuge alone comprises 11 distinct biotic communities that are host or home to 1,100 types of plants, 700 vertebrate species (including more than 500 bird species, the largest number documented for any national wildlife refuge) and over 300 species of butterflies. Two major migratory bird flyways merge at the Refuge, resulting in one of the premier birding areas in the nation. In addition, at least 17 federally endangered and threatened species occur here.

Because 95% of the vegetation in the Valley has been cleared or dramatically altered, the Refuge Complex is a crucial link in the effort to protect the region's unparalleled biodiversity. The Refuge Complex now exists as 115 scattered fragments, and acquisition of property to connect these parcels is essential to protect the biological diversity not only in south Texas, but throughout the Americas, given the area's vital role for migratory species.



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department 2006

Green Jay

**Public Use Opportunities** include wildlife observation, nature photography, hiking, canoeing, fishing, and hunting.



### **Habitat**

Coastal barrier islands, oxbow lakes, desert-like brushlands, riverside woodlands, and caliche hillsides play host to a variety of plant and animal life. Native vegetation includes mesquite, sabal palm, Texas ebony, prickly pear cactus, and Montezuma bald cypress.

### ***Defenders of Wildlife***

1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)



Common pauraque

### **Threat**

The cities along the international border in South Texas are booming: McAllen, located at the center of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Refuge acquisition boundary, was the 4th fastest growing city in the U.S. during the 1990-2000 census period. This explosive growth is quickly converting ever-dwindling natural habitat and agricultural areas into housing and commercial developments. As surrounding natural areas succumb to unchecked growth, endangered species, including Aplomado falcons and ocelots, will likely suffer further decline.

### **Support**

Partners in the corridor project that are actively acquiring or protecting land and habitat by fee simple purchase or easement include Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, The Conservation Fund, and the Valley Land Fund. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Refuge will be a major partner in the new World Birding Center Complex developed in the area by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and local communities.



For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Noah Kahn, Federal Lands Associate (ext 127)

# Land & Water

Conservation Fund

FY 2009

# Pacific Crest Trail Tejon Ranch

California

## FY 2009 Project

10,000 acres

\$12 million

This project supports California's  
State Wildlife Action Plan



Endangered San Joaquin kit fox

### State and Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened

**Species:** California condor, California spotted owl, San Joaquin kit fox, Mohave ground squirrel, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, California red-legged frog, striped adobe lily, Bakersfield cactus, and Mexican flannelbush



Threatened California red-legged frog



Endangered California condor

## Importance

The Pacific Crest Trail spans 2,650 miles through three western states between Mexico and Canada and is visited by thousands of hikers and equestrians every year. The trail transverses 3 national monuments, 7 national parks, 24 national forests and 33 federally mandated Wildernesses. It also protects uniquely Western habitats, including desert, glacier-flanked mountains, meadows, and forests.

The acquisition parcel known as Tejon Ranch, California's largest contiguous private landholding, spans two counties and is adjacent to Angeles National Forest, Sequoia National Forest, Los Padres National Forest, and Wind Wolves Preserve. The acquisition would protect some of the most environmentally valuable lands in California, including a unique area where the Mojave Desert, Central Valley, Transverse Range and Sierra Nevada converge.

Acquisition of the ranch is important to protect low-elevation grasslands, increasingly rare oak woodlands and more than 20 state and federally listed threatened and endangered species, including California condors, San Joaquin kit foxes, and California red-legged frogs, the largest native frog in the western United States.



Endangered Bakersfield cactus

### Public Use Opportunities

Currently, the 2,650 mile long Pacific Crest Trail runs through desert in this area of California because the land with the prime “crest” corridor is privately owned. Acquisition would protect currently suitable habitat, connect larger blocks of federal lands, and establish a unique “crest corridor”/ non-desert section to the Pacific Crest Trail that will benefit hikers and equestrians.



Threatened Mohave ground squirrel

### *Defenders of Wildlife*

1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)



Spotted owl

### Threat

The California Wilderness Coalition designated the Tejon Ranch one of California’s top 10 most threatened wild places in 2004. Recently, several sprawling industrial and residential projects have been proposed or approved within the ranch, threatening and fragmenting irreplaceable wildlife habitat that cannot be restored once lost. The land acquisition would ensure a relatively unfragmented corridor between the southern Sierra Nevada and adjacent mountains as well as preserve the integrity of undeveloped lands and critical habitat for several imperiled species.

Connecting blocks of suitable habitat is immensely important to wildlife. Acquisition of the property would reduce ongoing management challenges, such as highly complex boundary management and cooperation.



For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Noah Kahn, Federal Lands Associate (ext 127)

# Land & Water

Conservation Fund

FY 2009

# Suwannee River

Wildlife Corridor

Florida

## FY 2009 Project

1,500 acres

\$2.4 million

This project supports Florida's  
State Wildlife Action Plan



American alligator

The project area will unite the Osceola National Forest and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, creating one of the largest protected areas in the eastern United States.



Endangered Florida panther



Threatened Florida black bear

## Importance

The Suwannee River Wildlife Corridor, or Pinhook Swamp, bridges the gap between Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the Osceola National Forest, creating one of the largest forested wetland habitat corridors east of the Mississippi River. The ecosystem is a critical stopover for neotropical migrant birds and is home to many endangered plants and federally listed species such as the wood stork, red-cockaded woodpecker, bald eagle, gray bat, indigo snake, and gopher tortoise. It is critical to the state-listed Florida black bear, and is a potential reestablishment area for the critically endangered Florida panther. This wetland ecosystem supports globally significant populations of pond cypress trees, little blue herons, American alligators, Florida sandhill cranes, carpenter frogs, and canebrake rattlesnakes. Protecting sensitive lands in this unique corridor, by including the Pinhook Swamp area as part of the Osceola National Forest, is critical to ensuring the long-term viability of this wetland ecosystem.

The Pinhook Swamp also provides watershed protection for two major rivers, the Suwannee and St. Mary's, that supply water for more than 13 million Floridians and 6.5 million Georgians.



The project area is an irreplaceable ecological treasure that is also a potentially valuable natural recreation area for the 2.6 million people who live within a 2-hour drive.



Endangered Red-cockaded woodpecker

### ***Defenders of Wildlife***

1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)



Sandhill cranes

## **Threat**

With over 1,000 new residents moving to Florida every day, habitat loss and fragmentation are, by far, the greatest threats facing the Florida black bear and many other native species. Without sufficient habitat, bears are not able to find mates, adequate food or denning sites, and may suffer genetic problems associated with inbreeding. Habitat fragmentation caused by highways and development also threatens the future of the black bear, as vehicle-caused mortality is the leading direct cause of death. Connecting the protected areas in northeast Florida and southern Georgia will not only help the Florida black bear, but may create a potentially viable reintroduction site for the critically endangered Florida panther, which now numbers less than 100 individuals in rapidly-growing southern Florida. Additional development on the proposed acquisition site will cause still more habitat destruction and fragmentation, severely hindering recovery efforts for Florida's imperiled species. There is also a potential for mining, logging, and swamp draining that would threaten both the area's ecological integrity and the water quality for millions of people. The Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) purchased this parcel and agreed to hold it for a limited time until adequate funding was available for the U.S. Forest Service to purchase the property. If funding is not made available soon, this window of opportunity may be lost and SRWMD will be forced to put the land back in private ownership.

For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Brianna Smith, Federal Lands Associate (ext 171)

# Land & Water

## Conservation Fund

FY 2009

# Appalachian Trail/Roan Highlands Pisgah National Forest

## North Carolina

### FY 2009 Project

**290 acres**

**\$1.875 million**

This project supports North Carolina's State Wildlife Action Plan

#### **Habitat**

Hardwood forests, granite outcrops and cliffs, red spruce and fraser fir forests and the rare grassy balds make up the Pisgah National Forest. Gray's lily, Oat grass, sedges, and forbs such as three-toothed cinquefoil and St. John's Wort are found in the grassy bald areas of the forest.



Black bear

#### **Wildlife**

Pisgah National Forest provides habitat for 16 Federally-endangered and threatened animals. The Forest is home to large mammals such as black bears and bobcats and smaller animals such as moles and shrews. Monarch butterflies can be seen during the fall migration as well as raptor species, such as the golden eagle.



Grassy bald in Pisgah National Forest

### **Importance**

Pisgah National Forest lies in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina and was established in 1915 as one of the first National Forests in the east. Elevations in the forest can reach over 6,000 feet and contain some of the highest points in the Eastern United States. The Roan Highlands, within the Pisgah, are home to the best examples of three high-elevation threatened ecosystems: grassy balds, red spruce/fraser fir forests and granite cliffs and outcrops. The Roan massif contains more nationally or regionally rare species than any other site in Southern Appalachia.

This particular parcel encompasses areas of northeastern hardwood forests, old-growth beech and oak groves and grassy balds. Grassy balds are unique to the high mountain summits of Southern Appalachia. These "bald" ecosystems are treeless and consist of various grasses and sedge species. Due to their uniqueness and limited remaining acreage, The Nature Conservancy has classified the grassy balds as a globally rare ecosystem. Grassy balds are now at less than two percent of their original acreage and are under threat of encroachment by invasive and woody species if not protected and managed.



Three-toothed cinquefoil



Pisgah National Forest in the fall

### **Public Use Opportunities**

Hiking, birding, wildlife observation and camping take place in Pisgah National Forest. Roan Mountain also provides visitors with the opportunity to see the the largest natural rhododendron garden in the world, covering over 600 acres.



### ***Defenders of Wildlife***

1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)

## **Threat**

There is an immediate threat of development to this spectacular area as the landowner has secured county approval to subdivide the property into 109 vacation home lots. A subdivision would be in direct line of the viewsheds of two important and historic trails, the Appalachian Trail and the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, which follows the Revolutionary War route of Patriot militiamen. The section of the Appalachian Trail that passes through Pisgah National Forest provides some of the most scenic views on the Trail.

Acquisition of this parcel would add to 17,000 acres of already protected land owned by the Pisgah National Forest, The Nature Conservancy and Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy.

## **Support**

This project is supported by Trust for Public Land and the funds provided by the federal government will be matched by private contributions, greatly reducing the cost for this significant parcel.

For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Brienne Smith, Federal Lands Associate (ext 171)



# Land & Water

Conservation Fund

FY 2009

# Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Virginia

## FY 2009 Project

465 acres

\$2.25 million

### **Habitat**

The refuge encompasses areas of mature hardwood forests, wetlands and riparian areas along the Rappahannock River. The major tributaries of the river are included within the refuge acquisition boundary and provide habitat for a variety of waterfowl and freshwater fish.



Bald eagle

### **Wildlife**

The Rappahannock River hosts one of the largest densities of Bald eagles on the Atlantic Coast. The river also provides major spawning and nursery area for anadromous fishes including striped bass, American shad, blueback herring and alewife. Adjacent wetlands provide feeding areas for shorebirds, migratory songbirds and raptors.



Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

## **Importance**

The Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge is located on the lower Rappahannock River, one of the most pristine rivers flowing into the Chesapeake Bay. The Refuge is recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the state of Virginia and the Atlantic Flyways Council as one of the most important waterfowl migration and feeding area along the Atlantic coast. Wetlands provide nesting and feeding areas for shorebirds, neotropical migrants, raptors and marsh birds. Bald eagles can be found nesting and roosting by the dozens, at concentrations greater than any place on the Atlantic Coast north of Florida.

The acquisition parcel is located on Farnham Creek, 1.5 miles away from where it flows into the Rappahannock River. The land includes 3,000 feet of uninterrupted shoreline along the creek and fully 40 acres of pristine marsh. This property is adjacent to a 400-acre tract recently acquired by the Refuge; its addition will create a larger area of protected habitat, enabling the Refuge to better protect wildlife, plants, and water quality flowing into the Chesapeake Bay.

## Public use opportunities

Fishing, wildlife observation and photography and deer hunting during certain times of the year are available on the refuge. The refuge hosts three stops on the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail.



The Refuge



Cat Creek at Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge



Wood Thrush

## *Defenders of Wildlife*

1130 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-682-9400  
Fax: 202-682-1331  
Web: [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)

## Threats

The refuge boundary includes 20,000 acres but to date, only 7,786 acres have been acquired, leaving 12,000 acres yet to be purchased. Only 50 miles east of Fredericksburg, VA, development is threatening to encroach on lands within the refuge boundary.

## Support

This project is supported by the Trust for Public Land.



For more information

Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs (ext 231)  
Noah Kahn, Federal Lands Associate (ext 127)



**Defenders of Wildlife**

1130 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW

Washington, DC 20036

202.682.9400

[www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)