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NEVADA TRIBES RECEIVE \$650,000 FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is awarding 79 grants, totaling nearly \$14 million, to help 60 federally-recognized Indian tribes conserve and recover endangered, threatened and at-risk species and other wildlife on tribal lands.

The Duckwater Shoshone Tribe (located in northeast Nye County) will receive \$450,000 to purchase a conservation easement, restore critical habitat for an endangered fish, and restore a cultural resource area. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe will receive \$200,000 for improvements to their Numana hatchery.

"We are very excited about receiving these grants and look forward to working with the Service to meet our mutual goals," said Jerry Millet, Tribal manager of the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe. "I really appreciate the hard work of Virginia Sanchez from our tribe, and Bridget Nielsen of the Fish & Wildlife Service. They made this possible."

The grants are awarded under two new cost-share programs, the Tribal Landowner Incentive Program (TLIP) and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program (TWG). These programs are similar to cost-share programs recently developed by the department to assist states, local communities, private landowners and other partners undertake wildlife conservation projects.

"These funds will help us improve the infrastructure of our 20-year old hatchery and allow us to increase production of Lahontan cutthroat trout to support recovery of the fish," said Erik Ringelberg, Executive Director of the Pyramid Lake Fisheries Program. "The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and the Fisheries program are very grateful to the Service for their support."

Of the \$14 million, the Service is providing about \$4 million to federally-recognized Indian tribes to help fund 23 projects under TLIP. The grants were chosen through a competitive process to address tribal needs for the protection, restoration, and management of habitat to benefit at-risk species, including federally listed endangered or threatened species and proposed or candidate species. The maximum award under this program is \$200,000 with a required minimum 25 percent match from non-federal funds.

Another \$10 million will help fund 56 projects under TWG, also awarded to federally-recognized Indian tribes to benefit fish, wildlife, and their habitat including non-game species. Although matching funds are not required for these grants, they are considered to be an indicator of a tribe's commitment. The maximum grant award under this program is \$250,000.

"The grant awards result from tribal partnerships that are a keystone in the foundation of resource management," said Steve Thompson, Manager of the service's California/Nevada Operations Office. "I commend tribal administrators and biologists who have worked cooperatively with the Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They have set the standard for future funding opportunities."

"Native Americans have a unique relationship to and understanding of the land and its wildlife," Norton said. "As part of the President's overall Cooperative Conservation Initiative, the Interior Department is providing these grants to build on our partnership with the tribes to conserve tribal land and recover the wildlife, especially those species that are in decline."

"Indian peoples were North America's first stewards," said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams. "For generations, they have lived close to nature, depending on wildlife for economic, cultural, and spiritual fulfillment. The Service, through these two special grant programs, will strengthen its conservation partnerships with tribes across the United States on behalf of traditionally important wildlife species and their habitat."

Indians and Indian tribes have a controlling interest in more than 52 million acres of tribal trust lands and in an additional 40 million acres held by Alaska native corporations.

"Indian country harbors vast pristine habitats, marked by a representation of an entire continental array of fish and wildlife species," said Ira New Breast, executive director of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. "The two Service grant programs will work to further raise the capacity of Indian people to meet the dynamic challenges facing sustainable Tribal management of this country's fish and wildlife resources."

Tribal Wildlife Grants awarded in Nevada are:

<u>Duckwater Tribe, Duckwater, NV</u> Railroad Valley Springfish Critical Habitat Restoration Project	\$250,000
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Tribal Landowner Incentive Program Grants awarded in Nevada are:

<u>Duckwater Tribe, Duckwater, NV</u> Railroad Valley Springfish Critical Habitat Restoration Project	\$200,000
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<u>Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Nixon, NV</u> Numana Hatchery Development Project	\$200,000
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