



DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Chris Christie, Governor
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor
Bob Martin, Commissioner



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Contact: Bob Considine (609) 292-2994
Robert Geist (609) 633-7588
Lawrence Hajna (609) 984-1795

DEP RECEIVES \$850,000 ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT GRANT *FEDERAL FUNDS TO GO TOWARD LAND PURCHASE FOR BOG TURTLE PROTECTION*

(16/88) TRENTON – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded the Department of Environmental Protection an \$850,000 grant under the federal Endangered Species Act Grants Program, Commissioner Bob Martin announced today.



The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) Recovery Land Acquisition grant for New Jersey will go toward the future acquisition of hundreds of key acres of habitat for the bog turtle, which is found predominately in the northern half of New Jersey.

“Preservation of this unique habitat protects the federally threatened bog turtle, while also enhancing our environment and providing a better quality of life for residents of the state,”

Commissioner Martin said. “We are grateful to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for our inclusion in this federal grant program.”

New Jersey is one of 20 states to receive funding to support projects that conserve at-risk species and their habitats.

“These grants will enable state fish and wildlife agencies to advance the stewardship of our nation’s fish and wildlife resources,” said Dave Chanda, Director of DEP’s Division of Fish and Wildlife. “We appreciate the strong ties formed by state agencies and their partners to protect these imperiled wildlife species and their habitats, which are critical to the on-the-ground success of these projects.”

The bog turtle is native only to the eastern United States and is found in the northern half of New Jersey. The species, considered threatened at the federal level and endangered at the state level, congregates in small colonies often of fewer than 20 individuals. They prefer calcareous wetlands (areas containing lime), including meadows, bogs, marshes, and spring seeps, that have both wet and dry regions.

Once the purchases of the properties are completed, the preserved lands will be managed by the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust in cooperation with the DEP's Endangered and Nongame Species Program,

CESCF funding is provided through three competitive grant programs: the *Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program*, which provides funds to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) that protect habitat for listed species; the *Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program*, which provides funds for the acquisition of habitat in support of approved and draft species recovery plans; and the *HCP Land Acquisition Grants Program*, which provides funds to acquire habitat for listed species associated with approved HCPs.

The grants are funded in part by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was established by Congress in 1965. The fund promotes access to outdoor recreation resources for present and future generations by providing funding to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. For the past 51 years, the fund has supported more than 40,000 conservation and outdoor recreation projects nationwide.

To learn more about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Ecological Services Program visit: www.fws.gov/endangered

For more information on the state's Threatened and Endangered species, please visit: www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ensphome.htm

For more information on turtles in New Jersey, please visit: www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ensp/fieldguide_herps.htm#turtles

For more information about the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust, please visit: <http://www.njnlt.org/>

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