CEC 2013 Annual Report

UNITED STATES

Country Report on the Implementation of the Commitments Derived from the NAAEC

The following report was submitted to the CEC Secretariat by the Government of the United States in accordance with NAAEC.

Introduction

The information included in this section of the 2013 Annual Report is intended to highlight certain activities and developments related to environmental protection for the calendar year 2013. It does not represent the full range of activities undertaken by the United States (U.S.) government with the NAAEC, nor is it intended to reflect environmental efforts at the state, tribal, territory, or local level.

Significant Successes

 The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved more than \$25 million in federal grants and Federal Duck Stamp revenues to protect, restore or enhance thousands of acres of wildlife habitat in the United States and Mexico for the benefit of shared migratory bird populations. The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission voted to approve the use of Migratory Bird Conservation Fund monies and North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants to acquire and enhance this habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, landbirds, marsh birds and other wetland-dependent species. An additional \$19.5 million awarded through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act will protect, restore or enhance more than 170,000 acres of habitat for migratory birds in the United States and Mexico, leveraging \$57 million in matching funds. Eighteen projects in 15 United States and seven projects in Mexico will receive North American Wetlands Conservation Act funding.

The 2013-14 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, also known as the Federal Duck Stamp, will go on sale June 28. Since 1934, sales of Federal Duck Stamps have raised more than \$800 million to acquire 6 million acres of habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act is the only federal grant program dedicated to the conservation of wetland habitats for migratory birds. Through the Act's U. S. Standard grants program, 3,300 partners have been involved in 910 projects affecting more than 7 million acres of habitat.¹

• The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission today approved \$28 million in funding to conserve, restore and enhance vital wetlands, including acquisition of more than 9,000 acres of waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The commission approved close to \$4 million in projects for land purchases and leases on three refuges with funds raised largely through the sale of Federal Duck Stamps. In addition, the panel approved \$23.7 million in grants through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to protect, restore or enhance nearly 89,000 acres of habitat for migratory birds in the United States and Canada, leveraging \$28.5 million in matching funds.

¹ http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=fish-&-wildlife-service-announces-approval-of-\$25-million-to-conserve-migra&_ID=30840

The three commission-approved refuge projects are:

- Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. Approval to acquire 81 fee acres of quality waterfowl habitat in the river floodplain for \$44,700. These bottomland hardwoods and associated wetlands benefit a wide variety of waterfowl, including mallard, wood and mottled ducks.
- Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana. Price approval and approval for a boundary addition on 489 lease acres for \$1,750. The commission also supported a price reapproval of \$22,350 on leased land that it previously approved in September 2012. Since then, the state of Montana reassessed the lease value, which increased by 102 percent. The new price is now locked in for five years. The refuge and the wider land area support high breeding densities of lesser scaup and trumpeter swans.
- Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana. Approval to acquire more than 3,200 acres in fee title for \$3.76 million will almost complete the current footprint of this refuge. The refuge provides high quality habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl.

As part of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act funding, the commission approved \$20.7 million in grants through the Standard Grants Program to support nine Canadian projects that will benefit ducks, geese and other migratory birds on 36,744 acres in 12 provinces and territories, leveraging \$21 million in matching funds.²

Strategic initiatives

- As part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan to cut carbon pollution and lead in clean energy, EPA released its 2013 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan that outlines actions planned over the next year to cut energy use and waste in agency operations. President Obama signed Executive Order 13514 on Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance in October 2009, setting aggressive targets for reducing waste and pollution in Federal operations by 2020. EPA's 2013 Sustainability Plan builds on four years of progress under the Executive Order and provides an overview of how the agency is saving taxpayer dollars, reducing carbon emissions, and saving energy. The 2013 Sustainability Plan will also help guide EPA's actions to meet the new goal President Obama set today with a Presidential Memorandum directing the Federal Government to consume 20 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2020 more than double the current level. Meeting this renewable energy goal will reduce pollution in our communities, promote American energy independence, and support homegrown energy produced by American workers. ³
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule that helps create a consistent
 national framework to ensure the safe and effective deployment of carbon capture and
 sequestration (CCS) technologies. CCS technologies allow carbon dioxide to be captured at
 stationary sources like coal-fired power plants and large industrial operations and injected
 underground for long-term storage in a process called geologic sequestration. The new rule clarifies
 that carbon dioxide streams captured from emission sources, injected underground via UIC Class VI
 wells approved for the purpose of geologic sequestration under the Safe Drinking Water Act, and

² http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=migratory-bird-conservation-commission-approves-acquisition-of-9-000-acres&_ID=30824

³

http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/bd4379a92ceceeac8525735900400c27/4541d25d66c9997285257c38 007193ab!OpenDocument

meeting certain other conditions (e.g., compliance with applicable transportation regulations), will be excluded from EPA's hazardous waste regulations. EPA concluded that the careful management of carbon dioxide streams under the specified conditions does not present a substantial risk to human health or the environment. EPA's determination will help provide a clear pathway for the deployment of CCS technologies in a safe and environmentally protective manner while also ensuring protection of underground sources of drinking water.

This rule is complementary to previous EPA rulemakings, including Safe Drinking Water Act regulations that ensure the Class VI injection wells are appropriately sited, constructed, tested, monitored, and closed. ⁴

- EPA issued its annual report that tracks the average fuel economy of vehicles sold in the United States which showed a 1.2 mpg increase over the previous year, making it the second largest annual increase in the last 30 years. Fuel economy has now increased in seven of the last eight years. Fuel economy will continue to improve under the Obama administration's historic National Clean Car Program standards. The program doubles fuel economy standards by 2025 and cuts vehicle greenhouse gas emissions by half. The standards will save American families \$1.7 trillion dollars in fuel costs, and by 2025 will result in an average fuel savings of more than \$8,000 per vehicle. The program will also save 12 billion barrels of oil, and by 2025 will reduce oil consumption by more than 2 million barrels a day as much as half of the oil imported from OPEC every day. The large fuel economy improvement in model year 2012 is consistent with longer-term trends. Fuel economy has increased by 2.6 mpg, or 12 percent, since 2008, and by 4.3 mpg, or 22 percent, since 2004. The average carbon dioxide emissions of 376 grams per mile in model year 2012 also represented a record low. While EPA does not yet have final data for model year 2013, preliminary projections are that fuel economy will rise by 0.4 mpg, and carbon dioxide emissions will decrease by 6 grams per mile in 2013.
- EPA announced the availability of \$4 million in grant funding to establish clean diesel projects aimed at reducing emissions from marine and inland water ports, many of which are in areas that face environmental justice challenges. Most of the country's busiest ports are located near large metropolitan areas and, as a result, people in nearby communities can be exposed to high levels of diesel emissions. Older diesel engines can emit large amounts of air pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides (NOX) and particulate matter (PM). These pollutants are linked to a range of serious health problems including asthma, lung and heart disease, other respiratory ailments, and even premature death. Clean diesel projects at ports, employing readily available technology, will make immediate emissions reductions and provide health benefits. This grant competition is available under the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) Program and is the first competition to focus on solely reducing emissions at ports. DERA funds are used to clean up the legacy fleet of diesel engines that were produced before more recent environmental standards. This grant competition is intended to help solve some of the complex air quality issues in port communities. Under this competition, EPA anticipates awarding between two and five assistance agreements to port authorities through the DERA program. Port authorities, governmental or public agencies that operate ports, are able to work directly with a variety of fleet owners to lower emissions from different types of equipment used in a port setting. Projects may include drayage trucks, marine engines, locomotives, and cargo

http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/bd4379a92ceceeac8525735900400c27/e405e8e3ca85093d85257c460 06d9ff5!OpenDocument

handling equipment at marine or inland ports. Priority will be given to ports located in areas of poor air quality. The objectives of the assistance offered under this program are to achieve significant reductions in diesel emissions in terms of tons of pollution reduced and reductions in diesel emissions exposure from fleets operating at ports. The program also seeks to build partnerships among port stakeholders to promote ongoing efforts to reduce emissions from port operations. Community groups, local governments, terminal operators, shipping carriers, and other business entities are encouraged to participate through partnerships with eligible port authorities.

- The Energy Department released two reports showcasing record growth across the U.S. wind market -- increasing America's share of clean, renewable energy and supporting tens of thousands of jobs nationwide. The United States continues to be one of the world's largest and fastest growing wind markets. In 2012, wind energy became the number one source of new U.S. electricity generation capacity for the first time – representing 43 percent of all new electric additions and accounting for \$25 billion in U.S. investment. President Obama's Climate Action Plan makes clear that the growth of clean, renewable wind energy remains a critical part of an all-of-the-above energy strategy that reduces harmful greenhouse gas emissions, diversifies our energy economy and brings innovative technologies on line. The Obama Administration has committed to another doubling of the renewable electricity generation from energy resources like wind power by 2020.5
- As part of President Obama's plan to cut carbon pollution the Energy Department is implementing four research and development projects to bring next generation biofuels on line faster and drive down the cost of producing gasoline, diesel and jet fuels from biomass. The projects located in Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah and Wisconsin represent a \$13 million Energy Department investment. The Energy Department continues to take steps to speed the development of clean, renewable biofuels, with the goal of producing cost-competitive drop-in biofuels at \$3 per gallon by 2017. These projects will help maximize the amount of renewable carbon and hydrogen that can be converted to fuels from biomass and improve the separation processes in bio-oil production to remove non-fuel components further lowering production costs.6
- New data submitted by President Obama's Better Buildings Challenge partners shows that they have improved facility energy efficiency by more than 2.5 percent per year on average compared to their baseline years, equal to about \$58 million in annual energy savings. These efforts support President Obama's broader goal of doubling American energy productivity by 2030. In 2011, President Obama launched the Better Buildings Challenge to catalyze revolutionary change in energy use and achieve record-breaking energy bill savings. More than 110 organizations -- including a diverse set of public and private sector partners from local governments, school districts and universities to commercial real estate, healthcare and manufacturing are partnering with the Energy Department to achieve portfolio-wide energy savings and share successful strategies that maximize efficiency. In addition, the Challenge includes a network of financial and utility allies to assist partners in overcoming financial and data access barriers across the marketplace. Over the first year of the Challenge, these partners have also completed more than 50 showcase projects that highlight innovative, cost-

⁵ http://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-dept-reports-us-wind-energy-production-and-manufacturing-reaches-record-highs

⁶ http://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-department-announces-new-investment-accelerate-next-generation-biofuels

effective energy saving strategies. Better Buildings Challenge financial allies have also extended more than \$1.1 billion in private financing for energy efficiency improvements.⁷

- NOAA has installed Science On a Sphere[®] around the world. The 3-D display system, illuminates awe-inspiring animations of planet Earth and is used by educators, curators and scientists alike to explore global environmental data, such as swirling hurricanes, clouds and ocean currents. Science On a Sphere[®] (SOS) is seen by 33 million people annually in 15 countries, 27 U.S. states, the District of Columbia and American Samoa. Using computers and video projectors, the system displays planetary data on an opaque carbon fiber sphere, and presenters can draw from more than 400 annotated datasets to highlight weather observations, climate models, ocean acidification plus the latest solar system imagery. Since the first installation, the presence of SOS has expanded around the world. Through an educational climate network, 15 SOS systems have been installed in Mexico alone. Each SOS installation is connected to a continually refreshed online data catalog, containing annotated environmental and other planetary datasets (http://sos.noaa.gov/datasets/). Scientists and forecasters from NOAA and other federal agencies like NASA post near real-time datasets to this catalog, allowing SOS institutions to display the most recent events and cutting-edge models, such as daily global weather observations, hurricane tracks, and climate models. Science On a Sphere[®], administratively and technically housed at NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory in Boulder, uniquely extends NOAA's educational program goals designed to increase public understanding of the environment. Using NOAA's collective experience and knowledge of the Earth's land, oceans, and atmosphere, NOAA uses Science On a Sphere® as an instrument to enhance informal educational programs in science centers, universities, and museums across the world. NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources.⁸
- An instrument that measures the sun's energy output is in orbit after it was launched last night on the U.S. Air Force's Space Test Program Satellite-3. The instrument, called the Total solar irradiance Calibration Transfer Experiment (TCTE), is funded by NOAA's next-generation Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS) and designed to continue measurements of the total energy output of the sun. These measurements are used to measure light from the sun at all wavelengths, which is the primary energy source that drives climate on Earth, and determine if solar changes influence the Earth's climate. The instrument was assembled by the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) at the University of Colorado, working with the TCTE program office at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., with a quick turnaround to get the instrument ready to fly on the Air Force satellite. "The resourcefulness and ingenuity of the LASP, NASA and NOAA team in building and integrating the TCTE in such a short period demonstrates responsive engineering at its finest," said Kevin Carmack, Polar Free-Flyer project manager at NASA Goddard.⁹
- In partnership with State and Tribal agencies, the Obama Administration released the first
 nationwide strategy to help public and private decision makers address the impacts that climate
 change is having on natural resources and the people and economies that depend on them.
 Developed in response to a request by Congress, the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate
 Adaptation Strategy is the product of extensive national dialogue that spanned nearly two years and

⁷ http://www.energy.gov/articles/better-buildings-challenge-reports-first-year-s-savings-partners-track-meet-2020-goal

⁸ http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20131122_sos.html

⁹ http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20131120_solarinstrument.html

was shaped by comments from more than 55,000 Americans. Fish, wildlife, and plant resources provide important benefits and services to Americans every day, including jobs, income, food, clean water and air, building materials, storm protection, tourism and recreation. For example, hunting, fishing and other wildlife-related recreation contribute an estimated \$120 billion to our nation's economy every year, and marine ecosystems sustain a U.S. seafood industry that supports approximately 1 million jobs and \$116 billion in economic activity annually. The Climate Adaptation Strategy provides a roadmap of key steps needed over the next five years to reduce the current and expected impacts of climate change on our natural resources, which include: changing species distributions and migration patterns, the spread of wildlife diseases and invasive species, the inundation of coastal habitats with rising sea levels, changing productivity of our coastal oceans, and changes in freshwater availability.

The Climate Adaptation Strategy builds upon efforts already underway by federal, state, tribal governments and other organizations to safeguard fish, wildlife and plants and the communities that depend on them, and provides specific voluntary steps that agencies and partners can take in the coming years to reduce costly damages and protect the health of our communities and economy. The strategy does not prescribe any mandatory activities for government or nongovernmental entities, nor suggest any regulatory actions.

Implementation of the strategy will provide public and private decision makers with the information and tools they need to consider and respond to climate change as part of their ongoing activities. The Strategy identifies seven key steps to help safeguard the nation's fish, wildlife and plants in a changing climate:

- Conserve habitat to support healthy fish, wildlife, and plant populations and ecosystem functions;
- Manage species and habitats to protect ecosystem functions and provide sustainable commercial, subsistence, recreational and cultural use;
- Enhance capacity for effective management;
- Support adaptive management through integrated observation and monitoring and use of decision support tools;
- Increase knowledge and information on impacts and responses of fish, wildlife, and plants;
- o Increase awareness and motivate action to safeguard fish, wildlife, and plants; and
- Reduce non-climate stressors to help fish, wildlife, plants, and ecosystems adapt.

The draft Strategy received nearly 55,000 comments from 54,847 individuals, 51 non-governmental organizations, 17 governmental entities, and 5 tribes. Input and suggestions provided in the comments were carefully reviewed and incorporated into the final document.

The partnership was co-led by Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (representing state fish and wildlife agencies). An intergovernmental steering committee that included representatives from 15 federal agencies, five state fish and wildlife agencies, and two inter-tribal commissions oversaw development of the strategy with support from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy can be found on the web at www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov.¹⁰

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is implementing a multi-faceted Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative to
make its programs reflect the diverse perspectives, values and cultures of America. The initiative
strives to make the Service's programs far more relevant to millions of Americans — 80 percent of
whom live in big and small cities — giving them myriad ways to participate in wildlife conservation
and recreation. This initiavie grows out of the Service's Conserving the Future process, which set a
strategic path for the National Wildlife Refuge System for the next decade and beyond.

The initiative is built on four major elements:

- "Standards of Excellence for Urban National Wildlife Refuges" to help national wildlife refuges engage urban Americans in new and more effective ways. The standards are aimed at national wildlife refuges within 25 miles of urban areas with 250,000 people or more, but also can benefit refuges serving more rural communities.
- Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships in geographically-dispersed communities to expand the Service's conservation programs. Eight partnerships were established in 2013 and more will be established by 2015.
- A Director's Order that authorizes and encourages all Service programs to conduct cooperative fish and wildlife conservation, education and outreach in urban communities. These areas are partnership-based lands, not managed by the Service, where people can enjoy outdoor experiences that foster connections with fish and wildlife resources and promote active engagement of people in the natural world.
- A first-ever Urban Academy for staff and partners at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia on September 23-25, 2013. The purpose is to train staff on cultural diversity, how to overcome barriers to outdoor recreation, and create partnerships that engage new audiences in order to foster a new conservation constituency.

The National Wildlife Refuge System has scores of wildlife refuges in urban areas, including Denver, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Detroit and Boston, among other cities. More than 47 million people annually visit national wildlife refuges.¹¹

Government Enforcement Action

• The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have announced an expanded partnership to support water quality trading and other market-based approaches that provide benefits to the environment and economy. Water quality trading provides a cost-effective approach for regulated entities to comply with EPA Clean Water Act requirements, including water quality-based effluent limits in National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits. Trading would allow regulated entities to purchase and use pollutant reduction credits generated by other sources in a watershed. Cost savings and other economic incentives are key motivators for parties engaged in trading. Water quality trading can also provide additional environmental and economic benefits, such as air quality improvements, enhanced wildlife habitat, carbon capture and storage, and new income and employment opportunities for rural America.

¹⁰ http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20130326_climate_adaptation_strategy.html
¹¹ http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=urban-wildlife-refuge-initiative-will-connect-millions-to-conservation&_ID=30513

- EPA and USDA are working together to implement and coordinate policies and programs that encourage water quality trading. The Department and the Agency will identify opportunities to work collaboratively to help improve water quality trading programs across the country. Cooperative management and technical assistance will improve resource management and public services, and accelerate implementation.¹²
- NOAA Fisheries announced final regulations requiring the United States Navy to implement
 protective measures during training and testing activities in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico to
 reduce effects on marine mammals.

The Navy requested an authorization under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, because the sound generated by active sonar, the sound and pressure generated by detonating explosives, and other associated activities could affect the behavior of some marine mammals, or cause a temporary loss of their hearing sensitivity or other injury.

The Navy's current authorization expires in January 2014. The purpose of the Navy training and testing is to ensure the readiness of naval forces. Under the MMPA, this new authorization is limited to five years, and expires in November 2018.

NOAA Fisheries recently made a final determination that the effects of these Navy operations would have a negligible impact on the overall species or stocks involved. Based on that final determination, NOAA is requiring that the Navy use mitigation measures and, if properly followed, expects the exercises will not to result in serious injury or death to a large number of marine mammals. The final rule allows for a small number of incidental injuries to marine mammals from sonar, as well as vessel strikes and explosions.

Under the authorization, the Navy will use the following mitigation measures to minimize effects on marine mammals, including:

- o establishing marine mammal mitigation zones around each vessel using sonar;
- using Navy observers to shut down sonar operations if marine mammals are seen within designated mitigation zones;
- using mitigation zones to ensure that explosives are not detonated when animals are detected within a certain distance;
- implementing a stranding response plan that includes a training shutdown provision in certain circumstances, and allows for the Navy to contribute in-kind services to NOAA Fisheries if the agency has to conduct a stranding response and investigation; and,
- using specific mitigation measures at certain times to reduce effects on North Atlantic right whales.

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These measures should minimize the potential for injury or death and significantly reduce the number of marine mammals exposed to levels of sound likely to cause temporary loss of hearing.

Additionally, the final rule includes an adaptive management component that requires that the Navy and NOAA Fisheries meet yearly to discuss new science, Navy research and development, and Navy monitoring results to determine if modifications to mitigation or monitoring measures are appropriate.

NOAA Fisheries and the Navy have worked to develop a robust monitoring plan to use independent, experienced vessel-based marine mammal observers (as well as Navy observers), and passive acoustic monitoring to help better understand how marine mammals respond to various levels of sound and to assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures. Additionally, an Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Plan developed by the Navy (with input from NOAA Fisheries) will better prioritize monitoring goals and standardize data collection methods across all U.S. Navy range complexes. The final rulemaking is posted online.¹³

The Department of the Interior today announced changes to regulations enabling the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to better monitor and address the long-term impacts of renewable energy projects and other activities on federally-protected eagles. In addition to these immediate changes, the Service will continue its comprehensive review of all eagle permitting regulations to determine if other modifications are necessary to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. The revised rule, a result of extensive stakeholder engagement and public comment, extends the maximum permit tenure to 30 years, subject to a recurring five-year review process throughout the permit life. Only applicants who commit to adaptive management measures to ensure the preservation of eagles will be considered for permits with terms longer than five years. Any such increased measures, which would be implemented if monitoring shows that initial permit conditions do not provide sufficient protection, will be negotiated with the permittee and specified in the terms and conditions of the permit. All permits will be closely monitored to ensure that allowable take numbers are not exceeded and that conservation measures are in place and effective over the life of the permit. Steps taken today will increase transparency and accountability by making annual reports and fiveyear compilations of eagle fatalities available to the public. The revised regulations also increase the fees charged for processing programmatic permit applications to reflect the true cost to the Service of developing adaptive conservation measures and monitoring the effectiveness of the terms and conditions of the permits. Permits also will now be transferable to new owners of projects, provided that any successor is qualified and committed to carrying out the conditions of the permit.¹⁴

Future Plans

• Department of the Interior Climate Science Centers are awarding nearly \$7 million to universities and other partners for research as part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan to reduce carbon pollution, move our economy toward clean energy sources and begin to prepare our communities for the impacts of climate change.

The 50-plus studies, conducted with Fiscal Year 2013 funding, will focus on how climate change will affect natural resources as well as management actions that can be taken to help offset such impacts. The research will help guide managers of parks, refuges and other cultural and natural resources to plan how to help species and ecosystems adapt to climate change. Each of the

¹³ http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20131114_mmpa.html

¹⁴ http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=interior-department-releases-revised-rule-to-ensure-long-term-monitoring-an&_ID=31474

Department of the Interior's eight Climate Science Centers (CSCs) worked with states, tribes, federal agencies, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), universities supporting the CSCs, and other regional partners to identify the highest priority management challenges in need of scientific input, and to solicit and select research projects. The eight Interior Climate Science Centers form a national network and are coordinated through the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center, located at the headquarters of USGS. CSCs and LCCs have been created under Interior's strategy to address the impacts of climate change on America's waters, land, and other natural and cultural resources. Together, Interior's CSCs and LCCs are assessing the impacts of climate change and other landscape-scale stressors that typically extend beyond the borders of any single national wildlife refuge, national park or Bureau of Land Management unit and will identify strategies to ensure that resources across landscapes are resilient in the face of climate change.¹⁵

- NOAA awarded \$27.2 million to sustain current critical ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes observing efforts and to support innovative marine sensor technologies, with a goal of helping provide a better understanding of coastal and marine environment. The funding is provided through the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®), other federal agencies, and NOAA programs. The awards include \$2.9 million for marine sensor innovation projects to enhance our understanding of the coastal and marine environment. In addition to the marine sensor innovation projects introduced this year, the U.S. IOOS awarded \$24.3 million to sustain critical coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes efforts. As part of this effort, the U.S. IOOS Program and NASA will continue to jointly fund, at \$250,000 each per year, projects to improve satellite sea surface temperature data from existing and new sensors, produce a blended output of sea surface temperature data from U.S. and international datasets, and target these products for coastal applications and regional IOOS usage.
- President Obama has requested \$1.6 Billion in Fiscal Year 2014 for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service an increase of \$76.4 million over the 2012 enacted level, to fund the agency's high priority needs. The budget also includes approximately \$1.2 billion available under permanent appropriations, most of which will be provided directly to States to support fish and wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation. The Service's 2014 budget request contains costs in a number of areas by identifying administrative efficiencies, program reductions, and other savings, while proposing select increases. Specific areas of the budget proposal include:¹⁶

America's Great Outdoors New Energy Frontier Cooperative Landscape Conservation National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement Endangered Species Fish and Aquatic Conservation Ecosystem Restoration Migratory Birds

¹⁵ https://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/interior-announces-funding-for-new-scientific-studies-as-part-of-president-obamas-climate-action-plan

¹⁶ http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=president-requests-\$16-billion-in-fiscal-year-2014-for-us-fish-and-wildlife&_ID=29434

Conclusion

Calendar year 2013 was another outstanding year for the United States in fulfillment of our obligations under the North American Agreement for Environmental Cooperation. The success achieved in enforcing our environmental laws and safeguards, increasing levels of environmental protection, researching the technology to better understand our environment, and investing in infrastructure and strategies to combat climate change was encouraging. Additionally, the development of clean energy projects, the funding of monitoring networks, and inter-agency agreements to address pollution and waste management are clear signals that U.S. federal agencies are employing a comprehensive approach to environmental management. Moving forward, we will seek to expand the inter-agency dialogue on the North American environment. We are steadfast to the commitments made under the North American Agreement for Environmental Cooperation and will continue to seek new ways to further protect and improve the state of our environment in the years to come.