

Power of Flight Grant Recipients

2017

Under the Gulf Coast Conservation Grants Program:

Wildlife Mississippi will place 80 acres of grassland in Jackson County, Miss., under permanent conservation easement. The project will protect an agricultural property that provides important habitat for the critically endangered Mississippi sandhill crane and is currently used by up to nine cranes, which is seven percent of the wild population, for foraging and raising colts.

The **Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies** will promote water conservation best management practices on 6,000 acres of agricultural lands within the ApalachicolaChattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River basin. The project will protect flow to benefit habitat for six federally listed mussel species, gulf sturgeon and a host of other endemic species native to the Chipola River and ACF basin.

Under the Atlantic Shorebirds Flyway Initiative:

The **Georgia Department of Natural Resources** will map horseshoe spawning areas in Georgia, confirm red knot consumption of horseshoe crab eggs, and use this information to highlight key areas where human disturbance threatens spring staging sites for red knots. Previous efforts continued through this project include a state-wide band re-sight survey for American Oystercatcher and a Wilson's Plover predator exclosure project. The project will fund two island shorebird technicians to monitor nests, trap predators, and advocate for nesting American Oystercatchers and Wilson's Plovers.

2016

Under the Gulf Coast Conservation Grants Program:

Operation Migration will conduct monitoring and outreach efforts in support of conserving the critically endangered whooping crane and building a self-sustaining population in the Southeast. Activities include tracking and monitoring young-of-year cranes following their release, as well as adult cranes in the population during north-south migration flights and spring nesting activities and conducting web outreach to increase general awareness and provide migration progress updates.

The **Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute** will map the distribution, abundance, timing and habitat affiliations of birds during the spring and fall migrations around the Gulf Coast using weather radar and citizen-collected (eBird) data. Resulting maps will be used by conservation planners and policymakers as decision support tools to develop Gulf-wide conservation priorities for North America's migratory birds.

Under the Atlantic Shorebirds Flyway Initiative:

The **Georgia Department of Natural Resources** will support shorebird conservation efforts from Tybee Island to Cumberland Island, focusing on priority species including Red Knot, Whimbrel, American Oystercatcher and Wilson's Plover. This project will assist with predator control to address the emerging

coyote depredation threat, shoreline change planning to examine inlet dynamics in light of potential future sea level changes and establish beach stewards at key foraging and breeding areas that are heavily used by beachgoers.

2015

Under the Gulf Coast Conservation Grants Program:

The **Alabama Wildlife Federation** will use capacity building, expanded partnerships, technical assistance and outreach to increase landowner engagement and on-the-ground stewardship on private lands in Alabama Gulf Coast counties to expand habitats for shorebirds, waterbirds and waterfowl, as well as terrestrial birds and wildlife.

Conservian will continue to work with partners in Alabama and Mississippi to monitor and restore beach-nesting bird populations and habitats. The project will use monitoring methods and best management practices and supervise local volunteer stewards to implement comprehensive shorebird management.

The **Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences** will create a Florida shorebird recovery business plan built on the work of the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Conservation Business Strategy and American Oystercatcher Recovery Business Plan. The project will strive to recover the imperiled American oystercatcher, snowy plover, black skimmer and least tern.

The **Nature Conservancy** will support two new conservation corps and a veteran's conservation corps pilot demonstration to undertake projects that will improve long-term habitat health for native plants and animals and train young people to participate in the expanding Gulf restoration.

State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry will implement experimental vehicle speed reduction measures and provide shelters for snowy plover chicks in order to increase beach-nesting bird population on Gulf Islands National Seashore, which is currently limited by poor reproductive success related to predators and vehicular collision mortality.

Under the Longleaf Stewardship Fund:

The **Alabama Forest Resources Center** and partners will continue habitat management benefiting the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) on Enon and Sehoy plantations and adjacent properties. The project will also maintain habitats through regular prescribed burning and mid-story control, along with planting 100 acres of longleaf pine in gaps of dying shortleaf.

The **Longleaf Alliance** and partners will monitor approximately 110 groups of RCWs for breeding activity, band nestlings of successful breeding pairs and translocate approximately 30 subadults from the pool of successful fledglings on the Apalachicola National Forest (ANF). The project will also collect cluster, cavity-tree and cavity-status data on multiple clusters on the ANF. These efforts provide critical status data on 275 of the approximately 559 active RCW clusters on the ANF, a significant contribution to the world's largest RCW population.

2014

The **Mississippi Land Trust** will apply fire on 7,760 acres of private lands to reintroduce fire to inactively managed pinelands and enhance bird habitat for multiple species of high conservation need. Targeted, localized prescribed burning campaigns will encourage the sustained use of prescribed burning by private landowners and ultimately seek to return fire to the landscape on a large scale. Partners include US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Mississippi Forestry Commission, National Wild Turkey Federation, Mississippi Prescribed Fire Council, and Mississippi State University Extension Service.

The **College of William and Mary** will conduct a Red Knot resight program along the Atlantic Coast of Georgia in fall 2014 and spring 2015 to be paired with ongoing programs within the Delaware Bay. The data produced on the population utilizing Georgia in the spring and fall will be used to analyze ongoing questions regarding Red Knot habitat choice decision-making on the south Atlantic Coast. The project will also develop a partnership to address the management needs of the species. Partners include the Center for Conservation Biology, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Non-Game Section, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The **Dauphin Island Park & Beach Board** will preserve, restore, and properly manage 133 acres of critical birding habitat at the Audubon Bird Sanctuary on Dauphin Island by executing a comprehensive prescribed burn regimen and implementing an invasive species management strategy to enhance birding and wildlife habitat. In addition, highly visible educational signage and outreach and service opportunities will engage the public in conservation and natural resource issues. Partners include Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Alabama Forestry Commission, and The Nature Conservancy.

The **Alabama Wildlife Federation** (AWF) will begin its second phase of a program that delivers technical assistance to landowners for the establishment or enhancement of native grasses. AWF will continue to maintain the 10 demonstration sites developed during the project's first phase and develop case studies and management bulletins to serve as educational tools for resource professionals, contractors and landowners. The project will establish 5,000 acres of native warm season grasses and support several bird species conservation initiatives in Alabama. Partners include US Fish and Wildlife Service, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Auburn University.

2013

The **Georgia Department of Natural Resources** will create, maintain and restore longleaf forests and native fallow openings on 3,550 acres of Silver Lake Wildlife Management Area as part of an ongoing long-term project.

Conservian, Inc. will work closely with Alabama and Mississippi partners to monitor and restore beach-nesting bird populations and habitats and use local steward volunteers to expand field capacity.

Milliken Forestry Company, Inc. will monitor 200 red-cockaded woodpecker clusters in the Apalachicola National Forest over a four-year period. Project will translocate at least 30 red-cockaded woodpeckers from the forest to populations on private, state and federal lands throughout the Southeast to support the Southern Range Translocation Cooperative (SRTC), a group of public and private entities working to

recover the species. Based on previous years of total SRTC available birds, this grant will support approximately 22% of the total annual SRTC allocation of birds.

Operation Migration will reintroduce whooping cranes to the Southeast, potentially adding 45 cranes toward the goal of achieving a self-sustaining population. They will use specially modified light aircraft to imprint and guide young-of-year Whooping cranes along a predetermined seven-state, 1,285-mile migration route each fall from Wisconsin to Florida, with the hope of leading a dozen juveniles next fall.