



PRESS RELEASE

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DORIS DUKE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Environment Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two Grants Totaling More Than \$10 Million Awarded to Accelerate the Implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans

**\$7.5 Million Will Establish a “Land Protection Initiative” in the Southeast
\$2.6 Million Will Create an “Opportunities Fund” to Advance Plans Across U.S.**

New York, NY – The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation today announced two grants totaling more than \$10 million to acknowledge and expand the enthusiasm surrounding state wildlife action plans.

“The wildlife action plans created last year by every state offer new hope for all concerned about the conservation of wildlife and the protection of open space in America,” said Dr. Joan Spero, president of the foundation. “The goal of these grants is to help turn good state plans into a series of specific actions that measurably benefit our nation’s wildlife.”

The larger of the two grants - \$7.5 million over three years to The Conservation Fund in partnership with The Nature Conservancy - will be focused on the southeastern states of North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama.

An estimated \$6 million will be devoted directly to the protection of lands identified as high priorities in the wildlife action plans of these four states. The remaining funds will be used to undertake educational efforts and build strategic partnerships.

According to Dr. Mark Shaffer, director of the foundation’s Environment Program, the grant builds on DDCF’s historic focus on land acquisition. “Conservationists have long recognized the need to set aside land to protect wildlife, but have lacked a common agenda or set of priorities,” he said. “That’s what makes the state wildlife action plans so valuable – they lay out the roadmap for wildlife conservation for everyone to follow, from the private sector to state and local government to NGOs.”

“Here in the Southeast, states have made an enormous investment of time and money producing high-quality wildlife action plans, and it’s great that the foundation has chosen to recognize that work,” said Rex Boner of The Conservation Fund. “This grant will really give us the opportunity to jumpstart the implementation of the wildlife action plans in these four states.”

The second grant - \$2.6 million over three years to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) – will focus on enabling the creation of an “Opportunities Fund,” a re-granting mechanism designed specifically to support projects that will accelerate the implementation of state wildlife action plans across the country through the creation of new public-private partnerships and the coordination of conservation efforts among the many organizations and agencies that can contribute to conservation.

“State wildlife plans provide the conservation community with a common set of priorities,” said Craig Groves of the Wildlife Conservation Society, who will be coordinating the grant program. “The Opportunities Fund will enable conservation organizations to get ideas off the ground quickly, work in partnership with state wildlife agencies, and undertake the most important actions, achieving results for wildlife and their habitats.”

Wildlife action plans were first conceived in 2001, when Congress mandated that each state develop a comprehensive strategy for conserving its wildlife. The states each submitted their plans to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for approval in October 2005.

In developing their plans, state agencies were careful to include game and non-game species, common species as well as endangered ones. They identified and prioritized critical wildlife habitat, in many cases using the latest technology to map these lands. They also brought multiple stakeholders to the table, establishing a common conservation agenda that enjoys broad acceptance within each state.

Impressed by the inclusive, collaborative, proactive and state-based principles guiding the plans, the foundation decided in 2004 to utilize state wildlife action plans as a focusing mechanism for its environmental grant-making, which seeks to accelerate the conservation of essential habitats in the U.S. Since 2004, the foundation has awarded \$38 million in grants to a cohort of 16 organizations working to promote and implement the state wildlife action plans on multiple fronts across the country.

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (www.ddcf.org) is to improve the quality of people’s lives through grants supporting the performing arts, wildlife conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke’s properties.