

**GRANT AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**TO:** U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
DIVISION OF FEDERAL AID  
HADLEY, MA

**FROM:** MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
WILDLIFE AND HERITAGE SERVICE  
ANNAPOLIS, MD

**GRANT AGREEMENT:** I-1-3 (7/1/2006-6/30/2012)

**GRANT TITLE:** LANDOWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM, TIER 1

**TOTAL COSTS:**

**PERFORMANCE PERIOD:** 7/1/2009-6/30/2010

## **PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**State:** Maryland

**Project Title:** Landowner Incentive Program Tier 1: Administration of a private landowner assistance program to enhance, protect and restore habitats for species at risk in the state of Maryland.

**Principal Investigator:** Linh D. Phu

**Time period:** 7/1/2009-6/30/2010

### **Objectives:**

1. Establish priorities for species and habitats at risk on private lands.
2. Partner with other agencies to develop strategies for outreach and habitat restoration practices.
3. Build a program for fairly and equitably delivering those practices on the ground.

### **Summary of Work Conducted:**

Maryland's Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) has continued to grow in both capacity and partnerships in the last 5 years after implementing its first project. To date the program has provided funding for 65 different projects and a total of 81 landowners. As more landowners and potential partner organizations learn about the program, through partnerships, news stories, presentations, website searches, word of mouth and targeted direct outreach, LIP continues to have a steady stream of inquiries from private landowners and potential partners. During this performance period we have been in contact with 3,120 new landowners via direct mailing, emails and/or phone calls. Of these landowner contacts, 3068 were made as part of an informational direct mailing outreach to landowners in the Patapsco River Valley in regards to treatment of Wavy Leaf Basketgrass on private lands that is threatening habitat on adjacent park lands. From all of our new landowner contacts, program biologists conducted site visits and provided technical assistance to 35 landowners. To date, we have signed and administered a total of 86 landowner grant agreements. Twenty of these agreements were signed within this performance period between 7/1/2009-6/30/2010 (four signed between 7/05-6/06, 22 signed between 7/06-6/07, 14 signed between 7/07-6/08, 11 signed between 07/08-06/09 and 15 already signed for the next period between 7/10-6/11).

As the program continues to grow, LIP biologists have been able to work with partner agencies to develop and implement larger scale projects and leverage our funds. The program will continue to do so, to ensure continuity of our projects as our funding for this grant program draws to a close. These efficient and effective partnerships have also helped us streamline our outreach efforts thereby allowing staff to spend more time developing and implementing new projects as well as overseeing multi-year projects currently underway. While we have been able to reduce our number of targeted outreach for various target areas, we continue our direct outreach for high priority projects including 3068 direct mailings to properties targeted for Wavy Leaf Basket Grass Treatment, a new invasive species in the region. Working with Maryland Department of

Agriculture's regional Weed Control Teams, our Invasive Species Specialist, and State Park Managers, LIP biologist have worked develop a rapid response plan to identify, map, and treat these new invasive plant species. In addition, LIP biologist continue direct outreach, such a phone calls, emails, and site visits for projects benefiting Bog Turtles, Baltimore Checkerspot Butterflies (and other rare butterfly species), Diamondback Terrapins, Delmarva Fox Squirrel, and Delmarva Bays. We also continue to revise our website with updated information about the program and have made all of our annual federal reports available online for public downloads.

In consultation with the specialist for each targeted habitat and/or species, we have continued to refine our habitat restoration objectives and practices according to the goals of Maryland's Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan. A more detailed description of the work we have accomplished in this performance period is given for each of our objectives below.

1. *Establish priorities for species and habitats at risk on private lands.*

We continue to work with our staff biologist to refine restoration goals and practices. Much of our work in previous performance periods (between 7/1/2006-6/30/2008) focused on the establishment and refinement of priorities for species at risk in the state. During the past performance period, our work has shifted to the application of these priorities for targeted outreach and restoration work.

2. *Partner with other agencies to develop strategies for outreach and habitat restoration practices.*

In addition to our direct outreach to individual landowners, we continue to expand our partnerships with other agencies and organizations to assist us in landowner outreach, providing technical assistance, and implementation of habitat restoration projects.

- We received 6 direct calls or emails from potential partners interested in how they could work with LIP to help achieve their conservation goals.
- We gave presentations about LIP at 4 different meetings or workshops involving potential partners. These included presentations at the following events:
  - Maryland Bog Turtle Partnership (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Chesapeake Bay Field Office, October 2009)
  - Alleghany Highlands Conservancy Monthly Meeting (April 2010)
  - Port Tobacco River Conservancy Meeting (May 2010)
  - Randallstown Community Outreach Meeting for Wavy Leaf Basket Grass (June 2010)
- As a result of these efforts, during this past performance period, we have continued our work with 27 partners representing 16 agencies and NGOs including: the Potomac River Conservancy, the Port Tobacco River Conservancy, The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Maryland Ornithological Society, the Izaak Walton League of America, Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Environmental Trust, The

Southern Maryland Agricultural Commission, DNR's Watershed Restoration Services and Forestry Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the University of Maryland, College Park.

3. *Build a program for fairly and equitably delivering habitat restoration practices on the ground.*

We continue to evaluate project applications using our ecologist review process to provide rankings and insight from expert ecologists both within Maryland DNR and outside the agency. In coordination with Heritage Biologists, we updated our databases and maps for the state watch-list species to reflect new data and improve our project ranking methods. Applications are reviewed as they are received, and we consistently complete reviews in less than our estimated 6-week timeframe.

**Benefits to species at risk:**

**Bog turtles (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*):** As a result of our partnerships with USFWS, Environmental Defense, and NRCS, LIP has successfully implemented a long-term prescribed grazing to restore two bog turtle wetlands on private lands in Maryland, and has improved another through chemical treatment of invasive woody species. This past summer marked our third consecutive successful grazing season. We have and will continue our work on this multiyear restoration effort as well as expand our efforts by working at 2 additional wetlands.

**Delmarva fox squirrels (*Sciurus niger cinereus*):** Our work in developing the Delmarva Fox Squirrel (DMFS) Forest Stewardship Payment continues. We continue to work with landowners involved in a 10 year agreement to conserve high quality habitat for Delmarva Fox Squirrels and continue to make stewardship payments to conserve these habitats. Bi-annual visits are conducted to monitor DMFS habitat and populations.

**Northeastern beach tiger beetle (*Cicindela dorsalis dorsalis*):** Our outreach to landowners with potential for tiger beetle habitat resulted in a project with a Community Association to treat invasive non-native stands of *Phragmites australis* in 2007. We continue to monitor these project areas to ensure that the habitat remains suitable for the tiger beetles.

**Rare Amphibians in Delmarva bays:** Rare amphibians, including the state endangered barking tree frog, the state threatened carpenter frog, and the state threatened eastern tiger salamander, were benefited by LIP outreach to landowners with properties containing Delmarva Bays. We continue to monitor our Delmarva Bays projects.

**Summary: Technical Assistance Performance Measures:**

For the period of 7/1/2009-6/30/2010:

# landowners provided technical assistance WITHOUT a formal agreement: 15

# landowners provided technical assistance WITH a formal agreement: 20

**Deviations:** None

**Recommendations for the continuance of project:** Continue project.