



## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Southwest Region

### NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release: June 18, 2009**

**Contact: Kim Forrest, 209/826-3508**

[Kim\\_forrest@fws.gov](mailto:Kim_forrest@fws.gov)

### **Secretary Salazar Announces Contract Award for Design and Engineering of Administrative Headquarters and Visitor Center at San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex**

SACRAMENTO - Today Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced the award of a contract to design and engineer a new administrative headquarters and visitor center for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC) in Merced County, California. Catalyst Architecture LLC of Prescott, Arizona, was awarded the contract to provide planning, design, construction management and inspection services for the \$9.775 million construction project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The proposed design for the new facility totals 15,300 square feet, and will be located on the southwest corner of San Luis National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), about 8 miles north of Los Banos, California. Refuge management and administrative functions will occupy approximately 10,500 square feet and include workspace for up to 39 people. The visitors' center is proposed to be 4,800 square feet, and may contain such features as a classroom, an auditorium, permanent and temporary interpretive exhibit spaces, and information desk.

"The economic recovery investments that the Department of the Interior is making will create jobs by building trails, restoring habitat, upgrading visitors' centers, and protecting national treasures in communities across America, while leaving a lasting legacy for our children and grandchildren," said Secretary Salazar.

The new facility will replace the present refuge offices, which have been operating out of a strip mall in Los Banos for more than 14 years. Eliminating costs for leased space will save the Service an estimated \$300,000 per year (\$25,000 per month). The strip mall location provided no facilities for refuge visitors, which have numbered about 70,000 people annually. The Service's Unified Design and Cost Model predicts visitation in the new facility to exceed 140,000 people annually.

"We are very excited to begin this much-needed project that will benefit the refuge and the local community for years to come," said Kim Forrest, Project Leader at the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex. "It improves management efficiencies by locating our staff on the refuge as well as provides a long overdue state-of-the art public facility that will help make San Luis NWRC a destination for families seeking to re-connect with wildlife and nature."

The administrative headquarters and visitor center will also be built to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification standards.

“Catalyst Architecture is an award-winning firm and experts in energy-efficient and sustainable design,” Forrest said. “The design will combine functionality with sustainability and beauty, blending the structure with the ecology of the site. When complete, the facility will be an exceptional work place for refuge staff and an asset to the local community.”

The Service expects the design phase to be completed by March 2010 with construction commencing by June or July. The Service anticipates qualified local subcontractors will be used during various phases of this project, and future contract awards will be announced when known. Contract opportunities for all ARRA projects are announced on the Internet at FedBizOpps.gov ([www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov)). More information about this and other U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service projects is available at <http://recovery.doi.gov/press/bureaus/us-fish-and-wildlife-service>.

Funding for these projects and hundreds more across the nation comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Of the \$3 billion appropriated to the Department of the Interior, the Act provides \$280 million for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – which includes \$115 million for construction, repair and energy efficiency retrofit projects at Service facilities, and \$165 million for habitat restoration, deferred maintenance and capital improvement projects. The Service will benefit from an additional \$10 million, which is administered by the Department of Transportation and is not included in the Service’s \$280 million appropriation that will be used to rebuild and improve roads on several national wildlife refuges. Projects will immediately create local jobs in the communities where they are located, while stimulating long-term employment and economic opportunities for the American public.

Recovery Act projects address long-standing priority needs identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its capital planning process. The Service worked through a rigorous merit-based process to identify and prioritize investments meeting the criteria put forth in the Recovery Act: namely, that a project addresses the Department’s highest priority mission needs; generates the largest number of jobs in the shortest period of time; and creates lasting value for the American public.

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Department of the Interior is making an investment in conserving America's timeless treasures – our stunning natural landscapes, our monuments to liberty, the icons of our culture and heritage – while helping middle class families and their communities prosper again. Interior is also focusing on renewable energy projects, employing youth and promoting community service.

For a full list of funded projects nationwide, go to the Department’s Recovery Web Site at <http://recovery.doi.gov/>. For a list of Service projects, click on the Service’s logo at the bottom of the page. Secretary Salazar has pledged unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Department of the Interior’s economic recovery projects. The public will be able to follow the progress of each project on the recovery web site, which will include an interactive map that enables the public to track where and how the Department’s recovery dollars are being spent. In addition, the public can submit questions, comments or concerns at [recoveryact@fws.gov](mailto:recoveryact@fws.gov).

Secretary Salazar also has appointed a Senior Advisor for Economic Recovery, [Chris Henderson](#), and an Interior Economic Recovery Task Force. Henderson and the Task Force will work closely

with the Department of the Interior's Inspector General to ensure the Recovery Program is meeting the high standards for accountability, responsibility and transparency that President Obama has set.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

###