

February 10, 2017



WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program: 1987-2017



Landowner watching 'his' waterfowl broods. Photo: USFWS/PFW

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30 Years of Successful Private Lands Conservation

By Matt Filsinger

Supporters of the Federal Duck Stamp are aware that funds go to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) to secure fee-title and easement acquisition in the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS). Besides the MBCF, there are also familiar efforts through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and parts of the Farm Bill that are very important for habitat security, especially for birds. However, readers should be familiar with other government programs that help restore and enhance vital habitat for birds and other wildlife. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) Program is a small but complementary effort to support on-the-ground activities on private lands.

Partners officially started in 1987, with its beginnings grounded in waterfowl management. One of the most important building blocks of the Partners Program was the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Mid-Continent Waterfowl Management Project (MCWMP). Beginning in the late 1970s, the MCWMP had a specific focus to increase waterfowl populations in a pilot area near Fergus Falls, Minnesota, through the use of innovative management techniques. Wetland drainage and the loss of upland nesting habitat were occurring at alarming rates during that time. In addition to FWS assets, Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) was the primary partner in this undertaking, providing a wealth of scientific, technical assistance, and on-the-ground support.



Duck rising from a PFW project.
Photo: USFWS/PFW

Out of this cooperative arrangement, a team comprised of FWS NWRS employees and DU biologists was formed. Looking at a landscape-scale, they quickly realized that to make a positive impact on waterfowl populations they needed to go beyond the traditional fee-title NWRS holdings and to better engage private landowners. Part of their vision included voluntary habitat restoration on privately-owned farms and ranches. Small prairie potholes were the primary focus of wetland restoration efforts and croplands were reseeded back to native grass to provide nesting cover. A connected patchwork, much like a patterned quilt, started to emerge with

the private lands projects located in close proximity to federal and state lands. The biologists started to gain trust and credibility within the local community, and in 1987 the Partners Program formed.

The model was quickly adopted in other areas of the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR), and it eventually spread throughout the nation. From those humble beginnings in the PPR, the Partners Program has grown to 260 biologists who fulfill habitat restoration needs in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Since 1987, the program has completed over 50,000 projects and restored 4 million upland acres, 1.5 million wetland acres, and over 12,000 miles of stream habitat. The Program has worked with over 45,000 private landowners and 5,000 partner organizations, and has had a leveraging ratio of 4:1 wherein the return on investment of federal taxpayer dollars is maximized. Essentially, for every single dollar provided to Partners, they find four other non-Service dollars to complete projects.

There are several guiding principles of the Partners Program, but none is more important than the recognition that success inherently is a product of working cooperatively with people. Of all the variables in the complicated equations driving our ecosystems, none is more important than the human element. Thirty years of this Program is proof that people on the land are the key to finding common sense solutions to complex ecological problems!

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TWO TRAVELING WATERFOWL ART SHOWS

Would you like to attract visitors interested in art, conservation, and the outdoors to your annual meeting, festival, gallery, visitor center, or building? The Federal Duck Stamp Art Exhibit Tour can bring award-winning original waterfowl art to your locale or event. The exhibit features the top entries as judged in the Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest, and each piece of artwork is a unique and detailed depiction of waterfowl and habitat.

Also, the Junior Duck Stamp Art Tour features art created by talented young people through their participation in a wetlands and wildlife conservation education program.

Both these exhibits are available free of charge to any organization that would like to host them. Both exhibits are made up of the original art (with the exception of the winning Federal Duck Stamp art, which is a high-quality giclee print) from the most recent contests.

If you would like to host either exhibit at your location or event, it's as simple as checking the [availability](#) and submitting an [application](#).



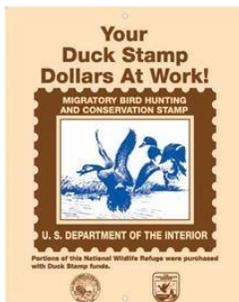
2015 FDS exhibit with Joe Hautman.
Photo: USFWS

You can find more details on these two traveling art shows from the informative Federal Duck Stamp Office [website](#).

Support the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to two fundamental goals:

1. To increase promotional and educational efforts among various target audiences concerning the stamp and the National Wildlife Refuge system.
2. To increase the regular, voluntary purchase of the stamp among hunters and non-hunters alike.



Join or renew your membership. Our membership is annual, corresponding to the year of validity for the Federal Duck Stamp, namely from the beginning of July to the end of the following June. Our "Regular Friend" fee is modest, only \$15, but all Friends are also asked to *pledge to buy TWO stamps per year*, joining with other organizations across the country in that effort.

You can access a secure online form to join the Friends - or to make a contribution - [via Razoo](#). Or you can access our simple mail-in [membership](#)

[form](#).

We encourage you to commit yourself to the promotion of the Stamp program, the Friends, and smart conservation through the sales and promotion of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp.

And don't forget support for the Jr. Duck Stamp Program which reaches tens of thousands of youngsters. One way to help is described here, on the right.

Shop at AmazonSmile
and Amazon will make
a donation to:

The Junior Duck Stamp Program
through our Friends

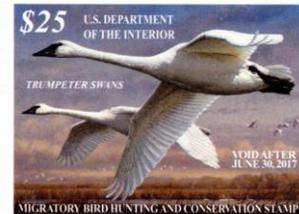
Get started

amazon smile

Get your 2016-17 Federal Duck Stamp

So, you don't have your 2016-2017 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp? You haven't bought your second stamp yet? (See our suggestion above.) We have some extra stamps on hand. Just send us a \$25-check (made out to "Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp") *along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope*, and we'll send you your stamp:

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp
P.O. Box 2143
Columbia, MD 21045



Note: We have a limited supply of stamps.

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