

News from the Non-profits



DU encourages waterfowl enthusiasts to "Double Up" for the ducks

New campaign aims to show Congress that hunters and others support an increase

Ducks Unlimited is asking duck hunters and other waterfowl enthusiasts to "double up for the ducks" by purchasing two federal duck stamps this year.

"The federal duck stamp has been an important tool in waterfowl habitat conservation for 77 years, but its ability to purchase and conserve important waterfowl habitat has been greatly diminished by inflation and rising land prices," DU CEO Dale Hall said. "The purpose of the 'Double Up for the Ducks' campaign is to show that hunters support the program and are willing to pay more for the duck stamp in order to conserve waterfowl habitat. We view the duck stamp as an investment in conservation, not as a tax on hunters."

This effort is part of a larger campaign currently being led by Ducks Unlimited to increase the price of the federal duck stamp. Since 1934, the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly known as the federal duck stamp, has added more than 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat in all 50 states to the National Wildlife Refuge System. The program is a highly efficient way for waterfowl hunters to invest in the future of their sport by conserving habitat; 98 cents out of every dollar is spent to acquire land and protect waterfowl habitat. Additionally, acquiring land under the National Wildlife Refuge System not only expands habitat protection, but also expands hunting opportunities and access.

While the federal duck stamp has proved a valuable conservation tool, its buying power has not kept pace with inflation. The cost of the stamp has not increased since 1991, marking the longest period in the program's history without a price increase. Simply put, \$15 is not what it used to be:

* Based on the Consumer Price Index, the stamp would need to cost \$24.26 today to have the same buying power that \$15 had in 1991.

* The total buying power of the duck stamp has decreased

by 64 percent since 1991.

* In 1991, revenue from the duck stamp enabled the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to acquire 89,000 acres of habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System at an average cost of \$306 per acre. In 2010, the USFWS was able to acquire only 32,000 acres because land values had tripled to an average of \$1,091 per acre.

Ducks Unlimited supports efforts to ensure that the investment waterfowl hunters have made to protect waterfowl habitat over the last 77 years is sustained into the future. And it is up to duck hunters and all who enjoy wetlands and waterfowl to continue the conservation legacy of the federal duck stamp. For these reasons, Ducks Unlimited supports legislation that would immediately increase the price of the stamp from \$15 to \$25, which would allow the program's revenues to keep pace with inflation.

"Increasing the price of the duck stamp will take an act of Congress," DU Chief Conservation Officer Paul Schmidt said. "To get Congress to act, waterfowl hunters must show their elected officials that their constituents care about conservation issues. The increased sales that will occur when hunters 'double up' on duck stamps will help conserve more habitat and also show Congress that hunters are serious about this issue."

Ducks Unlimited is the world's largest nonprofit orga-