



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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### WATERFOWL WIN BIG DURING MIGRATORY BIRD COMMISSION MEETING

Waterfowl scored the hat trick during the recent meeting of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, the advisory body responsible for administering the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. In three separate actions, the Commission approved a record number of waterfowl habitat land acquisitions and okayed 46 new projects for funding under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and Dow Chemical Company presented a check to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for over a half-million dollars for wetlands restoration.

#### Record Number of Projects Approved

The Commission, chaired by Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Mike Hayden, approved a record-setting 12 projects involving the acquisition of 23,143 acres of prime waterfowl habitat for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System. This represents an allocation of nearly \$21 million from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to purchase the land.

Those projects include Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge in Texas; Cape May and Edwin B. Forsythe refuges in New Jersey; Morgan Brake, Yazoo, and Panther Swamp refuges in Mississippi; Overflow, Holla Bend, and Cache River refuges in Arkansas; Back Bay refuge in Virginia; Grasslands refuge in California; and Hamden Slough refuge in Minnesota.

The fund consists primarily of money received from the sale of the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (the Federal "Duck Stamp") and must be used to secure waterfowl habitat.

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### New Wetlands Projects

The Commission then approved \$17,497,180 in funding for 46 major projects to conserve and improve threatened wetlands in the United States, Canada, and Mexico under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. These are the first projects selected for Fiscal Year 1992 funding in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, a 15-year program to conserve wetlands and enhance waterfowl populations in the three countries.

During Fiscal Year 1991, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, composed of Congressional lawmakers and Administration officials, approved a total of \$32 million for 101 projects in the three countries under the 1989 law.

The money is used to acquire and enhance wetland habitat for migratory birds and other fish and wildlife. The projects were recommended to the commission by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, a public and private body established by the Act. The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North American Waterfowl and Wetlands office provides staff support for the council.

The largest Federal sums proposed are \$2.5 million to renovate the Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and permanently preserve and enhance habitat within the Cheyenne Bottoms basin in Barton County, Kansas (recently designated as a Wetland of International Importance); \$2,275,972 to protect and enhance biological diversity on a portion of the 21,679-acre Chehaw-Combahee Reserve in Colleton County, South Carolina; and \$1,755,400 to acquire land near the cities of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, Virginia, to complete the core area of the North Landing River National Wildlife Refuge. A total of \$33,106,193 in state and private funds will be added to the Federal grants. This amounts to 1.75 partner dollars for every Federal dollar.

Two projects will receive large partnership donations in addition to Federal funding. In Cobscook Bay, Maine, \$1,355,000 in partnership money will be added to \$550,000 Federal funding to protect 1,941 acres of land and 10.8 miles of frontage on coastal wetlands in Washington County. Ten Mile Pond, Missouri, will receive \$2,668,625 in partnership money along with its \$338,750 to reestablish and restore wetlands, establish water distribution and control capability, and create a diversity of wetland types in Mississippi County.

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Funds for the projects come from interest on Federal excise taxes on hunting equipment sales, fines from violators of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and private contributions.

Approved projects also include:

California: Cosumnes River in Sacramento County--\$340,000; Howard Slough, Butte Basin in Glen County--\$118,500; and Llano Seco Unit, Butte Basin in Butte County--\$118,500.

Florida: Thomas M. Goodwin Waterfowl Management Area, Brevard County--\$84,500.

Idaho: Thousand Springs/Chilly Slough area of central Idaho--\$125,000.

Kansas: Kansas Playa Lakes (acquisition in Meade County, enhancements and leases in 12 other counties)--\$100,000.

Louisiana: Sediment diversions in Plaquemines Parish, near the mouth of the Mississippi River on Pass-a-Loutre Wildlife Management Area--\$292,000.

Minnesota: Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Lacqui Parle County--\$317,800.

North Dakota: Kelly's Slough wetlands restoration and enhancement in Grand Forks County west of the City of Grand Forks--\$214,497.

Oklahoma: Fee-title acquisition of bottomland hardwood forest, Deep Fork River between Tulsa and Oklahoma City--\$250,000; and Oklahoma Playa Lakes in Beaver, Cimarron, Harper, and Texas counties--\$50,000.

Virginia: Acquisition of 415-acre Whitehurst Marsh, 4 miles southeast of Back Bay, Virginia Beach--\$325,000.

Wisconsin: Uihlein Waterfowl Production Area in Winnebago County--\$51,000.

A total of \$7.8 million was approved for 27 projects in Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan in Canada. One project for \$116,500 was approved in Sinaloa, Mexico.

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### Partnership for Wetlands Protection and Restoration

Following the Commission meeting, Dow Chemical Company's Director of Global Issue Management, Ben Woodhouse, presented a \$550,000 check to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Foundation pledged to match the contribution on a one-to-one basis with Congressionally appropriated funds. This was the second installment on a \$3 million Dow commitment, the largest corporate donation to date to benefit the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Last year, Dow joined in a 4-year partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the Foundation, and the Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve and restore endangered wetlands throughout North America.

In recognition of Dow's wetland restoration efforts, Hayden presented Woodhouse with a framed print of the Federal Duck Stamp. Hayden said, "Dow has set a high standard for the corporate world in its protection of wetlands for waterfowl and other important values. Its participation and financial support exemplifies the North American Plan's public/private partnership objectives."

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission is made up of Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan, Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William Reilly, Senators Thad Cochran and David Pryor, Representatives John Dingell and Richard Schulze, and an ex officio member representing the state in which a project under consideration falls.