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**Federal Duck Stamp Task Group  
DRAFT Report**

**Bird Conservation Committee / Waterfowl Working Group**

**February 28, 2022**

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## 1. Task Group Purpose

In accordance with the motion passed at the meeting of the Waterfowl Working Group on March 9, 2021, the Waterfowl Working Group established the Federal Duck Stamp Task Group (Task Group hereafter) to work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to develop recommendations for consideration at the Association's 2021 Annual Meeting. The Task Group was requested to review stamp sales data (physical and e-Stamp) and other available information on sales, marketing, and policy issues pertaining to the sale of the "e-Stamp". The Task Group was to identify issues and make recommendations to improve the marketing and sales of the Federal Duck Stamp to hunters and non-hunters and to improve the implementation, use, and enforcement of the e-Stamp program. The Task Group was to consider in its deliberations the objectives of increasing waterfowl hunting, public access, and conservation activities on National Wildlife Refuges, improve processes for use of the e-Stamp in states currently using the e-Stamp, and to encourage others to adopt the e-Stamp, in addition to philatelic issues. The complete Terms of Reference and membership list of the Task Group is provided in Appendix A.

## 2. Summary of Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed based on the identification of issues and actions by the Task Group members. The recommendations and the associated short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions are more fully described within the report beginning on page 17. The Task Group recommends that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies endorse these recommendations and should work with the USFWS and other conservation organizations to implement the recommendations and action items.

### 1. **Increase capacity for marketing the Federal Duck Stamp and use of customer data to support waterfowl hunter R3 efforts, outreach to diverse audiences, reaching wildlife art enthusiasts, and generating more funds for wetland conservation.**

**Short-Term:** AFWA and state fish and wildlife agencies engage actively in communicating the conservation benefits of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, marketing the Federal Duck Stamp through existing channels of outreach and social media, and maintaining/increasing duck stamp sales through waterfowl hunter R3.

**Mid-Term:** Develop and support implementation of a communications strategy that targets groups identified in the NAWMP National Stakeholder workshops and survey.

**Long-term:** AFWA assist USFWS to secure funding and initiate an iconic branding marketing strategy for the Federal Duck Stamp that includes specific sales and revenue goals for waterfowl hunters, other hunters, nonhunters, wildlife viewers and others.

### 2. **Complete the transition to e-Stamp that began with Electronic Stamp Act of 2005 while taking steps to ensure connections to the wildlife art tradition.**

**Short-term:** By 2024, amend the Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013 to eliminate the 45-day expiration and make e-Stamp valid for the entire season.

**Mid-term:** AFWA in consultation with the Federal Duck Stamp Office develop a timeline and plan by March 2023 to ensure all states have adopted e-Stamp by 2028.

**Long-term:** Develop a national e-Stamp database

**3. Grow support from diverse audiences for the Federal Duck Stamp Program with a focus on the artwork contest.**

**Short-term:** Increase support of the Junior Duck Stamp Program and encourage more artists to enter the contest and participate in the Federal Duck Stamp Program.

**Mid-term:** Create the capacity to market to those interested in art through the e-Stamp Program

**4. Support a budget increase for the Duck Stamp Office via appropriations process and/or other means.**

**Short-term:** Support efforts of the USFWS to secure a minimum of \$1M in additional funds for the Duck Stamp Office through appropriations or internal budget allocations.

**Med-Term:** Encourage appropriators and the USFWS, through the Association's Legislative and Federal Budget Committee efforts, to adequately fund the Duck Stamp Office to transition to a digital Duck e-Stamp platform compatible with State e-Licenses, while also increasing efforts to market the physical stamp to a more diverse client base.

**5. Encourage the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) to work with the NAWMP community to enhance communications with hunters, bird watchers and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts to better inform them about Refuge areas acquired using Federal Duck Stamp funding and encourage stamp purchasers to access Refuges for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing.**

**Short-term:** State agencies and the NWRS should collaborate on improving communications to hunters, bird watchers, and the public about the conservation benefits of the Federal Duck Stamp and the lands acquired using Stamp revenues.

**Mid-term:** USFWS should examine the potential to increase the number of refuges that allow the use of a Federal Duck Stamp to access the refuge, including voluntary payment or self-pay systems, for all recreational uses.

### 3. Introduction

#### 3.1 Overview of Federal Duck Stamp Program

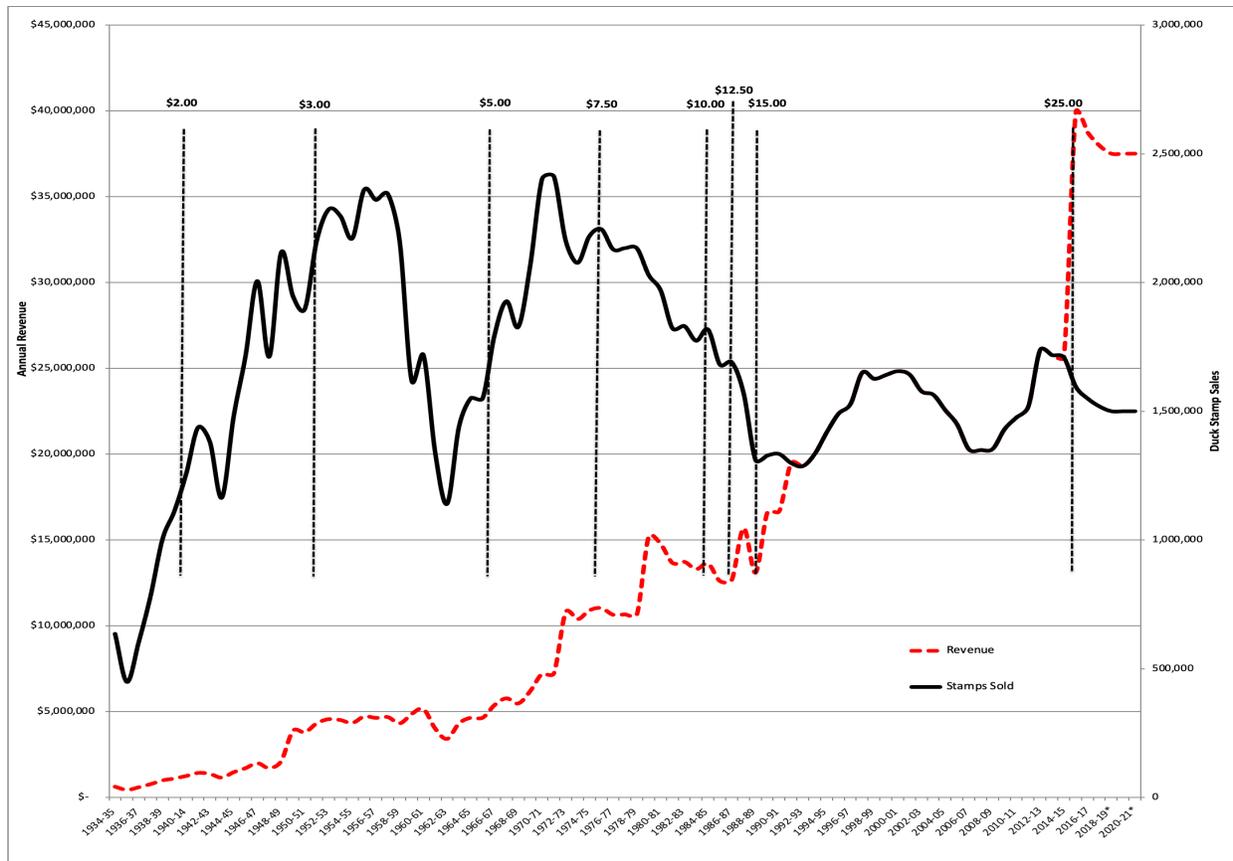
The need for protecting waterfowl populations was addressed in 1913 by the *Weeks-McLean Law* that prohibited spring hunting, marketing of migratory birds, and importation of wild bird feathers for women's fashion. It was the first U.S. law ever passed to regulate the shooting of migratory birds by establishment of hunting seasons. The Law was later replaced by the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* of 1918, which provided protection of migratory waterfowl and other species of birds from commercial exploitation.

On February 18, 1929, the *Migratory Bird Conservation Act* established a Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) to approve areas recommended by the Secretary of the Interior for acquisition with Migratory Bird Conservation Funds (MBCF). The law also allowed the expansion of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), which began in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt ordered a small island in Florida's Indian River to be forever protected as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds. The *Migratory Bird Conservation Act* made no provision for the appropriation of funds with which to purchase lands. The *Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act* was passed and became law on July 1, 1934. It created what is commonly called the "Federal Duck Stamp," but the official name became the *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp* in 1976. The 1934 Act came about because of the rapid decrease in waterfowl, which was a result of overshooting and a protracted drought in the critical waterfowl breeding areas in the 1930s.

The *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act* requires every waterfowl hunter 16 years of age or older to annually purchase and carry a Federal Duck Stamp and earmarks proceeds from the sale of stamps to purchase easements and buy and lease waterfowl habitat. Over the years, Congress has amended the Federal Duck Stamp numerous times to address validation of the hunting stamp by signature across the face of the stamp (1935), the art used for the stamp (1949), change the name from Federal Duck Stamp to Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp to invite broader support from nonhunters (1976), and initiating price increases or potential to garner fees from licensed products (1949, 1959, 1972, 1979, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1991, 2014). It also passed complementary legislation to create and support the Junior Duck Stamp Program (1994 and 2000).

The *Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act* originally set the price of the stamp at \$1, however amendments over the years increased the price and changed other key administrative elements (see Figure 1 and Appendix B). Attempts to adjust the price of the Federal Duck Stamp between 2008 and 2014 were unsuccessful. However, in December 2014 President Obama signed the "*Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014*" to authorize a price increase from \$15 to \$25 beginning in

2015. The Act also required that all amounts exceeding \$15 from the sale of each stamp only be used to acquire easements for the conservation of migratory birds.



**Figure 1 Trends of Duck Stamp sales and revenues versus price increases (adapted from data published at: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp/duck-stamp-dollars-at-work.php>) (Updated August 2021)**

The modern Duck Stamp program currently utilizing the 45-day e-Stamp relies on two key pieces of legislation: The *Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005*, which established the 45-day validity period with a 15-state pilot program for issuing e-Stamps, and the *Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013*, which built on the success of the pilot program to allow e-Stamps to be offered by any state. The pilot “e-Stamp” program began on September 1, 2007, with seven States participating (an eighth state joined later that year) and allowed waterfowl hunters to purchase an electronic stamp and use it as proof of licensure for 45-days from the day of purchase. They would receive a physical stamp in the mail within 45-days of purchase and were required to carry a signed physical stamp thereafter. After the successful pilot program, President Obama signed the “*Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act*” in 2014 to enduringly authorize the e-Stamp.

### 3.2 Aligning NAWMP and Federal Duck Stamp Program

In the *NAWMP 2012: People Conserving Waterfowl and Wetlands* and the *2018 NAWMP Update: Connecting People, Waterfowl, and Wetlands*, the waterfowl conservation community came together to make a major course correction to address new challenges posed by accelerating environmental and social system change. In response to a 49% decline in waterfowl hunters from 1970 to 2020 and concerns about declining involvement in wetland and waterfowl conservation, NAWMP 2012 added a new goal of “Growing numbers of waterfowl hunters, other conservationists, and citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation. To accomplish this goal, the Plan offered a new vision of waterfowl management that included a focus on increasing relevancy by strengthening emotional and pragmatic ties to waterfowl and wetlands. The Plan now includes objectives focused on increasing waterfowl hunter numbers, waterfowl viewer numbers, Federal Duck Stamp purchasers, and landowners participating in habitat conservation programs.

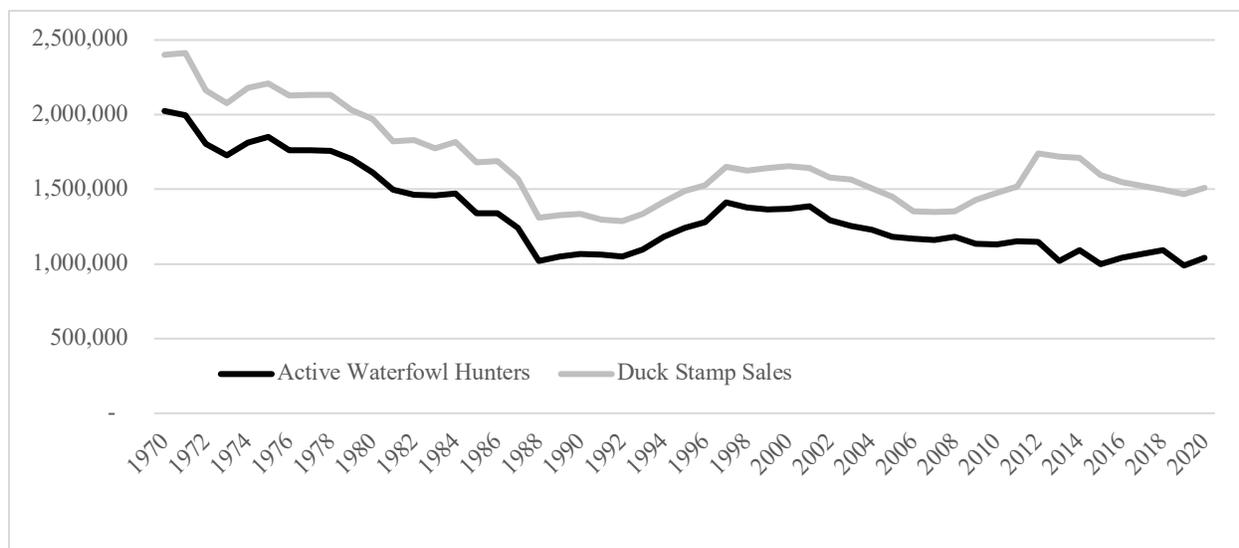


Figure 2 Trends of Duck Stamp sales and active waterfowl hunters

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) calls for all waterfowl conservation partners to participate in the course correction by taking a fresh look at their role in helping accomplish the Plans new goals and objectives. For the Federal Duck Stamp Program, it raises three key questions:

1. To maintain participation, are there changes that could be made to improve the customer experience for duck hunters and other purchasers?

2. How can the Federal Duck Stamp Program be used in conjunction with Hunter Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) efforts to help achieve Plan objectives of increasing hunter numbers?
3. Can the tracking of Federal Duck Stamp sales be improved so we can more effectively determine impacts of price increases or other changes on specific market segments, e.g., new recruits versus retained hunters, or waterfowl hunters vs. other stamp purchasers?

### **3.3 Aligning State Fish and Wildlife Agencies License Sales Systems and the Federal Duck Stamp**

A digital identity is a set of validated digital attributes and credentials for the digital world, similar to a person's identity for the real world. The digital identity uniquely identifies a person online or offline. It can include attributes such as a unique identity number, social security number, vaccination code, name, place, and date of birth, citizenship, biometrics, and more. With specific credentials it can be used to authenticate its owner, and with these credentials may also include a digital identity certificate to sign. State agencies are rapidly adopting digital identification systems (e.g. driver's license) and electronic licensing systems used by state fish and wildlife agencies have dramatically changed how hunters purchase their licenses. The electronic licensing systems are invaluable for capturing data that agencies can use to know their customers and what products they are purchasing. The data can also be used to better communicate with and market products/services to customers and increase sales of licenses and other associated products.

Currently, 44 of 49 states that allow waterfowl hunting (Hawaii being the exception) provide a means for electronic self-purchasing of licenses, and 42 of 49 states allow either digital or physical proof of licensure. The Task Group discussed the challenges of requiring a physical (paper) license or stamp and the many advantages of digital licensing systems. It was concluded that the preference of hunters is to have all their licenses in the same format, including state and federal duck stamps. Furthermore, the electronic licensing systems are invaluable for capturing data that agencies can use to know their customers and what products they are purchasing. The license data is critically important for recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) initiatives of the state agencies. To better understand the current and future direction of digital licensing, the Task Group conducted surveys of hunters, law enforcement, and state license system administrators and reached out to a few companies that are license vendors for numerous states for input of their views.

The following highlights input from license vendors that contract their services to state fish and wildlife agencies about their views on the licensing and other systems used by state agencies. Customers that they serve have undergone a "digital transformation" over the course of the past decade that has seen hunting and fishing licenses sold, and increasingly fulfilled and displayed in the field electronically. The ability to purchase and store licenses, permits, and stamps

electronically is a great convenience to customers who increasingly rely on their electronic devices to store digital copies of important documents (everything from movie tickets to airline tickets, insurance cards to drivers' licenses, etc.)

The ability to sell licenses, permits, and stamps electronically creates tremendous efficiencies for state fish and wildlife agencies. Selling electronic licenses, permits, and stamps provides state agencies with enhanced ability to collect and track customer information, and use that information to better serve and engage their customers. Additionally, the ability of hunters to provide "proof" of proper licenses, tags, stamps, etc. makes it easier for law enforcement officers to ascertain those contacts are in compliance.

License vendors are leaders in the transition away from paper-heavy processes and help move state fish and wildlife agency license systems to modern digital solutions which can be trusted by customers, law enforcement and agency employees. The vendors provide flexible, industry-leading technology platforms for hunting and fishing licenses, tags, special hunt draws, and harvest reporting and they collect data used for reporting and analytics to proactively recruit, retain, and reactivate customers.

The hunting and fishing industry is abandoning outdated processes and paper-based systems, and is rolling out products to digitize their processes to engage customers. They are moving to keep pace with e-commerce platforms which are equally intuitive and secure. This transition from long-standing paper processes to digital solutions is seeing great successes. For example, in one state the license vendor is helping replace a long history of using postcard surveys to estimate the harvest of deer and turkeys. These surveys were slow and cumbersome, and often didn't provide reliable information about deer and turkey harvest at the county level. The electronic harvest reporting system provides harvest information much faster, and with a much higher level of detail, thus more responsive management of deer and turkey populations is occurring. In other states, a mobile app allows for electronic tagging of bear, deer, and turkey and works even when offline. This type of system has eliminated the need to maintain check-stations where hunters previously had to bring their deer or turkey to be checked-in. Electronic tagging allows hunters to confirm their harvest by answering a few simple questions and once they hit save and submit, their harvest is recorded, and a confirmation number is assigned.

Many states now offer mobile apps that allow customers to purchase licenses online, view existing licenses, and sync their documents on the app for offline access. Users may download multiple customer licenses on one device to offer one secure digital license document location for families and groups. These mobile apps also include helpful information such as regulations, sunrise and sunset times, boat ramp maps and locations, and law enforcement contact details. Law enforcement officers also benefit from electronic licensing where they can access digital records in near real time. A key feature of systems designed for law enforcement is offline access to the system database—officers can query the customer database using a snapshot of the database from when the officer was last connected to the central database. These systems also

provide for encrypted QR Codes on license documents - promotes contactless interactions, such that officers can scan QR codes on customer documents and/or mobile apps to view customer and license information and apps can save a local record of the previously scanned customers, allowing officers to easily look back at their day's activity.

It is apparent that state license systems are undergoing a transformation. Through this transformation, agencies are providing better customer experiences in a digital era, enhancing law enforcement tools, and increasing capacity for marketing, R3, and monitoring progress towards achieving R3 objectives. For the Federal Duck Stamp Program, this raises three questions:

1. Are there changes that could be made to the Federal Duck Stamp that would better align it with state license sales systems?
2. Can the Federal Duck Stamp be better integrated into state R3 efforts that rely on license-sales data?
3. Are there steps that could be taken to strengthen the state-USFWS partnership required to integrate federal duck stamp sales into state license sales systems?

#### **4. Issues Identification and Discussion**

The Task Group held four conference calls to identify issues and to develop recommendations to improve the Federal Duck Stamp program for hunters, artists, the public, and law enforcement. Additionally, subgroups held separate calls to address issues in more detail within four areas: (1) monitoring and marketing; (2) e-Stamp; (3) artists, artwork, and the artwork contest; and (4) wildlife refuges.

The Task Group solicited stakeholder input through web surveys and more in-depth discussions with all four flyways (*see Federal Duck Stamp Stakeholder Survey Results*). We sent a web-survey to law enforcement administrators in all states that offer e-Stamp to gain a better understanding of enforcement issues and received # responses. We surveyed license sales managers from the 49 states that offer waterfowl hunting to learn more about their current licensing requirements, use of license sales data for marketing/R3, and compatibility of their systems with the e-Stamp. We received responses from all 49 states. We surveyed random samples of e-Stamp purchasers from 13 e-Stamp states and physical stamp purchasers from 12 of those same states. We received 5,786 responses from e-Stamp purchasers and 5,108 responses from physical stamp purchasers. See Appendix G for the survey report.

##### **4.1 Marketing, R3, and Relevancy**

The marketing group was led by some of the nation's best in marketing and R3. This included Chris Willard, COO of S3 and one of the authors of the 2016 National Hunting and Shooting

Sports Action Plan, Phil Seng, President of D. J. Case & Associates; and Jenifer Wisniewski, Chief of Outreach and Communication for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. She is a nationally respected marketing and communications professional and under her leadership Tennessee had the highest growth of hunting and fishing license sales in the United States in 2020.

The group used a survey of state license system managers to first identify state capacity to use digital platforms for state license sales. They found that 44 states currently allow individuals to purchase electronic hunting licenses and of these states, 39 indicated they were using their license sales databases for marketing purposes. It was noted that this capability does not exist with the Federal Duck Stamp. The current federal purchasing system does not capture any customer data that can be used for marketing, nor does it identify “why” the stamp was purchased—it is not known how many stamps are sold to hunters versus other types of customers. There also is no way to track the individual purchase histories necessary to identify hunters as new recruits, retained, or lapsed hunters. As a result, it is not possible to monitor effectiveness of R3 programs or monitor impacts of duck stamp changes on the specific components of participation – recruitment, retention, and reactivation, or stamp collection. The Federal Duck Stamp purchasing system is designed based on an increasingly outdated paper-based system that worked well in the past but is not designed for the future. In its current form, it is at odds with the vision, goals, and objectives of the course correction desired in the NAWMP.

#### **4.2 E-Stamp**

The e-Stamp group was led by three flyway council members, five flyway technical section representatives, and one flyway law enforcement committee member. These members reported that each of their respective flyways raised the following concerns about the e-Stamp expiring after 45 days and the requirement that waterfowl hunters then carry a signed physical stamp.

- 1) It leads to complicated regulations when hunters are allowed to use one type of proof of licensure for a portion of the season and are then required to use a different type for the remainder of the season. Wildlife regulations are typically established to sustain wildlife populations, provide equitable opportunity, and promote public safety. Mandating a change in proof of licensure during the season does not fulfill any of these purposes.
- 2) It is uncertain how well hunters understand the requirement to possess a signed physical stamp and if they are complying.
- 2) Waterfowl hunters are put into an undesirable situation when the physical stamp does not arrive within 45 days their e-Stamp is valid.
- 3) E-Stamp purchasers often receive the physical stamp within a few days of purchasing the e-Stamp, creating a situation where the hunter possesses two valid forms of the same license while having paid for only one. Enforcement officers are encountering

situations where the physical paper stamp is handed off to another hunter who presents it as a license to hunt, never having purchased their own. They have also heard of hunters selling their physical stamp to others.

- 4) One component of retaining hunters is providing them with as satisfying a hunting experience as possible while ensuring sustainable populations, equitable opportunity, and public safety. Flyway members were hearing from hunters that they like the e-Stamp but not the 45-day expiration period.
- 5) Law enforcement is moving in the direction of maintaining digital records that can be easily accessed from the field or office. There currently is no way for Law Enforcement to access a single database to determine validity of proof of e-Stamp purchase when that e-Stamp has been purchased in another state.

The results from the stakeholder surveys allowed us to better determine the magnitude of these issues. The results revealed the following:

- 1) Requiring hunters to carry a paper license, like a physical duck stamp, is a thing of the past with 42 of 49 states allowing hunters to display digital proof of licensure.
- 2) All stakeholder groups support eliminating the requirement to carry a physical duck stamp after 45 days with the strongest support among hunters with 79% supporting the limitation of the 45-day expiration, followed by law enforcement administrators at 65%, and license managers at 71%. Ten percent or less from each group opposed this measure.
- 3) Requiring hunters to switch methods of displaying proof of licensure adds additional complexity with 38% percent of e-Stamp purchasers indicating they were not even aware of this requirement. It's easy for hunters to assume that e-Stamp would be valid for the entire season when this is the case for all their other digital hunting and angling licenses.
- 4) Law enforcement expressed more concerns about problems associated with expired e-Stamps than stamp passing. Forty-one percent of 23 law enforcement respondents indicated hunting with an expired stamp was a major concern, 45% indicated it was a minor concern, and 14% indicated it was no concern. Twenty-six percent of 22 law enforcement administrators responding indicated stamp passing was a major concern, 65% indicated stamp passing was a minor concern and 9% indicated it was no concern.

It is likely the extent of the enforcement issues varies from state to state depending on the popularity of waterfowl hunting in the state. We offered law enforcement administrators an opportunity to provide additional comments. Here is what the respondent from Mississippi said:

*For the past 2 years we have conducted a joint weekend detail between the USFWS OLE and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. Each year the Federal Stamp violations surpassed any of the waterfowl violations that the field officers encountered. [The] majority was hunters possessing the 45-day documentation of purchase but hunting past the 45 days. Other violations concerned the failure to sign their stamps on the cards which we consider a floating stamp. All-in-all, the Federal Stamp violations seemed to show that it was double the violations than any other waterfowl violations noted... Too much confusion for the hunters, prosecutors, judges, and the loopholes allowing unethical hunters to slip through without purchasing a Federal Stamp for the conservation of waterfowl and the other species that share that same habitat and landscape.*

When the e-Stamp was first introduced in 2005, it represented an innovative way to provide more convenience to hunters. At the time, relatively few states allowed digital proof of licensure and the 45-day expiration period was much less of an issue. Since then, society and state license systems have continued transitioning into the digital era, but the Federal Duck Stamp program has not. Updating the e-Stamp program would better align with state license systems and would dramatically increase the Duck Stamp Program's role in contributing to the new goals and objectives of the NAWMP.

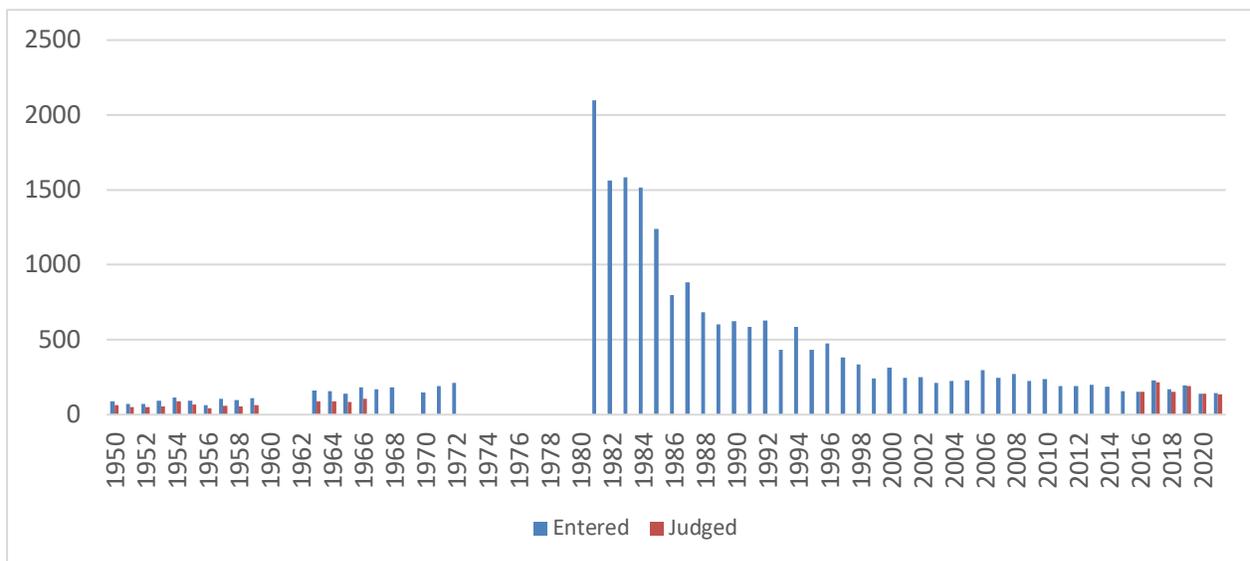
### **4.3 Artists, Artwork, and the Artwork Contest**

The Artwork subgroup was led by Barbara Volkle, president of Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp and Lionel Grant, Jr., Michigan's Junior Duck Stamp Coordinator. The group focused its discussion on the artwork, the contest, the operation of the contest, the artists, marketing of the contest, judging, and first-day-of-sale events. The discussion began with an examination of the current situation and progressed to a discussion about what should the future of the Duck Stamp artwork and contest look like.

The Federal Duck Stamp represents an important way to connect people to nature through art by providing an opportunity to celebrate nature each year, reach diverse audiences, and encourage the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl. The art contest also provides unique opportunities to raise awareness of and support for waterfowl and wetland conservation as evidenced by its inclusion in Last Week Tonight with John Oliver and Kara Fennell receiving over 2.5 million views as she invited TikTok subscribers to follow her progress creating an entry for the Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. The third goal of NAWMP emphasizes the need for "growing numbers of waterfowl hunters, other conservationists and citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation." The Federal Duck Stamp program should and can be a key initiative that contributes to this important NAWMP goal.

To sustain the Duck Stamp Art Contest over the long-term, it will be essential for the program to continue to evolve in response to broader challenges facing wildlife artists today. The Federal Duck Stamp contest reached its peak popularity in the 1980s, primarily fueled by the growing interest in wildlife art and the associated expansion of the limited-edition print market. In the

book, *Wildlife Art: 60 Contemporary Masters & Their Work*<sup>1</sup>, the author notes three potential reasons for reduced participation in the Federal Duck Stamp contest along with declining interest in Federal Duck Stamp from early 1980s through 2000. First, the increase to a \$100 entry fee may have discouraged amateurs from entering. Second, the introduction of state duck stamp contests in all fifty states may have saturated the duck stamp print market. Third, increased availability of prints from top artists may have provided alternatives to the Federal Duck Stamp. Since that time, the market for limited edition prints and Federal Duck Stamp prints has further contracted. As a result, the Federal Duck Stamp Contest no longer provides the financial incentive to artists it once did. After 2000, participation in the Federal Duck Stamp Program continued to decline with the average number of entries dropping from 252 in 2000-2009 to 182 entries in 2010-2021(see figure 3).



**Figure 3 Federal Duck Stamp Contest Entries (source: USFWS)**

Two more recent issues that likely have contributed to recent declines in participation. First, the rules of the Duck Stamp art contest have been in flux over the past six years. In 2016 there was a proposal to include a nongame migratory bird species within the artists’ compositions. While this proposed change was not finalized, final contest rules were not made available to the artists until later in the contest season. In 2018, and again in 2020, contest regulations imposed a mandatory theme of “celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage”; necessitating a requirement to include a hunting element in each entry and changing the criteria for qualified judges. In both 2018 and 2020, final rules were again published late in the contest season. The 2018 change also

<sup>1</sup> Pursley, Joan Muyskens. 2000. *Wildlife Art: 60 Contemporary Masters and Their Work*. Portfolio Press: Cumberland, MD.

necessitated a different list of eligible species (the list had been advertised for the previous three years). The mandatory hunting theme and inclusion of a hunting element remained for the 2021 contest.

Many artists expressed frustration with last minute rule changes, changing species lists, and not being given enough time to gather reference materials to satisfactorily develop their compositions. Some were unhappy with mandated art requirements and wanted to have more creative freedom of expression. Fortunately, contest regulations have been reversed beginning with the 2022 contest. There will be no mandatory theme and no requirement for inclusion of nonmigratory bird species: hunting accessories will again be optional. This reversal is expected to bring back artists who have not participated in recent years.

The artist style commonly adopted for the Duck Stamp entries was another key issue of the subgroup's discussions. Today, many successful wildlife artists use painterly, brushy, or impressionistic techniques, while staying true to the ideal of portraying animals and birds authentically.<sup>2</sup> However, throughout the Duck Stamp program's history, the artwork has increasingly shown a photo-realistic style. The style of artwork is an element that is influenced by the Duck Stamp regulations. These regulations outline specific criteria for the judges to consider when choosing the winning design. These include that the species should be anatomically correct, set in its natural habitat, and suitable for reduction into a stamp. Regulations also require that entries be two-dimensional, uniform in size (currently it is 7"x10"), and in landscape orientation. The artists can use any media except for photography and images cannot be computer generated or printed.

Each year, artists submit entries done in many art styles (e.g., pointillism, caricature, abstract) and or use non-typical media (e.g., charcoal, scratchboard, fabric). However, the accepted style for winning Duck Stamp selections by the judges tends to be photorealism. For some artists, the perceived lack of creative license may reduce interest in participating in the contest. Artists often fall into one of two groups (a) artists that set out to win the Duck Stamp artwork contest and adapt to what they think a Duck Stamp should look like; or (b) artists who don't think they will ever win but want to enter because they support conservation, enjoy participating in the contest, or for other personal reasons. As a result, artists that are seriously trying to win the contest tend to use a photorealistic style rendered in acrylic or oil paints.

The Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest faces significant short and long-term challenges; however, these challenges do not preclude the possibility of sustaining or growing the role of the Federal Duck Stamp in connecting people to nature, garnering publicity, and support for waterfowl and wetland conservation, and using as art as a bridge to new audiences. It will require more purposeful actions to encourage participation of artists, highlight the connections between art and conservation, and to reach new and diverse audiences through the appeal of art. In doing so, the Federal Duck Stamp has an important role to play in helping achieve NAWMP's third goal focused on better connecting with people.

#### 4.4 Refuges – Beneficiary of the Federal Duck Stamp Funds

For more than 80 years, the Migratory Bird Conservation Program and the Federal Duck Stamp Program have helped secure key habitats to sustain migratory bird populations. President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Jay N. “Ding” Darling as head of the U.S. Biological Survey (forerunner to the USFWS), and he was instrumental in the creation of a stamp, to be purchased by all waterfowl hunters, that would generate funds to pay for the acquisition of waterfowl habitat. In 1934, Congress passed the *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act*, which requires all hunters 16 years of age or older to purchase and possess a Federal Duck Stamp while hunting waterfowl. Today, as in the past, the Migratory Bird Conservation Program and the Federal Duck Stamp Program depend on the support of people who understand and connect with our natural world—people who understand the importance of wildlife resources and undertake conservation actions.

The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) is both a product and a component of the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation and embodies the two core concepts of wildlife held in the public trust and managing sustainable populations. The NWRS released its latest strategic plan, “*Conserving the Future*” in October 2011. They identified “*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.*” The NWRS also stated that they have worked especially closely with state fish and wildlife agencies in planning and administering the Refuge System, relying both on the authority and the expertise these agencies have in managing fish and wildlife.

The NWRS identified its vision to be:

*“The Service will enhance its close relationship with the state fish and wildlife agencies. We will coordinate with them on management of fish and wildlife within the Refuge System and on establishing population objectives. We will strive to increase hunting and fishing opportunities to a diverse constituency. We will also be a catalyst to find common ground with other refuge supporters with the goal of expanding the conservation constituency for the benefit of healthy wildlife and habitats for future generations.”*

America’s 555 national wildlife refuges and 38 Wetland Management Districts are present in every state and territory; and they provide important habitat to more than 700 species of birds, 220 types of mammals, 250 varieties of reptiles and amphibians, more than 1,000 species of fish and uncounted invertebrates and plants. Between \$35 and \$40 million is raised annually from Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Federal Duck Stamp) sales and more than \$1 billion has been generated since 1934, largely from waterfowl hunters. Nearly 98 percent of every dollar from the Federal Duck Stamp is spent directly on purchasing land or easements for the NWRS.

Easements conserve migratory bird habitats on private land associated with the national wildlife refuges and are open to hunting with permission from the landowner. Fee title land purchases can be either waterfowl production areas, which are open to public hunting, or lands encompassed by a national wildlife refuge, which may be either closed or open to hunting. All of lands conserved by MBCF or Federal Duck Stamp funds are part of the NWRS portfolio.

The *National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act* (1997) provided clear direction to the Service to “plan and direct the continued growth of the System in a manner that is best designed to accomplish the mission of the NWRS, to contribute to the conservation of the ecosystems of the United States, to complement efforts of States and other Federal agencies to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats, and to increase support for the NWRS and participation from conservation partners and the public.” To achieve these outcomes, the NWRS has stated that it needs to fully utilize electronic communications tools— such as websites, social media, and mobile applications—to invite and prepare people to visit refuges, give them up-to-date information on what is happening and develop a greater appreciation for natural values. This should include the acceptance of a digital Federal Duck Stamp, and digital hunting or fishing licenses.

In addition, the USFWS is building an iconic brand marketing and communication campaign for the NWRS, slated for launch in 2023, with the goal to empower wildlife and people to thrive by attracting younger and more diverse audiences to help achieve its conservation mission. This provides an unparalleled opportunity to leverage marketing of the Duck Stamp with marketing of the NWRS. Marketing and branding efforts for both campaigns could be designed to maximize collaboration opportunities while encouraging NWRS to work with the NAWMP community to enhance communications with hunters, bird watchers, and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts to better inform them about Refuge areas acquired using Federal Duck Stamp funding and encouraging stamp purchasers to access Refuges for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing.

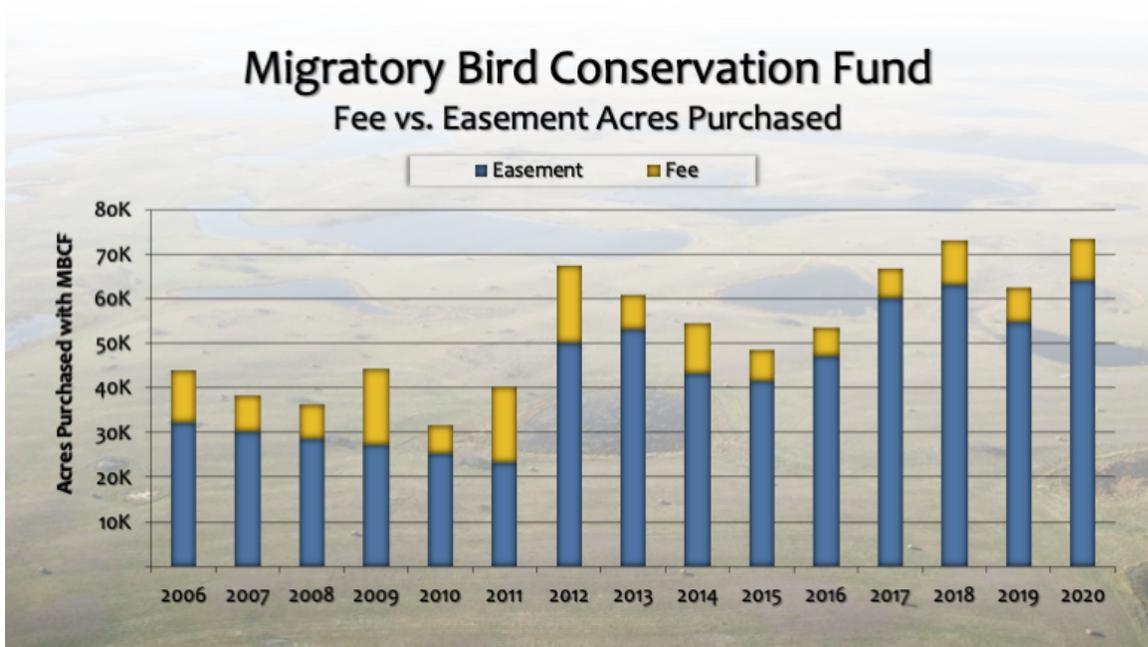
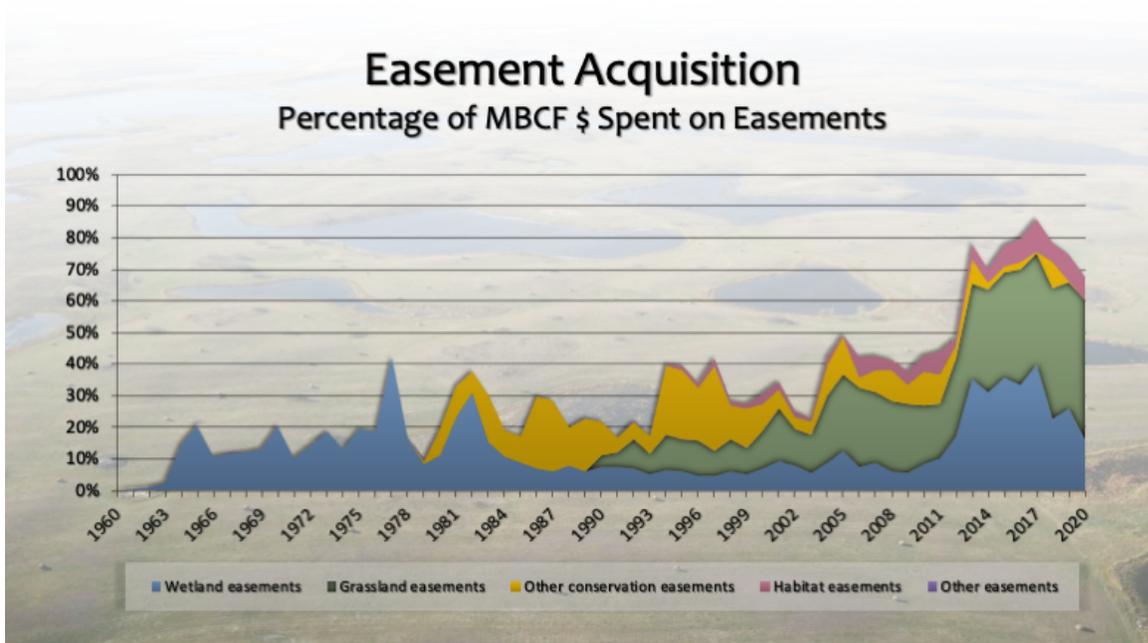


Figure 4. Acres acquired by easement versus fee title purchase

## **5. Recommendations of the Federal Duck Stamp Task Group**

The Task Group offers five broad recommendations that include short-term, mid-term, and long-term components. These recommendations are intended to better align the Federal Duck Stamp Program with the new vision for waterfowl conservation charted in the 2012 North American Waterfowl Plan and with state license sales systems. Each recommendation includes short-term, mid-term, and long-term components.

### **5.1 Marketing, R3, and Relevancy Recommendation**

**Increase capacity for marketing the Federal Duck Stamp and use of Duck Stamp customer data to support waterfowl hunter R3 efforts, outreach to diverse audiences, reaching wildlife art enthusiasts, and generating more funds for wetland conservation.**

As we move into the digital age, businesses of all types are discovering new, innovative ways to interact with their customers. Similarly, state agencies are participating in this

digital revolution and are using their license databases in new and exciting ways to support their R3 activities. Non-government organizations (NGOs) are doing similar things with their customer databases to garner support for conservation. Both state agencies and NGOs are recognizing the critical importance of marketing to engage traditional and new audiences. These strategies will lead to the achievement of the third or “people” goal of NAWMP.

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***Short-Term: AFWA and state fish and wildlife agencies engage actively in communicating the conservation benefits of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, marketing the Federal Duck Stamp through existing channels of outreach and social media, and maintaining/increasing duck stamp sales through waterfowl hunter R3.***

Rationale: These short-term actions will contribute to NAWMP's Goal 3: "Growing numbers of waterfowl hunters, other conservationists and citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation." More specifically, it will contribute to R3 efforts, reach new and more diverse audiences, garner support for conservation, and generate more funds for conservation.

We offer three examples. Tennessee has successfully increased license sales by "geofencing." They are able to target users at a specific location during a specific period of time by putting a digital, geographical "fence" around a small location (as small as one building) and tracking users' mobile devices that enter the fenced area within a pre-determined time window, marketers can identify users that are engaging in a specific activity. This technique works and can be used in many areas such as at outdoors expos and events, boat ramps, reservoirs, WMAs and other public lands, and sporting goods stores. Missouri has used hunter and angler license sales databases to identify lapsed participants who they then reach with targeted messages focused on specific themes like spending time with family or enjoying nature. Several state agencies and businesses now offer customers the opportunity to "round up" when purchasing a license or product to raise funds for conservation or R3 programs. Something similar could be set up for the Federal Duck Stamp. There is much more information on different marketing tactics on the [R3 Clearinghouse](#).

***Mid-Term: Develop and support implementation of a communications strategy that targets groups identified in the NAWMP National Stakeholder workshops and survey.***

Rationale: The conservation benefits of the Duck Stamp are poorly understood among the wildlife viewing community and the public, as well as among much of the hunting community. In the digital era, we have many more opportunities to communicate using a variety of platforms. At present, you can find general information about the Federal Duck Stamp Program, but it's difficult to find specific personalized information. Public lands purchased with Federal Duck Stamp funds are located in 43 states, yet it is extremely difficult to make direct connections between where Federal Duck Stamp dollars are spent and the benefits they provide for wildlife and people. For example, you cannot easily find where Federal Duck Stamp dollars are spent in each state and see an inviting path from this information to learn more about that refuge or WPA and what it offers outdoor recreationists. Joint Ventures and states are beginning to use story maps and other tools to

better connect with diverse audiences—the Federal Duck Stamp story needs to be told in a similar manner.

***Long-term: AFWA assist USFWS to secure funding and initiate an iconic branding marketing strategy for the Federal Duck Stamp that includes specific sales and revenue goals for waterfowl hunters, other hunters, nonhunters, wildlife viewers and others.***

Rationale: Iconic branding, like all branding, creates a consistent tone, vocabulary, illustrations, and color pallet that give a product of service a consistent image regardless of what part of the organization generated a message. It surpasses traditional branding in the scope of the discovery process used to develop the brand. Iconic branding examines cultural values to create a unique identity and to present a consistent, compelling story. The process identifies target audiences and tailors messages to those audiences providing efficiency, impact, and recognition. The ultimate success depends on the investment in sharing this brand with audiences using a variety of media platforms. Development and creation of an iconic brand for the Federal Duck Stamp would likely cost ~ \$300,000. This approach would apply a proven strategy for revitalizing iconic brands that has been leveraged by the National Park Service and National Geographic to generate exponential Return on Investment (ROI) while significantly growing conservation impact. The Federal Duck Stamp is one of the oldest, most iconic, and most successful tools in conservation history, and like MPS and NatGeo, would significantly benefit from an iconic brand refresh.

The USFWS is currently building an iconic brand platform for the National Wildlife Refuge System that will be launched in the spring of 2023. The effort is using a proven strategy for revitalizing iconic brands and bringing them in line with organizational, cultural and marketplace opportunities and positioning them for the future. Conducting an iconic brand refresh of the federal Duck Stamp would afford tremendous collaboration benefits. It would build on the massive, historic impact of the Duck Stamp Program and elevate it to become *the* iconic conservation brand in North America.

Once developed, state agencies, NGOs, and other partners would be able to integrate this branding to promote the Federal Duck Stamp through coordinated communications and marketing. The premise of NAWMP (1986) was that the cumulative effect of many local and regional conservation actions would result in dynamic but sustainable landscapes capable of providing for the physiological needs of waterfowl at prescribed levels. In a similar fashion, successful marketing and promoting an iconic brand is going to require local, state, flyway, and national partners each adding their voice to a shared message. Through AFWA and the NAWMP community, there will be opportunities to take advantages of economies of scale where some of the content and messages are developed nationally but then delivered through established channels at the state and NGO level.

## 5.2 E-Stamp Recommendation

### **Complete the transition to e-Stamp that began with Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005 while taking steps to ensure connections to the wildlife art tradition.**

Completing the transition to e-Stamp will provide better customer service, is essential for marketing, and preferred by law enforcement. Almost every aspect of our daily lives can be handled electronically and very soon every State will allow hunters to exhibit licenses electronically/digitally on mobile devices. Purchasing and exhibiting a Federal Duck Stamp to use as a license and/or privilege to hunt waterfowl should be no different. Moreover, effective marketing and outreach requires knowing your customers and developing relationships with them. Similar to what most states have already done, the Federal Duck Stamp program should complete the transition to a digital format, so we have a better understanding of who is buying duck stamps, why they are buying duck stamps, and then use this information for marketing/R3, monitoring effectiveness of marketing/R3 programs and progress in achieving NAWMPs waterfowl hunter R3, waterfowl viewer, and conservation supporter objectives.

***Short-term: By 2024, amend the Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013 to eliminate the 45-day expiration and make e-Stamp valid for the entire season (see: Appendix H).***

Rationale: This change is widely supported by waterfowl hunters, law enforcement, and state license sales system managers. It will enable to waterfowl hunters to carry their Federal Duck Stamp in a similar format as their other hunting licenses, it simplifies proof of licensure requirements, will avoid purchaser of e-Stamps from having two valid stamps (e-Stamp and physical stamp) at the same time, and eliminates a regulation that does nothing to sustain wildlife populations, provide equitable opportunity, or ensure public safety. This recommendation will require legislative change. We propose striking all references to 45 days in Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act and adding language to provide the Secretary of Interior flexibility to work with states to identify immediate and future options for the delivery of the physical stamp. These options would identify when physical stamps are delivered and who must receive them. The best likely option for timing of delivery would be agreed upon by States and the USFWS. Potential options for receipt would include requiring all hunters to receive the stamp as is the case now or making optional similar to the Canadian Wildlife Stamp.

***Mid-term: AFWA in consultation with the Federal Duck Stamp Office develop a timeline and plan by March 2023 to ensure all states have adopted e-Stamp by 2028.***

Rationale: The full potential of increasing the capability of the Federal Duck Stamp to contribute to NAWMP goals and objectives through marketing, R3, and monitoring will not be realized until all states participate in the e-Stamp Program. Once this happens, the

NAWMP community will be able to track purchase trends at state, joint/venture, national levels, develop marketing/R3 programs that target specific purchaser groups across state boundaries, create additional capabilities to better understand why individuals are purchasing duck stamps, and develop the capacity to introduce adaptive public engagement strategies with a common monitoring metric that can be used across scales.

Based on our survey of license sales system managers, 38% of the 21 states not offering the e-Stamp are extremely interested or very interested in implementing the e-Stamp and 38% are moderately interested or slightly interested in doing so. Managers from e-Stamp states offered encouragement to those who have not yet implemented it. They pointed out ease of use, convenience to hunters, and reduced workloads not having to handle an inventory of physical stamps. Thirty-three (33) percent of non-e-Stamp states indicated eliminating the 45-day expiration period would make them somewhat or much more likely to offer e-Stamp. Nineteen (19) percent indicated that it may be difficult to pass enabling legislation. In open-ended responses, managers from non-participating states expressed concerns about the number of staff and time required to go through the application process, the complicated MOU/cooperative agreement that is required, revamping state license sales systems, potential mismatch in calendar year for license sales, lack of authority to charge processing fees, and transferring funds to a federal contractor. Through AFWA, e-Stamp states and license sales vendors like Aspira, Brandt, Kalkomey, Sovereign Sportsmen Solutions (S3) and Terra Technology Group may be able to help states navigate through the implementation process and recommend changes to eliminate remaining barriers.

***Long-term: Develop a national e-Stamp database***

Rationale: The Federal Duck Stamp can be used as a license to hunt migratory birds in any State during the year, thus conservation law enforcement officers need a way to instantaneously verify that a person has the Federal Duck Stamp when other methods of digital exhibition have failed. For example, if a stamp is sold via the State of Michigan license vendor and the hunter is in Ohio, Ohio Wildlife Officers do not have access to the State of Michigan's licensing system to verify the Duck Stamp is valid. A database accessible to officers across the nation will allow them to quickly identify if a hunter holds a valid stamp purchased in any state or from a federal vendor.

States already have experience making data available for state, flyway, and national analysis through the Harvest Information Program. In the digital era, the capabilities to efficiently, effectively, and safely transfer data are improving at a rapid pace. With safeguards in place to address concerns about transferring data to a centralized database either maintained by the USFWS or some agreed upon entity, it would provide the foundation for monitoring progress towards NAWMP goals and objectives, dramatically

increase the potential to develop and coordinate marketing and R3 programs and offer the potential to be integrated with HIP to improve the sampling frame used to estimate waterfowl hunter numbers and harvest.

### **5.3 Artists, Artwork, and the Artwork Contest Recommendation**

#### **Grow support from diverse audiences for the Federal Duck Stamp Program with a focus on the artwork contest.**

Wildlife art remains an important way to connect people to nature; however, simply maintaining the status quo will be insufficient to maintain the duck stamp's successful tradition of doing so. The decline in monetary value of duck stamp prints, fewer entries, reduced quality of entries, and elimination of many state duck stamp programs all point to the need for a fresh look at how to build upon the Federal Duck Stamp's storied past.

#### ***Short-term: Increase support of the Junior Duck Stamp Program and encourage more artists to enter the contest and participate in the Federal Duck Stamp Program.***

Rationale: The Junior Duck Stamp Program offers a unique way to introduce children to nature, especially in urban locations, and to encourage them to develop a connection to the environment and take an active role in the conservation of waterfowl species. The reach of the program is much greater because of the activities associated with the program and the large number of people that see the artwork. In 1999, more than 44,000 students entered state competitions. In recent years this number has fallen to about 25,000 students who enter the contest annually. There are opportunities to grow this program by building on the existing infrastructure that includes coordinators in each state.

Increasing support for the Junior Duck Stamp is one way to develop the next generation of Federal Duck Stamp contestants, but other steps to encourage artist participation are needed as well and this will require engaging the broader art community in attracting more artists to participate in the Duck Stamp artwork contest. These efforts should be targeted at university art departments, art supply retailers, and to the numerous artist groups and associations across the country. It will require more effort put toward making artists aware of the contest and making these artists aware of the connection between their art and conservation. Winning artists serve as an important face of conservation by spending approximately 18 months working closely with the USFWS. However, more engagement with artists (winning, competing, and future artists), creating opportunities for greater recognition and financial gain for artists, regulations that do not constrict artists' creativity, and fewer restrictions (real and perceived) on art styles and accepted media, may all help increase the number of artists who are willing to serve as ambassadors for conservation. To increase the funding of habitat conservation, marketing and promotional efforts are required to increase interest in the art and the contest. State fish and wildlife agencies, non-government conservation organizations, Flyway Councils, and others should include information

about the contest in all their education and outreach efforts. Building a strong “conservation through the arts” ambassador corps should be a goal of the Federal Duck Stamp program.

The Task Group recommends the following potential next steps:

- Make more artists aware of the contest
- Make artists more aware of the connection between art and conservation
- Identify the “other” reasons to participate – love waterfowl, part of contest, part of conservation initiative that raises \$40M per year
- Provide more publicity for the artist(s) in their own state or region
- Eliminate the mandatory theme that has stifled creativity in past few years
- Allow artists to enter artwork until they win, then have a mandatory pause from entering (this has been done in the past)
- Explore alternatives to the entry fee (\$125) as some artists feel it is too high.
- Allow more creative license in art entry requirements.

The artwork contest itself can sometimes motivate people to enter and create sustained local support. The Task Group discussed the potential for action in the following areas:

- Having states and other conservation organizations do more to promote participation in the contest by more local artists.
- Encourage successful contestants and/or others to reach out to non-traditional audiences given that it often depends on the state as to what local marketing occurs (National Duck Stamp Office provides postcards, calendars, or other materials, but sometimes word-of-mouth is best promotional strategy.) Suggestions included:
  - Targeting University art departments
  - Developing marketing and promotional materials
  - Targeting state and local artist groups

***Mid-term: Create the capacity to market to those interested in art through the e-Stamp Program***

Rationale: The transition to e-Stamp offers the potential to identify why individuals are purchasing a Federal Duck Stamp and as a result will provide an important new tool to directly engage art enthusiasts or stamp collectors. Once identified, states, NGOs, Federal Duck Stamp Program, and Refuges could provide more direct outreach to these groups with messages focused on taking next steps to get involved in conservation and to purchase stamps in the future. Once established, Federal Duck Stamp partners could focus on expanding their reach to art enthusiasts and collectors who have not yet purchased federal duck stamps. Strategies like geofencing described earlier could be used art shows, art galleries, museums and other locations frequented by art enthusiasts to share the duck stamp art story with new and diverse audiences.

Building this capacity will require development of different electronic platforms for the sale of Federal Duck Stamps that are less hunter-centric than most license sales websites or apps. It will then require adding a question or two at the conclusion of an e-stamp purchase asking for the reason of purchase and if they would be interested in receiving information in the future. Finally, it will require working with partners to integrate this e-stamp purchasing options into several different platforms ranging from NGO websites and art-focused websites to state and federal agency websites and mobile apps.

#### **5.4 Increased Funding for USFWS Duck Stamp Office Recommendation**

##### **Support a budget increase for the Duck Stamp Office via appropriations process and/or other means.**

The USFWS's Duck Stamp Office requires additional staff and operating resources to advance the program into the future. Current resources only allow the Duck Stamp Office to sustain current programs and does not permit activities to grow or even improve any of their programs. Additional resources would permit the Federal Duck Stamp Office to attract new artists to the artwork competition, reach out to networks of artists and the art supply industry and would help expand engagement with more schools for the Junior Duck Stamp program. New resources would help the USFWS to increase their ability to market the Federal Duck Stamp, Junior Duck Stamp, and to tell the public more fully about all the great conservation work that the NWRs does with the proceeds of the sale of Federal Duck Stamps. All these actions have the potential to increase sales of the Federal Duck Stamp, thus conservation of wetlands and waterfowl.

***Short-term: Support efforts of the USFWS to secure a minimum of \$1M in additional funds for the Duck Stamp Office through appropriations or internal budget allocations.***

Rationale: The USFWS budget for the Federal Duck Stamp Office has been approximately \$560,000 per year for the past few years. The Service has requested that the budget be increased by \$1M in FY2022, however Congress has not passed a 2022 appropriation bill for the Department of the Interior at the time of writing this report. Formal communications of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' support for increasing the funding for the Federal Duck Stamp Office would signify that the Federal Duck Stamp program is important to state fish and wildlife agencies. Additionally, it would send a message that States support greater efforts to promote the artwork program, have more states adopt the e-Stamp program, and encourage efforts to increase stamp sales.

***Med-Term: Encourage appropriators and the USFWS, through the Association's Legislative and Federal Budget Committee efforts, to adequately fund the Duck Stamp Office to transition to a digital Duck e-Stamp platform compatible with State e-Licenses, while also increasing efforts to market the physical stamp to a more diverse client base.***

Rationale: The current Federal Duck Stamp program is based on the production and distribution of the physical stamp; however, hunters and license vendors are rapidly transitioning to digital platforms that allow hunters to provide proof of licensure via digital devices. The Federal Duck Stamp program should be moving in the same direction in collaboration with its state partners and to remain relevant to customers' expectations. Additional on-going funds are essential to make this transition to the digital-age and to establish new digital platforms that would encourage millennials and other potentially new outdoor recreationists to purchase the e-Stamp in support of conservation. A key element to implement this transition would be new funding for development and implementation of a targeted marketing strategy, in collaboration with States, using data collected through e-Stamp sales.

## **5.5 National Wildlife Refuge System Recommendation**

**Encourage the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) to work with the NAWMP community to enhance communications with hunters, bird watchers and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts to better inform them about Refuge areas acquired using Federal Duck Stamp funding and encourage stamp purchasers to access Refuges for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing.**

The NWRS consists of 568 national wildlife refuges, including Waterfowl Production Areas, covering over 146 million acres. Nearly 98 percent of every Federal Duck Stamp dollar is spent directly on purchasing land or easements for the NWRS, which manages land located in every state and territory. In partnership with the State fish and wildlife agencies, the NWRS could increase its efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate (R3) hunters and to attract a more diverse client base to explore the outdoors. A key element to attracting a diverse audience is to work in collaboration with States to communicate the benefits of conservation achieved using the Federal Duck Stamp funds.

***Short-term: State agencies and the NWRS should collaborate on improving communications to hunters, bird watchers, and the public about the conservation benefits of the Federal Duck Stamp and the lands acquired using Stamp revenues.***

Rationale: Increasing sales of the Federal Duck Stamp and maintaining the tradition of the waterfowl artwork will only occur if hunters, bird watchers and the public fully understand the linkage between the Federal Duck Stamp and conservation on the landscape. Given the decline in the wildlife art market, the greatest value of the Stamp

artwork can be realized through the NWRS efforts to conserve wildlife habitat; however, existing clients and potential new customers must better understand the connection between the purchase of their e-Stamp or physical stamp and the lands acquired by the NWRS for conservation.

***Mid-term: USFWS should examine the potential to increase the number of refuges that allow the use of a Federal Duck Stamp to access the refuge, including voluntary payment or self-pay systems, for all recreational uses.***

Rationale: Access to many Refuges is restricted or limited for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing even when lands are acquired by MBCF dollars. State agencies should encourage the NWRS to continue expanding access to Refuge lands in support R3 efforts and to increase participation in other outdoor recreation activities. This effort to increase access should also be accompanied by more Refuges accepting the Federal Duck Stamp as an entry pass.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A - Federal Duck Stamp Task Group Terms of Reference**

#### **Federal Duck Stamp Task Group**

#### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Reporting to: Waterfowl Working Group**

**May 31, 2021**

#### **Task Group Purpose:**

In accordance with the motion passed at the meeting of the Waterfowl Working Group on March 9, 2021, the Waterfowl Working Group is establishing the “Federal Duck Stamp Task Group” to work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and to develop recommendations for consideration at the Association’s 2021 Annual Meeting. The Federal Duck Stamp Task Group will review stamp sales data (physical and e-Stamp) and other available information on sales, marketing, and policy issues pertaining to the sale of the “e-Stamp”. The Task Group will identify issues and make recommendations to improve the marketing and sales of the Federal Duck Stamp to hunters and non-hunters and to improve the implementation, use, and enforcement of the e-Stamp program. The Task Group should consider in its deliberations the objectives of increasing waterfowl hunting, public access, and conservation activities on National Wildlife Refuges, improving processes for use of the e-Stamp in states currently using the e-Stamp, and to encourage others to adopt the e-Stamp, in addition to philatelic issues.

#### **Specific Discussion Topics:**

The Task Group will examine a broad suite of issues including but not limited to:

- Strategic marketing of the stamp to hunting and philatelic customers,
- Development of an iconic branding campaign and increasing marketing efforts,
- Improvement of the data collection for sales of both the physical stamp and e-Stamp,
- Improvement of the administration and implementation of e-Stamp program,
- Use of the stamp to support hunter recruitment and retention,
- Potential for the Federal Duck Stamp to increase the support for conservation from hunters and non-hunters,

- Hunting on National Wildlife Refuges when revenue from the Federal Duck Stamp is used to acquire land,
- Impact of restrictions on use of revenue from the 2014 price increase for easements only,
- Establishment of new uses of the stamp (i.e. day-access to refuges) to encourage youth to visit refuges, and
- Other issues as deemed important by the Task Force members.

### **Meetings:**

The Task Group will meet at the call of the Chair via conference call and/or web-enabled meetings for the majority of its deliberations, but if deemed necessary, the Chair may schedule one face-to-face meeting at a central location. It is anticipated that approximately four meetings will be required between May and September 2021. Task Force members will be responsible for their own costs to participate in face-to-face meetings.

### **Membership:**

The Federal Duck Stamp Task Group will be Chaired by Andrew Raedeke (Missouri Department of Conservation) and will include representatives from the Bird Conservation Committee or Waterfowl Working Group; and may include representatives from the following: Flyways, USFWS, AFWA, DU, TNC, National Wildlife Refuges Association, and the Friends of the Migratory Bird / Duck Stamp. The Task Group will be supported by Dean Smith of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

### **Members**

Andrew Raedeke (Chair)	Missouri Department of Conservation
Dean Smith (Support)	Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Billy Dukes	South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Kari Duncan	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Suzanne Fellows	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Duck Stamp Office)
Ken Fowler	National Wildlife Refuges System
Anne Glick	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Jeff Gordon	American Birding Association
Lionel Grant	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Jr. Duck Stamp)

Matthew Leibengood	Ohio Division of Wildlife
Luke Naylor	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Ted Nichols	New Jersey Fish and Wildlife Division
Shaun Oldenburger	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Brandon Reishus	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Andrew Rochon	Wildlife Habitat Canada
Frank Rohwer	Delta Waterfowl
Viviana Ruiz-Gutierrez	American Ornithological Society
Phil Seng	DJ Case and Associates
Justin Shannon	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Michael Szymanski	North Dakota Game and Fish Department
Barbara Volkle	Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp
Chris Willard	S3
Jenifer Wisniewski	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

## **Appendix B - Significant Legislative Changes to the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934**

- Price increased to \$2 on August 12, 1949;
- Price increased to \$3 on August 1, 1958, net proceeds of Federal Duck Stamp sales were dedicated for the acquisition of migratory bird refuges, and gave the Secretary of the Interior authority to open a maximum of 40 percent of any migratory bird refuge to the hunting of game birds (Waterfowl production areas were exempt.) (Public Law 85-585);
- Removed the 40 percent hunting limitation on October 15, 1966, where hunting was compatible with the major purposes of the designated area (i.e. migratory bird refuge), but Congress restated the 40 percent rule did apply to hunting of migratory game birds on any area that was (or would be) established as an inviolate sanctuary for migratory birds (Public Law 89-669);
- Authorized price increases up to \$5 on December 22, 1971 as determined by the Secretary of the Interior after considering the increased cost of lands (Public Law 92-214);
- Authorized the sale of stamps in 1976 by the Department of the Interior and provided for deposit of receipts into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (Public Law 94-215);
- Price increased to \$7.50 on October 30, 1978, if all sums appropriated to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund in the proceeding fiscal year were obligated (Public Law 95-552);
- Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of November 10, 1986, in Section 201, authorized charging of entrance fees at designated units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, except when a person holds a valid Federal Duck Stamp, a valid Golden Eagle Passport, a valid Golden Age Passport, or a valid lifetime admission permit. Section 202 provided for an increase in the price of the Federal Duck Stamp to \$10 in 1987 and 1988, \$12.50 in 1989 and 1990, and \$15.00 thereafter (Public Law 99-645);
- On November 14, 1988, the Wetlands Loan Act and Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act amended the 1934 Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to finance the marketing expenses involved in the Federal Duck Stamp Licensing Program from the royalties derived from that program (Public Law 100-653); and
- On October 19, 1998, the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Promotion Act authorized The Secretary of the Interior to use funds from sales of the Federal Duck Stamp, not to exceed \$1,000,000 in each of fiscal years 1999 to 2003, for promotion of additional sales with a MBCC approved annual marketing plan (Public Law 105-269).
- On December 18, 2014, President Obama signed the “*Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014*” to authorize a price increase from \$15 to \$25 and created a subaccount under the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to which the Secretary of the Treasury must transfer all amounts exceeding \$15 from the sale of each stamp. Additionally, funds from the subaccount can only

be used to acquire easements for the conservation of migratory bird (Public Law No: 113-264).

- President Obama also signed the “*Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act*” on December 18, 2014, to permanently authorize the electronic duck stamp (Public Law No: 113-239).
- The Duck Stamp artwork regulations, 50 CFR Part 91, were changed effective May 8, 2020, to stipulate that the Duck Stamp contest would include a permanent theme of “celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage,” and that it would be mandatory that each entry include an appropriate waterfowl hunting scene and/or accessory. The regulation also specified new qualifications for judges involved in the contest.
- On August 24, 2021, the USFWS published final regulations governing the annual Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Contest. This final rule removes the “celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage” theme and the mandatory inclusion of an appropriate hunting element beginning with the 2022 Federal Duck Stamp Contest; changes the judging requirements to consider that the entries reflect this theme; and revises the qualifications for selection as a judge.

## Appendix C. Current e-Stamp Legislation and Possible Revisions

### FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

While enactment of the *Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013* broadened authority for the Secretary of the Interior to allow any state to issue e-Stamps, it retained the 45-day maximum period of validity established by the *Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005*. The most straightforward solution to fulfill the recommendations of the Task Group would be to simply remove this limit, revising 16 U.S. Code § 718s(c) as follows:

“An electronic stamp issued by a State shall be valid for a period agreed to by the State and the Secretary, ~~which shall not exceed 45 days.~~”

The advantage of this solution is that it requires the least revision to existing statute, but as it relies on agreements with the Secretary, assurance of validity for the desired period would require explicit direction, such as:

“An electronic stamp issued by a State shall be valid for ~~a period agreed to by the State and the Secretary, which shall not exceed 45 days.~~ **the entirety of a single waterfowl hunting season.**”

Either of these revisions would also allow delivery of the actual stamp to be delayed until completion of the single waterfowl hunting season, as the delivery requirement found in 16 U.S. Code § 718r references back to the same section:

“The Secretary shall require that each individual to whom a State sells an electronic stamp under this subchapter shall receive an actual stamp—

- (1) by not later than the date on which the electronic stamp expires under section 718s(c) of this title;
- (2) in a manner agreed upon by the State and Secretary.”

As this language would maintain the required delivery of an actual stamp **prior** to expiration of the e-Stamp, associated cost and the issue of holders potentially having two valid permits would still apply. While considerably more ambitious, one solution would be to remove the mandated delivery of the actual stamp and its timeline entirely, with delivery only made upon request:

~~“The Secretary shall require that e~~ Each individual to whom a State sells an electronic stamp under this subchapter shall **have the option to** receive an actual stamp—

- ~~(1) by not later than the date on which the electronic stamp expires under section 718s(c) of this title;”~~
- (2) in a manner agreed upon by the State and the Secretary