

Mark Trail Cartoon on Duck Stamp

This *Mark Trail* strip celebrates the legacy of the Federal Duck Stamp, one of the world's most successful conservation efforts. Drawn by Jack Elrod, Mark Trail has been teaching people to preserve our natural resources — woods, water and wildlife — for nearly 50 years. *Mark Trail* appears in 175 newspapers, reaching nearly 23 million readers worldwide.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will host its annual competition to select the design for the 2004-2005 Federal Duck Stamp this week in Washington, D.C. Judges will select a winner from among 214 entries to serve as the next Duck Stamp, which will go on sale July 1, 2004.

You can make a difference for wetlands conservation by buying a duck stamp, available for \$15 at most Post Offices, and at a variety of sporting goods retailers, including Wal-Mart, K-Mart and others. Money raised by stamp sales to hunters and conservationists goes directly to acquire habitat for migratory birds and also benefits dozens of other species. Since its inception in 1934, the Duck Stamp program has raised more than half a billion dollars that has been used to purchase more than five million acres for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Elrod was honored in 1988 by President Reagan for his efforts to promote the Take Pride in America campaign. In addition to a Sunday page in which Mark Trail urged everyone to "reduce carelessness and abusive activity such as littering, vandalism and theft, and wildlife poaching." Elrod has also produced a variety of materials for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help teach schoolchildren respect for the environment. In addition, Mark Trail is now the official spokes character for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), making him the voice of the National Weather Service and NOAA Weather Radio.