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For Immediate Release

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The Art of Conservation Celebrated at Expo

National Best of Show and "Art of Conservation Stamp Award" Winners Announced at 2005 State-Fish Art Expo

BLOOMINGTON, MN—Wildlife Forever was pleased to announce the national winners for the 7th Annual *Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest* during the fun-filled State-Fish Art Expo at Mall of America on July 2nd and 3rd. A distinguished panel of judges selected the "Best of Show" winners in three age categories. The winners of the 2005 *Art of Conservation Stamp Award* and Cheap Joe's Art Stuff, People's Choice Award were also recognized.

National Best of Show winners:

Grades 4-6	1 st Place	Justin Davis	Campo, CO
	2 nd Place	Carolyn Erickson	Newtown Square, PA
	3 rd Place	Samantha Gustin	Cambridge, ID
Grades 7-9	1 st Place	Evan Martin	East Earl, PA
	2 nd Place	Loren Kim	Fairfax Station, VA
	3 rd Place	Katherine Lou	Plymouth, MI
Grades 10-12	1 st Place	Connery Carson	Birmingham, AL
	2 nd Place	Tiara Jenkins	Pittsburg, MO
	3 rd Place	Jae No	Centreville, VA

2005 Art of Conservation Stamp Award winner:

Tiara Jenkins Pittsburg, MO

2005 Cheap Joe's Art Stuff People's Choice Award:

Ryan Wreede Litchfield, MN

"These talented State-Fish Art Contest artists are true ambassadors for our natural resources," said Douglas H. Grann, President and CEO of Wildlife Forever. "Americans nationwide will learn about fisheries conservation and local aquatic species by experiencing the beautiful artwork of our country's youth at the Expo and on the State-Fish Art website. With the addition of the *Art of Conservation Stamp* in 2005, the State-Fish Art Contest is spreading the good news about our outdoor heritage while generating funds for fisheries conservation," continued Grann.

More . . .

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The original six “Art of Conservation” stamps (1999 to 2004 best of show winners) are the beginning of an annual release that will feature a top quality winner from the State-Fish Art Contest. Representatives of the United States Postal Service were on hand to officially cancel each of the six newly released stamps. Only 200 of each stamp’s commemorative cover will ever be issued. A special “Wildlife Forever Station” cancellation was available in the Sam Goody Central rotunda of Mall of America. Proceeds generated by the stamps offered to sportsmen, anglers and collectors will be used to expand aquatic conservation education for children and to fund fisheries and habitat restoration projects throughout the United States.

The winning artwork was on display for hundreds of thousands of Mall visitors to admire and an Awards Ceremony acknowledged the hard work of the talented young artists. Wildlife Forever’s Chairman of the Board Scott Grieve presented each winner with a blue ribbon and prizes including Rapala rods, reels and lures and gift certificates for art supplies from Cheap Joe’s Art Stuff.

Special events for the Expo weekend included a gourmet pizza lunch and an artist’s workshop with the faculty of The Art Institutes International Minnesota and a pre-game ceremony on the playing field of the Metrodome before the Minnesota Twins game against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

Winners and their families traveled from across the United States to attend the State-Fish Art Expo and participate in the events at Mall of America. “The future of our wildlife heritage and natural resources depends on quality conservation education for today’s youth. The support of the parents in traveling all the way to Minnesota from as far away as Oregon, West Virginia and Mississippi shows that, together, we’re accomplishing that goal,” remarked Grann.

About the State-Fish Art Contest

To enter the contest, young artists create an illustration of their state-fish and a written composition on its behavior, habitat, and efforts to conserve it. Entries are categorized in three grade levels: 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Educators nationwide have utilized the full-color *State-Fish Art Contest Lesson Plan*, an interdisciplinary educational supplement specific to aquatic natural resources that includes extensive background information, a species identification section profiling each state fish, a glossary, and student worksheets. The lesson plan can be downloaded at no cost from the State-Fish Art website, www.statefishart.com.

About Wildlife Forever

Located in Brooklyn Center, MN, Wildlife Forever is a multi-species conservation organization dedicated to preserving America’s wildlife heritage. Wildlife Forever is the non-profit arm of the North American Fishing Club and North American Hunting Club, representing 1.3 million members nationwide. Working at the grassroots level, Wildlife Forever has funded conservation projects in all 50 states, committing millions of dollars to “on the ground” efforts. Wildlife Forever engages in conservation education, habitat restoration and enhancement, land acquisition, research, and management of fish and wildlife populations.

Sponsors for the *Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest* include The Art Institutes International Minnesota, Cheap Joe’s Art Stuff, Mall of America, Minnesota Twins, North American Fishing Club, and Rapala.

Judges for the 2005 State-Fish Art Contest were Larry Horn of The Art Institutes International Minnesota, Eric Gislason of Kent Hrbek Outdoors, Kevin Robb of Mall of America, Mark LaBarbera of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Kelly Gohman of the North American Fishing Club.

For more information visit www.statefishart.com, or contact Brett Richardson at (763) 253-0222 or brichardson@wildlifeever.org.

Digital copies of artwork available upon request.

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