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BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **2007 Duck Stamp Artist Richard Clifton at Blackwater Refuge Open House**

Richard Clifton, the 2007 Duck Stamp Artist will be at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Open House on Saturday, October 6 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Richard Clifton is a 45 year old Delaware native. He lives and works on a historic family farm that adjoins a National Wildlife Refuge and is surrounded by the inspiration for his art. His private gallery and studio overlook various conservation projects added to enhance wildlife.

A self-taught wildlife artist, he chooses acrylics as his medium and waterfowl as one of his favorite subjects. Since his first win in 1991, Richard has gone on to paint twenty-six Duck Stamps. He has displayed at notable Wildlife Art Shows across the country and his work has been featured in the National Art Packages of both Ducks Unlimited and the National Rifle Association.

Richard's win in the Federal Duck Stamp Competition in October of 2006 was the culmination of more than twenty years of work in the wildlife art field. His depiction of two swimming ring-necked ducks will grace the 2007-2008 Federal Migratory Bird Stamp.

Since 1934, sales of Federal Duck Stamps have raised more than \$700 million to acquire habitat for national wildlife refuges in all 50 states. Over 75% of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge was purchased with funds from the Federal Duck Stamp. Ninety-eight percent of the \$15 you spend on a Duck Stamp goes directly to saving the planet by purchasing wetland habitat for our national wildlife refuge system. It's known as the Federal Duck Stamp, but millions of birds, mammals, fish, insects and plants can thank the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp for the habitat they dwell on. Duck Stamp dollars are used to acquire wetland habitat that is home to a variety of wildlife. That's why more and more birdwatchers, hikers and others who simply enjoy nature are buying duck stamps. Protecting wetlands benefits birds and a host of other wildlife – but people benefit too, since wetlands help to filter our drinking water.

For many families, waterfowl hunting has been a tradition for generations. During the Dust Bowl era, wetlands and waterfowl populations were declining, and waterfowl hunters supported the creation of a revenue stamp to essentially "tax themselves" to raise funds for habitat conservation. Since then, every waterfowl hunter age 16 or older has been required to purchase a Federal Duck Stamp each year.

Many people collect the Federal Duck Stamp. As a result, some of the stamps are very valuable. In addition to all the other great uses of the Federal Duck Stamp, the current signed stamp can be used as an entrance fee to any of the National Wildlife Refuges that charge an entrance fee.

Join us on Saturday, October 6 in the many activities scheduled throughout the day, view the Maryland Junior Duck Stamp display presently on display in the Visitor Center, buy a 2007 Federal Duck Stamp and have it signed by Richard Clifton.