

## 2008 Federal Duck Stamp Contest Reporters' "Tip Sheet"

### **For more information, contact:**

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### **The Federal Duck Stamp Contest**

**America's longest-running reality show.** The Federal Duck Stamp contest is America's original reality show: contestants vie for a prestigious honor... a panel of judges decides who stays and who goes... the field gets narrowed... the tension builds... and finally a winner is chosen. The contest was instituted in 1949, and since then hundreds of talented and ambitious waterfowl artists have competed for wildlife art's highest honor: having their design chosen as the Federal Duck Stamp.

**Being Simon Cowell (of wildlife art).** Each year, five judges and one alternate are selected who can critically judge each Duck Stamp Contest entry based on the artistry and composition, biological accuracy of the species and habitat depicted, and suitability of the image to be reproduced as a 1 3/4" x 1 1/2" stamp. Interview a former Duck Stamp contest judge and find out how tough it really is to choose one winner from among hundreds of high-quality art entries. A full list of previous Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest judges is available online by going to: <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/federal/federal.htm> and clicking on the "Database of Judges" link on the far right.

**How a star is born.** Interview Duck Stamp contest winners from previous years who can tell you just how long it takes to create that winning art and how it feels to get "the call" telling them they've won. Federal Duck Stamp Contest winners receive no prize for their work other than a pane of Duck Stamps carrying their design. However, winning artists may reap thousands of dollars by selling prints of their designs, which are sought after by hunters, conservationists and art collectors. Winning the contest launches an artist's career into a whole new dimension. See every Duck Stamp since 1934, as well as the names of the winning artists at <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/federal/stamps/fedimages.htm>.

**Developing the winners of tomorrow.** You've heard of the Federal Duck Stamp, but what about the Junior Duck Stamp? Kids in Kindergarten through twelfth grade have an art contest all their own—and on the way to creating their painting of a duck or goose, they learn about wetlands, wildlife and conservation. Learn more about this extraordinary program that sees some 30,000 entrants each year and interview past Junior Duck Stamp winners.

### **Federal Duck Stamp History:**

**One stamp. More than 5 million acres. More than \$700 million.** Since 1934, sales of Federal Duck Stamps have raised more than \$700 million to acquire habitat for national wildlife refuges in all 50 states. Find out which refuges near you have been purchased in part with Duck Stamp dollars at <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/Conservation/conservation.htm>. Then go visit, meet the refuge manager and explore the refuge to see the spectacles of wildlife that Duck Stamp dollars have helped protect.

**Be green: Buy a Duck Stamp.** Hybrid cars, carbon-neutral travel, compact fluorescent light bulbs... there are hundreds of ways to “be green” and be kind to the planet. One of the simplest and most cost-effective ways is to buy a 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. Protecting wetlands benefits birds and a host of other wildlife – but people benefit too, since wetlands help to filter our drinking water. Who knew it was so easy being green?

**A rite of passage, a family tradition.** 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. Interview waterfowl hunters in your area, such as members of a local Ducks Unlimited or Delta Waterfowl chapter, and ask them about when they bought their first Duck Stamp and what it means to invest in the conservation of our nation’s natural resources.

**It’s not just for ducks.** 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. Talk to your local Audubon Society or birdwatching group to find out why they are enthusiastically encouraging their members to buy Duck Stamps.

**Buy a Duck Stamp so your kids can connect with nature.** Children today suffer from what one author and researcher has dubbed “nature-deficit disorder”—a disconnect from the natural world that can be linked to the rise in obesity, attention disorders and even depression. Research shows that direct exposure to nature can affect the physical and emotional health of both children and adults. In order to make that connection with nature, people need natural places to go. Ninety-eight percent of the proceeds from the \$15 Federal Duck Stamp go directly to purchasing habitat for our national wildlife refuge system—creating places where wildlife thrive and where people can forge that important bond with their natural world.

### **Local/Regional Story Ideas:**

**Minnesota: A Haven for Wildlife Artists.** When it comes to the Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest, Minnesota is the “winningest” state in the land. Wildlife artists from Minnesota have won the contest 17 times since 1949, when the art competition was instituted (previously the Duck Stamp image was commissioned) – including of course the 2007 contest winner, Joe Hautman. What’s the secret to their success? Find out by interviewing one or more of these talented, homegrown artists. See every Duck Stamp since 1934, as well as the names of the winning artists at <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/federal/stamps/fedimages.htm>.

**Waterfowl Production Areas: Prairie Jewels of the National Wildlife Refuge System (thanks to Duck Stamps).** In 1958, Congress amended the Duck Stamp Act to authorize the Fish and Wildlife Service to use money from the sale of the Federal Duck Stamp to buy small

wetland areas to preserve waterfowl habitat. These small wetlands dotting the Prairie Pothole Region of the upper Midwest became known as waterfowl production areas, or WPAs. In the past 50 years, the Service has conserved nearly 3 million acres of wetlands and grasslands on WPAs, through acquisition or perpetual easement, as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. All WPAs provide habitat for a vast variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, grassland birds, plants, insects and wildlife. They also help reduce erosion, clean and protect ground water and reduce flooding. WPAs owned by the Service provide ample opportunities for public access and wildlife-dependent recreation such as hunting, wildlife watching and photography. Talk to the managers of these small but powerful lands and see them for yourself. Most waterfowl production areas are managed under administrative structures called wetland management districts. For a list of district contacts, go to: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Refuges/>.