

THE NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION ACT

History

- ❖ The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) was enacted in 1989 as a way to incentivize non-federal contributions to wetland wildlife habitat in North America.
- ❖ NAWCA grants are used to protect and restore the quality wetland and associated upland habitat in all 50 states, Canada, and Mexico.
- ❖ The law requires each federal dollar put into the program to be matched by at least \$1 in non-federal funds. Due the highly competitive grant process, **each federal dollar is matched \$3.20 on average.**

Reauthorization

- ❖ The program was authorized at \$75 million. Authorization expired in 2012, but as long as Congress continues to appropriate funds the program will continue. Representatives Wittman (VA) and B. Thompson (MS) will re-introduce legislation in the House, and Senators Vitter (LA) and Boxer (CA) will reintroduce legislation in the Senate, which would reauthorize the program through 2018.

Incentivizing Local Contributions for Conservation

- ❖ Over the life of the program, NAWCA grants totaling more than \$1 billion have leveraged contributions from partners of over \$3.4 billion. These contributions have far exceeded the match requirements, and have allowed for the successful implementation of wetland habitat restoration projects all over North America.
- ❖ In FY2012, 108 projects were completed across the continent—94 in the U.S., 6 in Canada, 8 in Mexico.

Creating New Jobs

- ❖ These expenditures will **create nearly 7,500 new jobs annually** in the United States on average, generating over **\$200 million in worker earnings** each year*.

Protecting Wildlife Habitat

- ❖ Federal and non-federal funding have resulted in the **conservation of over 26 million acres** of wetlands and associated uplands across North America.
- ❖ The abundance of wildlife, including many species of waterfowl, other migratory birds, fish, and mammals supported by wetlands, translates into multi-billion dollar activities for Americans who enjoy hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and photography.

Working with Partners

- ❖ Through April 2012, more than **4,500 separate partners** have been involved in **2,216 NAWCA projects.**
- ❖ Partners include all 50 state wildlife agencies, hundreds of private landowners, a diversity of private conservation organizations, corporations, businesses, tribes, and local governments.

Current Funding

- ❖ **FY2013 appropriations are \$35.52 million minus sequester amounts of approximately \$2 million.**



NAWCA CREATES AND PROTECTS JOBS

According to the most recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service study*, an average of **7,500 workers are employed every year on NAWCA projects** using federal and matching funds. Many other sectors are directly benefited by the projects located in their area, even if they don't work directly on the projects.

DIRECT BENEFITS THROUGH PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- **Construction Industry**- Contractors and equipment operators are hired to move dirt, contour land, build water control structures, construct berms, plant trees and shrubs, and many other tasks
- **Wildlife Biologists**- Biologists assess appropriate restoration requirements, evaluate habitat management needs, and establishes criteria for completing projects for the benefit of wildlife
- **Land purchasers for local land trusts and state agencies**- Many projects include purchase or donation of land or conservation easements. These land purchasers work with willing sellers to make sure their needs are met and the best deal is reached for both parties
- **Engineers**- Engineers are hired for topographic survey, construction management, planning, permitting, and engineering design needed to complete restoration projects
- **Local Businesses**- All the supplies and materials used at the construction site are purchased locally from manufacturers and suppliers.

INDIRECT BENEFITS THROUGH INCREASED HUNTING AND FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the direct benefits created by the actual project, other industries in the area benefit from the project due to the increased opportunities for hunters, fishermen, and outdoor enthusiasts to utilize the newly restored and opened lands. These industries include **hotels, car rental centers, local restaurants, sporting goods industries, firearms dealers, and local hunting and fishing guides.**

NAWCA INCENTIVIZES LOCAL PARTNERS TO CONSERVE WETLANDS

Over the twenty-plus years that NAWCA has been working across the country to restore and protect vital wetland habitat, over 4,500 separate partners have been involved in over 2,216 projects.

These partners include individual landowners, for-profit corporations, NGO's and non-profits, state and local wildlife agencies, local land trusts, federal partners and agencies, and many many more.

The availability of the grant funds spurs many of these projects and partnerships, providing a starting point for raising funds for wetland restoration projects.

Due to the competitiveness of the grant process, there is a strong incentive to raise a much larger match than the required 1:1. Some large projects with numerous partners see match ratios of 10:1.

Work only proceeds on these projects with the knowledge and approval of the nearby neighbors. Restoring NAWCA lands increases surrounding property values, opens land for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation purposes, and brings the community together while increasing air and water quality, restoring wildlife capacity, and creating habitat.



Construction of a berm on a NAWCA project
ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge, South Carolina

* "A Programmatic Evaluation of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) in the United States and Canada", Final Report , Conducted for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service by Responsive Management, September 2002