



ASSOCIATION *of*
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

Federal Duck Stamp Task Group Final Report

Bird Conservation Committee / Waterfowl Working Group

September 15, 2015

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1. Task Group Purpose:

Under the leadership of the Waterfowl Working Group, the Federal Duck Stamp Task Group will develop a position statement, for consideration at the Association's 2015 Annual Meeting, on policy issues pertaining to the recent price increase of the Federal Duck Stamp and the marketing and use of the Duck Stamp to increase hunting, public access, and conservation activities on National Wildlife Refuges.

Specific Discussion Topics:

The Task Group will examine a broad suite of policy issues related to, or impacted by the recent price increase of the Federal Duck Stamp, including but not limited to:

- Assessment of impacts of the price increase on stamp sales;
- Determination of optimal price points to inform the USFWS legislative proposal for the Secretary to have authority to increase Duck Stamp price;
- Strategic marketing of the stamp to traditional and non-traditional customers;
- Monitoring and assessment of marketing efforts, and improved data collection of stamp sales;
- Assessment of issues for public hunting on Refuges when revenue from the Duck Stamp is used to acquire land;
- Assessment of the impact on the "priority use" access resulting from the restriction to use revenue from the 2014 price increase for easements only;
- Use of the stamp to support hunter recruitment and retention;
- Potential to increase the support for conservation from hunters and non-hunters;
- Establishment of new uses of the stamp (i.e. day-access to refuges) to encourage youth to visit refuges;
- Identification, and how to address issues with the administration of e-stamp program;
- Other issues as deemed important by the Task Force members.

Meetings:

The Task Group will meet via conference call and/or web-enabled meeting for the majority of its deliberations, but if deemed necessary, the Chair may schedule one face-to-face meeting at a central location. It is anticipated that approximately four meetings will be required between May and September 2015. Task Force members will be responsible for their own costs to participate in face-to-face meetings.

Membership:

The Task Group will be formed with representatives from the Bird Conservation Committee or Waterfowl Working Group; the four Flyways, USFWS, AFWA, DU, TNC, National Wildlife Refuges Association, and the Friends of the Migratory Bird / Duck Stamp and supported by AFWA. Members are listed in Appendix A.

2. Summary of Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed based on an issue prioritization and action identification exercise that is summarized in this report. The comprehensive list of recommendations and the associated actions is provided on page 16. The Duck Stamp Task Group recommends that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies endorse these recommendations and should work with the USFWS to implement the recommendations and action items.

1. a) Develop and support implementation of a communications strategy that targets groups identified in the NAWMP National Stakeholder workshops and survey.
b) Work with all groups to identify synergistic opportunities for promoting broad conservation benefits of the Duck Stamp.
2. a) Develop and support implementation of a marketing plan with specific sales and revenue goals for waterfowl hunters, other hunters, non-hunters and wildlife viewers, etc.
b) Determine a price point that optimizes sales and total revenue.
3. a) Finalize plans and timeline for all states to sell electronic stamps through existing licensing systems.
b) Address issues of complications/shortcomings with existing e-stamp, including the 45-day expiration of the e-stamp.
4. a) Improve the identification and reporting of Refuge areas open/closed to waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing and the reasons for not providing access.
b) USFWS should work with the NAWMP community to identify priority areas for habitat acquisition, develop lists of land parcels available from willing sellers, and develop for submission to the Director and approval by the MBCC such that the limited MBCF funds are employed in a manner that maximizes the contributions to the NAWMP goals of waterfowl populations, habitat, and human users.
c) USFWS should examine the potential to increase the number of refuges that allow the use of a Federal Duck Stamp to access the refuge, including voluntary payment or self-pay systems, for all recreational uses.

5. a) Assess impacts of price increase on federal Duck Stamp sales and state waterfowl stamps/licenses sales.
b) AFWA should request data from individual states on waterfowl stamp/permit sales, participation in waterfowl hunting, etc., and compare it to federal stamp sales, revenue, and Harvest Information Program estimates..

6. a) Identify new (non-hunting/recreational) uses for the Duck Stamp.

3. Introduction

Overview of Federal Duck Stamp Program

The need for protecting waterfowl populations was addressed in 1913 by the *Weeks-McLean Law* that prohibited spring hunting, marketing of migratory birds, and importation of wild bird feathers for women's fashion. It was the first U.S. law ever passed to regulate the shooting of migratory birds as it provided the Secretary of Agriculture the power to set hunting seasons. The Law was later replaced by the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* of 1918, which provided protection of migratory waterfowl and other species of birds from commercial exploitation.

On February 18, 1929, the *Migratory Bird Conservation Act* established a Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) to approve areas recommended by the Secretary of the Interior for acquisition with Migratory Bird Conservation Funds (MBCF). The Commission consists of the Secretary of the Interior (as chairman), the Secretaries of Transportation and Agriculture, two members of the Senate and two members of the House of Representatives, and an ex-officio member from each State in which acquisitions are being considered. The law also allowed the expansion of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), which began in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt ordered a small island in Florida's Indian River to be forever protected as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds.

The law made no provision for the appropriation of funds with which to purchase lands, therefore, the *Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act* was passed and became law on July 1, 1934. It created what is commonly called the "Federal Duck Stamp," but the official name became the *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp* in 1976. The 1934 Act came about because conservationists were alarmed by the rapid decrease in wild ducks and geese. The problem arose from overshooting and a protracted drought in the critical waterfowl breeding areas that lasted throughout the early 1930s. The Act requires every waterfowl hunter 16 years of age or older to annually purchase and carry a stamp and earmarks proceeds from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps to buy and lease waterfowl habitat. The Act was amended on June 15, 1935 to require validation of the hunting stamp by signature across the face of the stamp.

The *Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act* originally set the price of the stamp at \$1, however amendments over the years increased the price and changed other key administrative elements (see Appendix B). The last price increase occurred in 1991, setting the price at \$15, and was authorized by Section 202 of the *Emergency Wetlands Resources Act* of November 10, 1986.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other conservation organizations have experienced dramatic increases in the costs of conservation, especially from escalating land values. The USFWS has made numerous attempts since 2008 to increase the price of the Federal Duck Stamp. In the 2012 budget justification for the Migratory Bird Conservation Account, the USFWS proposed an amendment to the *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act* to increase the price of a Federal Duck Stamp to \$25, which would bring it in line with inflation adjustments determined by the consumer price index (WMI, 2014). Attempts to adjust the price of the Federal Duck Stamp between 2008 and 2014 were unsuccessful.

On July 10, 2014, Rep. Fleming (R-LA) introduced H.R.5069, the “*Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014*” which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources. On July 17, 2014, Sen. Vitter (R-LA) introduced the same bill in the Senate as S.2621, and it was referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works. Congress passed the bills, and on December 18, 2014, President Obama signed the *Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014* into law. The Act increased the price of the stamp from \$15 to \$25, with the condition that revenue from the \$10 price increase would be dedicated to conservation easements (not purchases). The additional funds would be available for habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Letters from Flyways Supporting the Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014

The four Flyway Councils sent letters to Senator Vitter and Representative Fleming prior to the passage of S.2621 and H.R.5069. The Atlantic, Central and Pacific Flyway Councils noted that additional conservation funding revenue is needed to meet the challenges facing wetlands, grasslands, and waterfowl. They estimated that the Duck Stamp price increase would result in annual sales of 1.5 million stamps and would generate an additional \$37 million. From a waterfowl perspective, this revenue increase could protect another 10 to 15 thousand acres of vital habitat on private lands each year. The Flyway Councils indicated they strongly supported the bills and underscored the important principles established in the Federal Refuge Improvement Act with regard to conservation easements acquired through Duck Stamp revenue. They noted the law codifies the pre-eminence of hunting as a priority form of wildlife-dependent recreation within the National Wildlife Refuge System. Any augmentation of the Refuge system via conservation easements due to new Duck Stamp revenues must ensure that hunting be guaranteed on those easements in a manner consistent with the Refuge Improvement Act.

The final statement in the letters from the Atlantic, Central, and Pacific Flyways stated they; “strongly support the Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014 as a means to protect vital wetlands and grasslands that supply wildlife habitat but which also supply tremendous benefits to all

Americans. We encourage movement of S. 2621 and H.R. 5069 in both chambers of Congress as soon as possible.”

The Mississippi Flyway Council was supportive of the price increase, however they also requested consideration of a number of issues. For example, they noted that from past surveys of waterfowl hunters, that a primary concern is finding access to a quality place to hunt. They indicated that there are thousands of acres of well-managed waterfowl habitat in our National Wildlife Refuge system, but sometimes these lands are not as accessible to hunters, either by refuge-specific regulations, or because they were acquired with MBCF dollars. The Flyway suggested it was time to reconsider the issue of increasing public access to lands acquired with Duck Stamp funds, particularly in light of the recent revision of NAWMP to incorporate human dimensions. The USFWS should work with its partners to increase public waterfowl hunting access on lands purchased by MBCF, and ensure that the vast majority of lands acquired with Duck Stamp dollars – largely supported by waterfowl hunters – are available for waterfowl hunting.

The Mississippi Flyway Council also raised concerns about whether the Duck Stamp price increase was more than hunters were willing to pay and if it may have a negative impact on hunter numbers and Duck Stamp sales, thus conservation funding. They also expressed a desire for expanding the sale of Duck Stamps by increasing the number and types of uses of the Stamp. For example, they suggested that all users of Waterfowl Production Areas, not just hunters, be required to possess a Duck Stamp so that more people are contributing to conservation. The Mississippi Flyway Council made numerous other suggestions such as: establishing a method to monitor Duck Stamp sales to determine effects of price increases on hunter recruitment and retention; conducting market research to determine the optimal price point for the Duck Stamp; increase the marketing effort to inform waterfowl hunters and the public about the high return on investment in habitat conservation; identify marketing strategies to increase sales beyond waterfowl hunters; and to consider new ways to provide duck stamp options/uses rather than the current one-size-fits-all approach.

4. Issues Identification and Discussion

The Task Group held three conference calls to identify issues and to develop recommendations for action to improve the Duck Stamp program for hunters and the public and to identify means of increasing revenue that could be used for waterfowl and wetland habitat. The discussions held during these meetings are summarized below.

Overview of Current Duck Stamp Program Administration

- The majority of land transactions (75%) using Duck Stamp revenues are for the acquisition of easements with a focus on working landscapes, and they set aside sufficient habitat for waterfowl (Figures 1 and 2). There is more demand for easements than funds available.
- MBCC guidance restricts acquisition to lands from “willing sellers” and these lands are identified in an annual plan that is presented to MBCC. USFWS regional offices administer the acquisition of lands and States are to approve the expansion of Refuge boundaries. The basic process for acquisitions is: identification of the “willing seller;” appraisal; negotiate purchase; and close the sale. Easements require some additional work. State Fish & Wildlife Agencies have a voice in regards to the acquisitions through membership on MBCC.
- USFWS staff indicated that lands purchased with Duck Stamp monies are considered “open until closed” for hunting and other recreational uses – state and other members of the Task Group are unclear if this is how the National Wildlife Refuge System actually operates when land is acquired.
- Over the years, sales of Federal Duck Stamps through the Postal Service have declined, while on-line (e-stamp) sales are increasing – now over one million stamps are sold on-line annually. The Postal Service was having trouble administering sales but have improved their processes, with all stamp sales now coordinated out of Kansas City. The Duck Stamp Office only receives about 25 calls per year with complaints from people that cannot find a location to buy the Duck Stamp. Hunters must buy the stamp, and at present there have been no complaints about the price increase.
- The Duck Stamp office has three (3) employees and fifteen (15) states have e-stamp sales with the program run through the USFWS Duck Stamp office. Amplex (consignment retailer) has resolved some of their past issues and deals with all on-line sales. Duck Stamp revenues are transferred by Amplex twice per year to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.
- The total operating budget for the Duck Stamp office, including staffing, travel, etc. is about \$500K; which is considered low cost. About \$16K is derived from value-added products and is used for marketing, with the contest itself being the key marketing tool because it moves around the country (for both the regular and the junior stamp). Junior Duck Stamp program is self-sufficient and involved 27,000 students in the past year.

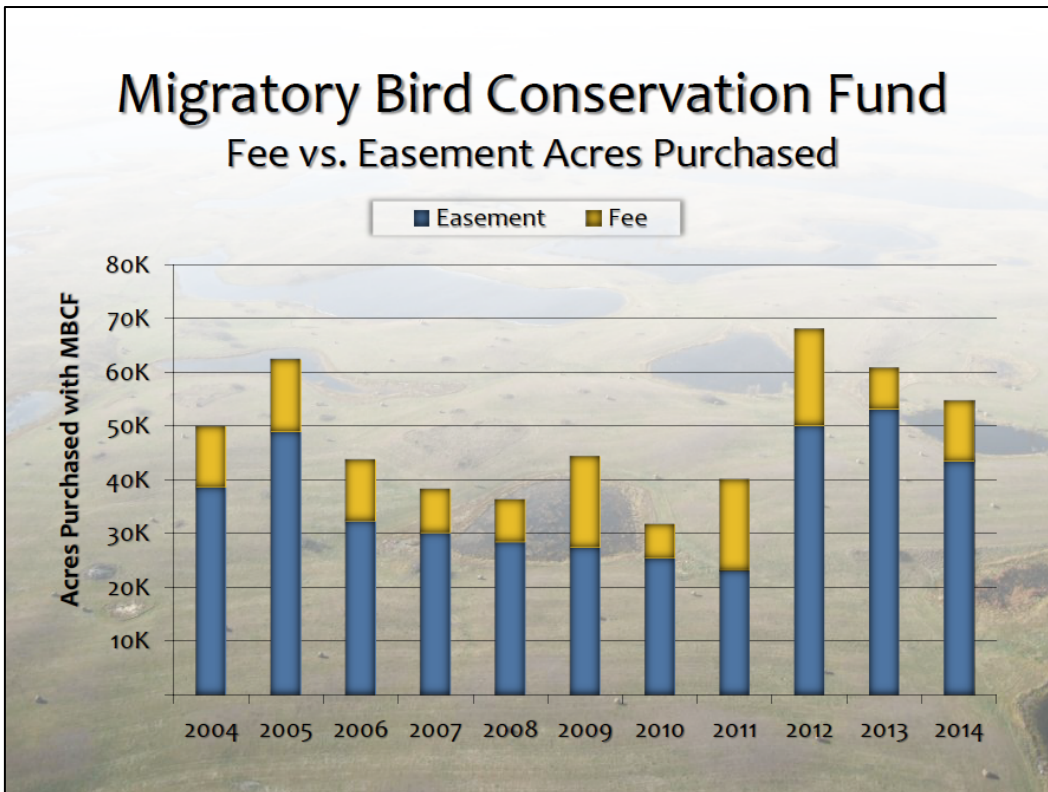


Figure 1 Acres acquired by easement versus fee title purchase

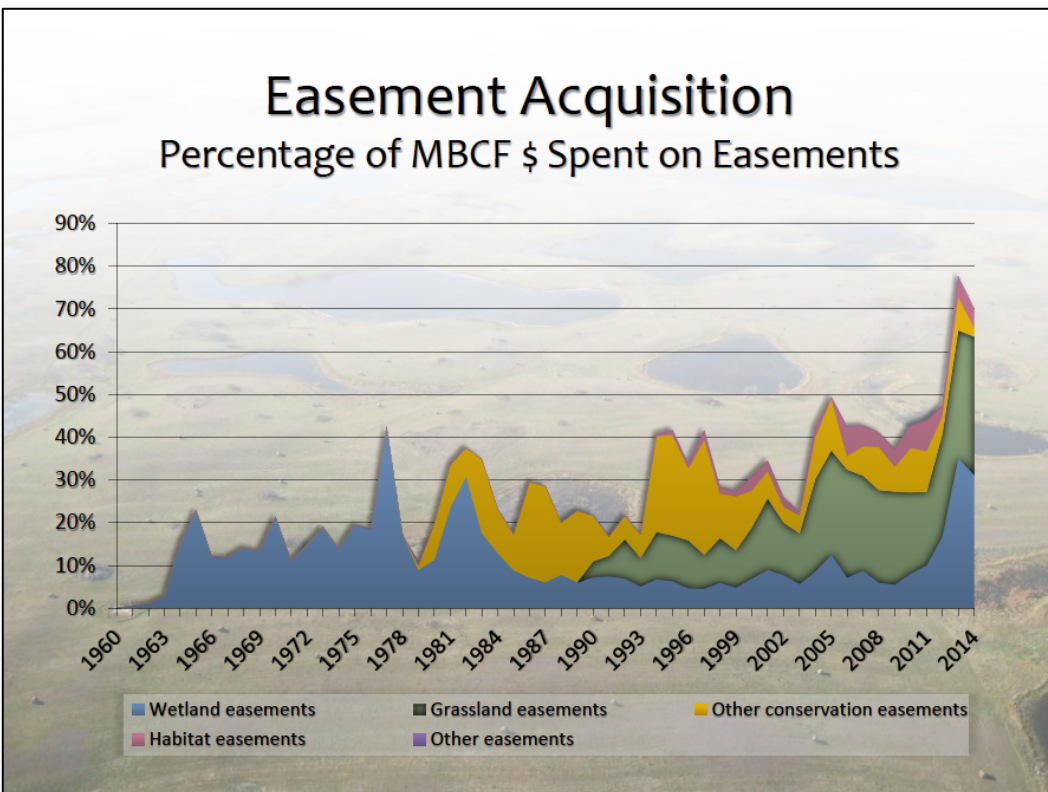


Figure 2 Easements acquired with MBCF funds

Initial Identification of Issues with the Duck Stamp Program

A number of topics/issues were identified as important to the Task Group efforts and some of these are listed below, however it was decided that a more comprehensive effort to identify issues needed to be undertaken (Appendix C).

- The primary concern for birders is that they do not have to buy a stamp. The stamp program needs to show “value to birders,” such as the habitat and biodiversity values that go beyond waterfowl hunter uses.
- A key issue is that the e-stamp program, run by the USFWS, collects the data on the number of stamps sold and the revenue generated, however, the 15 states that currently sell e-stamps collect the related demographic data. The Duck Stamp Office does NOT have the demographic data, and therefore a comprehensive analysis of sales and demographics of purchasers cannot be easily undertaken.
- It is not possible, at present, to determine the percentage of sales that are go to hunters, birders, collectors, etc. but it is believed that collectors are a much smaller proportion today than previous years. Additionally, some stamps sell better because of the specific artist or the featured species
- Total sales in 2010 were about 1.6 million stamps and in 2013 sales were about 1.8 million stamps. Duck Stamp revenue sources are shown in Figure 3. An estimate for 2014 sales is unavailable at this time. (Philatelic Center has most recent sales data.)
- USFWS does not sell e-stamps on their website because they cannot provide the option for on-line credit card purchases.
- How will easement proposals be handled with the funds from the price increase being dedicated to easements?
- In theory, lands purchased with Duck Stamp monies are considered by some to be “open until closed” for hunting and other recreational uses. In reality, this operating principle appears to be inconsistently applied throughout the refuge system. Due to the many concerns by hunters and anglers, it was suggested that greater clarity and transparency is required for designating lands open or closed.
- What do WPA hunters think about the Duck Stamp? (i.e. should pheasant hunters be required to buy a stamp to hunt on a WPA)?
- Are there jurisdictional issues?

- What is the appropriate price-point for the stamp?
- Can the stamp price affect hunter recruitment and retention?
- How can the Duck Stamp be used for “more” or “better” access to Refuges (i.e. one-day license/access)?

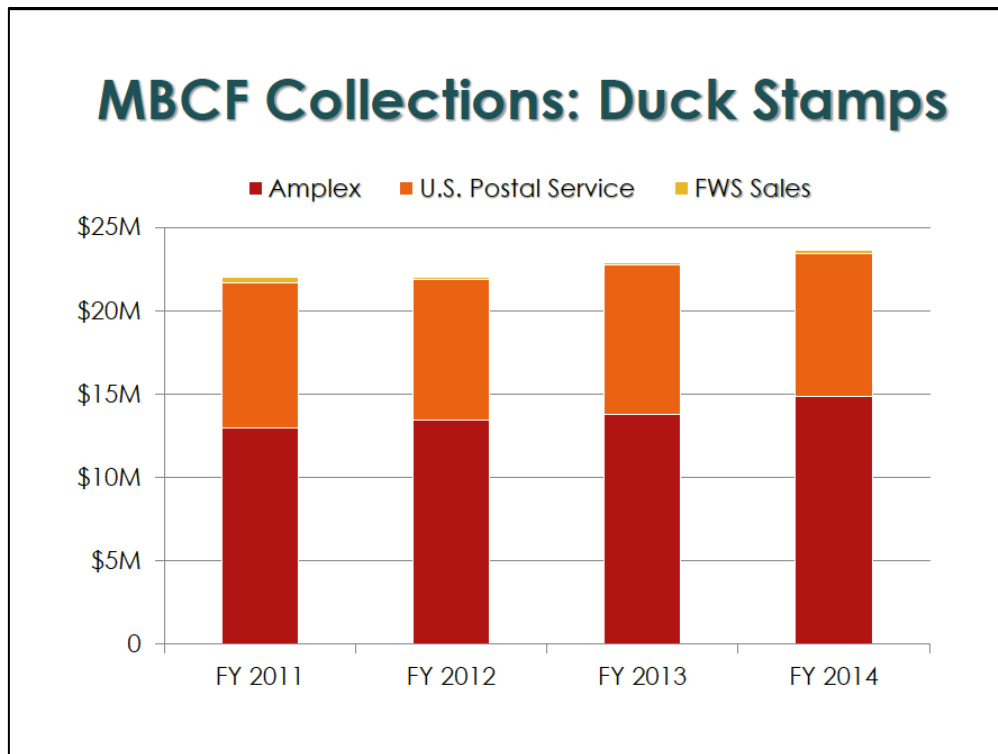


Figure 1 Duck Stamp Contributions to MBCF

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp published a list of eight ideas in their Wingtips newsletter in January 2015, prior to the formation of the Task Group. These ideas/issues were presented to the Task Group for consideration (<http://www.friendsofthestamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Wingtips-12-January-2015.pdf>) and are summarized below (list is in no particular order). Central to these eight ideas are the goals of getting more outdoor-involved Americans to appreciate how the federal duck stamp conserves habitat, saves wildlife, builds a valuable National Wildlife Refuge System, and serves the American public. Friends groups, non-waterfowl hunters, birders, wildlife photographers, collectors, and environmental educators should be approached with the argument that they should buy a stamp.

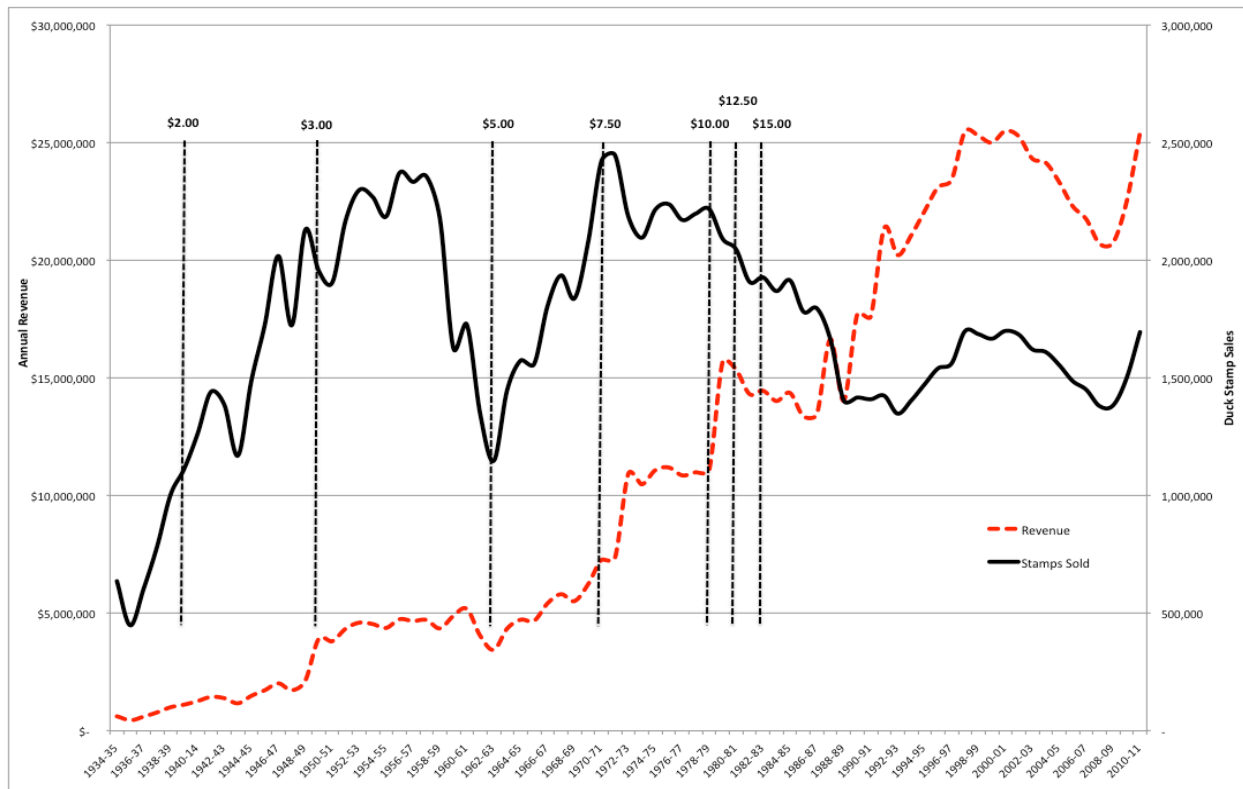


Figure 2 Trends of Duck Stamp sales and revenues versus price increases (adapted from data published at: <http://www.friendsofthestamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Stamp-Sales-Ove>)

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp ideas:

1. Beyond the requirement to hold a federal duck stamp to hunt waterfowl, the stamp is also a "free pass" to any National Wildlife Refuge that charges for entry. This is excellent, but there could be new "benefits" to holding a stamp. Those pursued might include a requirement/discount for locally run refuge tours and walks, photo-blind use, nature-festival entry, shopping at the NWR store, etc.
2. More National Wildlife Refuges should charge. Simply put, refuges should charge what they are worth. When a refuge charges only \$3 or \$5 for the entry of a car full of passengers, that's exactly what the public will think it's worth! Too few refuges charge – out of 464 NWRs open to the public only 35 charge an entry fee. There is no fee for any Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) entry/use. The "value" of a free-pass stamp will decline when the price of the stamp goes up to \$25 – for some people, more visits will have to be made to refuges charging fees, before they feel they have reached a "break even" point.
3. Stamp supporters should draw more attention through the waterfowl art on the stamp and the related art contest run by Duck Stamp Office. This means further

engagement with the art community, collectors, and portions of the general public interested in wildlife and art. The process, the contest, and the exposition, all should be made "more interesting."

4. Stamp promotion should be combined with a recognition of historical and conservation events. Soon, there will be the sequential centennials of the Migratory Bird Treaty - signed in 1916, ratified by Congress in 1918, and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1920. More stamp connections with these celebrations should be considered throughout the multi-year centennial period.
5. The highly respected and successful North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) was revised in 2012. The revision includes an objective that considers human dimensions, specifically to "*increase the number of North American citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation.*" This is a great opportunity to combine stamp promotion with the necessity to "increase the number" of Americans who appreciate waterfowl and wetlands. That not only involves the traditional commitment to recruitment and retention for waterfowl hunters, but it also includes a place for refuge Friends groups, wildlife photographers, bird watchers, anglers, environmental educators, and many others.
6. In the category of "measuring," we need to know who is buying the stamp. How many? And how many of them double-up to buy two stamps (as promoted by Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, and other waterfowl-oriented groups)? Do waterfowl hunters buy 95% of all stamps? Or might it be 85%? How about stamp collectors? Or birdwatchers? Or refuge Friends groups? We may know where they are sold, but not who buys the stamps. This is essential for serious future marketing.
7. Promote materials that include the federal duck stamp or the stamp message: t-shirts, mugs, posters, and pins. It's about the visibility and display of the actual stamp and its image. This is not the responsibility of the Federal Duck Stamp Office but it can, and should, be taken up by organizations and businesses whose goals are in parallel with the mission of the stamp program.
8. Give the Junior Duck Stamp (JDS) the attention it justly deserves. There are recent (i.e., 2011) aids available for the JDS Program, including field-tested and evaluated education guides and curricula (K-12) prepared by the Federal Duck Stamp Office.

Priority Issues Identified by the Task Group Survey:

Once issues were identified by the Task Group, an on-line survey instrument was developed and administered through SurveyMonkey to rate the relative priority of the issues. Only members of the Task Group were given the opportunity to participate in the survey. A total of 15 Task Group members responded to the survey and the ranked list of issues provided a means for the Task Group to focus its discussions and identify areas that require additional effort.

- It was recommended that the items ranked from 1 to 15, inclusive, should be the focus of the Task Team (Appendix D).
- Although all the issues are important and should be given further consideration, it was agreed that the top ranked issues would form the basis of the Task Group's efforts to develop recommendations to AFWA for consideration at the Annual Meeting in September. During the ranking discussion a number points of clarification were provided:
 - The 45-day expiration period for the e-stamp is part of the legislation, however, it is still an issue that needs to be addressed as it adds complications for law enforcement, and state processes are often operating on different timeframes. The key to fixing this e-stamp issue is to simplify the administration.
 - Marketing and awareness – may not be a standalone issue. The goal is to increase knowledge about the stamp, and increase sales. In order to accomplish these, there is a need for data, information, and efficient reporting.
 - Although the determination of an “optimal price point” of the Federal Duck Stamp and integration of the Federal and State stamps and license sales are important issues, they are beyond the mandate of the Task Group. We could make recommendations on these issues, but it is important that the Task Group examine the total costs/revenue issues and the impact on sales.
 - Some issues will require legislative changes, which the Task Group cannot influence, however, this type of longer-term action may be worthwhile and should be considered as an action the Task Group may recommend to AFWA.
 - It may be best to recommend that development of a comprehensive marketing plan should occur after the NAWMP stakeholder survey (USGS/University of Minnesota) is completed as it will help to identify target audiences.

Discussions about the “issue ranking” led to suggestions on how to best group the issues for further action by the Task Group. Two or three variations of groups were explored, with consensus reached on the following four groups of priority issues (Note: the list is not in rank order – only those issues that ranked within the top 15 are included in the groups.)

1. Increase Total Funding

- a. Important to develop a marketing plan and increase customer numbers:
(i) Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen; (ii) Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders); and Waterfowl hunters.
- b. Important to assess impacts of price increase: (i) Conservation activities (i.e. land acquisition); (ii) Federal Duck Stamp sales; and (iii) Hunting license sales (i.e. state waterfowl permit or stamp).
- c. Important to determine optimal price points: (i) Impact on Federal Duck Stamp sales; (ii) To automatically increase the price by the CPI when the buying power is reduced, or every five (5) years in line with the CPI; and (iii) To inform the USFWS proposal to have the Secretary of the Interior establish future increase of Duck Stamp price.
- d. How important is monitoring and assessment of Duck Stamp marketing efforts?
- e. How important is the task of identifying new uses of the stamp (i.e. day-access to refuges) to encourage youth or other non-waterfowl hunters to access Refuges?

2. Improve how money is spent

- a. Importance to assess impacts of price increase - Conservation activities (i.e. land acquisition).
- b. Importance to waterfowl hunting access if stamp funds used for land - land acquired by purchase.

3. Improve buyer access

- a. Important to develop marketing plan and increase customer numbers:
(i) Waterfowl hunters; (ii) Wildlife watchers (i.e., birders); and (iii) Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen.
- b. How important is improved data collection of Duck Stamp sales?

- c. Importance to address e-Stamp administration - Finalize plans for all States to sell waterfowl hunting privileges through existing licensing systems.
- d. How important is monitoring and assessment of Duck Stamp marketing efforts?
- e. How important is the task of identifying new uses of the stamp (i.e. day-access to refuges) to encourage youth or other non-waterfowl hunters to access Refuges?
- f. Issues have been raised about complications/shortcomings with the existing e-stamp, including the 45-day expiration of the e-stamp. Please rate the importance of assessing the above approach.

4. Increase knowledge of conservation

- a. Importance to increase active support for conservation: (i) Waterfowl hunters; (ii) Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders); and (iii) Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen.
- b. Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers: (i) Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen; and (ii) Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders).
- c. How important is monitoring and assessment of Duck Stamp marketing efforts?

Identification of Action Items:

The third meeting of the Task Group, followed by additional input from Task Group members, identified specific actions the group felt were necessary to address the priority issues noted above. Due to time constraints, team members' input was collated without Group discussion, but all information was redistributed to the team members for review.

The following list of issues, recommendations, and suggested actions were assembled into a short document for the Flyway representatives, and others, to discuss at their meetings during July/August. The Flyway Councils were all supportive of the recommendations and no significant changes were requested. Additionally, the recommendations were discussed and supported by the Board Members of the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp organization.

5. Issues and Recommendations of the Federal Duck Stamp Task Group

1) **Issue:** The conservation benefits of the Duck Stamp are poorly understood among the wildlife viewing community and the public, as well as among much of the hunting community

- a) **Recommendation:** Develop and support implementation of a communications strategy that targets groups identified in the NAWMP National Stakeholder workshops and survey.
- b) **Recommendation:** Work with all groups to identify synergistic opportunities for promoting broad conservation benefits of the Duck Stamp.

2) **Issue:** Revenue from sales of Duck Stamp has declined and is insufficient to meet conservation goals.

- a) **Recommendation:** Develop and support implementation of a marketing plan with specific sales and revenue goals for waterfowl hunters, other hunters, non-hunters and wildlife viewers, etc.
 - i) **Action:** USFWS should work with NAWMP/bird conservation community to identify and target specific messages and product(s) to the various market segments and identify the most appropriate and effective methods for sales and distribution. The NAWMP National Stakeholder Survey should help inform this effort.
 - ii) **Action:** Identify *aspirational* sales and revenue goals for each state, and market segment that are achievable based on past history, and the proposed marketing effort.
 - iii) **Action:** Identify demographic information that is currently being collected by e-stamp states and additional information required for improving sales.
- b) **Recommendation:** Determine a price point that optimizes sales and total revenue.
 - i) **Action:** AFWA/USFWS cooperate to model past, current, and future sales data and the desirable price points for the stamp. This simulation could inform future efforts to increase the price of the stamp by the CPI.

3) **Issue:** Purchasing a Duck Stamp should be efficient and easy.

- a) **Recommendation:** Finalize plans and timeline for all states to sell electronic stamps through existing licensing systems

- b) **Recommendation:** Address issues regarding complications/shortcomings with existing e-stamp, including the 45-day expiration of the e-stamp.
 - i) **Action:** Change law to allow the e-stamp to suffice as the requirement to hunt waterfowl for the duration of the hunting season. The physical stamp could be sent to hunters after March 10th each year.
 - ii) **Action:** Develop smartphone app that would enable the person to easily purchase as a Duck Stamp (a physical stamp) and serve as an electronic version of the stamp (i.e. no physical stamp required).

4) Issue: Access to many National Wildlife Refuges is restricted or extremely limited for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing even when lands are acquired by MBCF dollars.

- a) **Recommendation:** Improve the identification and reporting of Refuge areas open/closed to waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing and the reasons for not providing access.
- b) **Recommendation:** USFWS should work with the NAWMP community to identify priority areas for habitat acquisition, and to develop lists of land parcels available from willing sellers for submission to the Director and approval by the MBCC such that the limited MBCF funds are employed in a manner that maximizes the contributions to the NAWMP goals of waterfowl populations, habitat, and human users.
- c) **Recommendation:** USFWS should examine the potential to increase the number of refuges that allow the use of a Federal Duck Stamp to access the refuge, including voluntary payment or self-pay systems, for all recreational uses.

5) Issue: The increased price of the Federal Duck Stamp may affect sales of the federal stamp and state-level waterfowl hunting privileges or state conservation stamp sales.

- a) **Recommendation:** Assess impacts of increased price on sales of federal Duck Stamp sales and state waterfowl stamps/licenses
- b) **Recommendation:** AFWA should request data from individual states on waterfowl stamp/permit sales, participation in waterfowl hunting, etc., and compare it to federal stamp sales, revenue, and Harvest Information Program estimates.
 - i) **Action:** Select key states and compare sales of licenses and federal stamps before and after price increase
 - ii) **Action:** Determine correlation between HIP-derived hunter numbers and sales of state/federal stamps

- 6) **Issue:** The current uses of the Duck Stamp are limited to only those engaged in waterfowl hunting, or access to a very limited number of National Wildlife Refuges.
- a) **Recommendation:** Identify new (non-hunting/recreational) uses for the Duck Stamp.
- i) **Action:** Cooperate with hunting, viewing, and tourism industry to provide a national discount to sporting good stores, national bird specialty stores, car rentals, etc.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Federal Duck Stamp Task Group Members

Member	Representing
Ed Penny (Chair)	Mississippi
Craig Leschack	Ducks Unlimited/Waterfowl Working Group
Gray Anderson	Tennessee
Larry Hindman	Maryland
Jimmy Anthony	Louisiana
Scott Taylor	Nebraska
Tony Leif	South Dakota
Dan Yparraguirre	California
Laurie Shaffer	USFWS Duck Stamp Office
Eric Alvarez	USFWS - Refuges
Michael Kreger	USFWS - DBHC
Jen Mock Schaeffer	AFWA
Kellis Moss	Ducks Unlimited
Dave Mehlman	The Nature Conservancy
Paul Baicich	Friends of the Migratory Bird / Duck Stamp
Caroline Brouwer	National Wildlife Refuge Association
Dean Smith	AFWA

Appendix B - Significant Legislative Changes to the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934

- Price increased to \$2 on August 12, 1949;
- Price increased to \$3 on August 1, 1958, net proceeds of Federal Duck Stamp sales were dedicated for the acquisition of migratory bird refuges, and gave the Secretary of the Interior authority to open a maximum of 40 percent of any migratory bird refuge to the hunting of game birds (Waterfowl production areas were exempt.) (Public Law 85-585);
- Removed the 40 percent hunting limitation on October 15, 1966, where hunting was compatible with the major purposes of the designated area (i.e. migratory bird refuge), but Congress restated the 40 percent rule did apply to hunting of migratory game birds on any area that was (or would be) established as an inviolate sanctuary for migratory birds (Public Law 89-669);
- Authorized price increases up to \$5 on December 22, 1971 as determined by the Secretary of the Interior after considering the increased cost of lands (Public Law 92-214);
- Authorized the sale of stamps in 1976 by the Department of the Interior and provided for deposit of receipts into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (Public Law 94-215);
- Price increased to \$7.50 on October 30, 1978, if all sums appropriated to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund in the proceeding fiscal year were obligated (Public Law 95-552);
- Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of November 10, 1986, in Section 201, authorized charging of entrance fees at designated units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, except when a person holds a valid Federal Duck Stamp, a valid Golden Eagle Passport, a valid Golden Age Passport, or a valid lifetime admission permit. Section 202 provided for an increase in the price of the Federal Duck Stamp to \$10 in 1987 and 1988, \$12.50 in 1989 and 1990, and \$15.00 thereafter (Public Law 99-645);
- On November 14, 1988, the Wetlands Loan Act and Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act amended the 1934 Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to finance the marketing expenses involved in the Federal Duck Stamp Licensing Program from the royalties derived from that program (Public Law 100-653); and
- On October 19, 1998, the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Promotion Act authorized The Secretary of the Interior to use funds from sales of the Federal Duck Stamp, not to exceed \$1,000,000 in each of fiscal years 1999 to 2003, for promotion of additional sales with a MBCC approved annual marketing plan (Public Law 105-269).

Appendix C - AFWA Duck Stamp Task Group – Survey Results of Issues Prioritization

(Questions re-ordered for presentation purposes only; text-based responses not shown)

1. How important is the task of assessing the potential impacts of the 2014 Duck Stamp price increase on the following?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
Conservation activities (i.e. land acquisition)	4.33	6
Federal Duck Stamp sales	4.20	11
Hunting license sales (i.e. state waterfowl permit or stamp)	3.87	15
Hunting and fishing access on Refuges	3.73	20
Non-hunting Duck Stamp customers	3.67	22
Other issues	2.71	35
2. How important is the task of determining the optimal price point(s) of the Federal Duck Stamp for the following issues?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
Impact on Federal Duck Stamp sales	4.20	11
To automatically increase the price by the CPI when the buying power is reduced, or every five (5) years in line with the CPI	3.93	14
To inform the USFWS proposal to have the Secretary of the Interior establish future increase of Duck Stamp price	3.87	15
Impact on hunting license sales (incl. state waterfowl permit or stamp)	3.73	20
3. . How important is the task of developing/implementing a strategic marketing plan for the Federal Duck Stamp to increase the number of potential traditional and non-traditional customers?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen	4.60	3
Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders)	4.60	3
Waterfowl hunters	4.33	6
Refuge System volunteers, visitors, etc.	3.67	22
Stamp collectors	3.07	31
Arts community (i.e. duck stamp artist)	3.00	32
7. How important is the issue of public waterfowl hunting access to the National Wildlife Refuge System when revenue from the Federal Duck Stamp is used to acquire land?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
Land acquired by purchase	4.27	9
Land acquired by easement	3.20	28

4. How important is improved data collection of Duck Stamp sales?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
	4.33	6
11. How important is the task of identifying initiatives/actions that could be undertaken to increase the active support for conservation (i.e. legislation, policy, habitat restoration, etc.) by the following groups?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
Waterfowl hunters	4.67	1
Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders)	4.67	1
Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen	4.47	5
Refuge System volunteers, visitors, etc.	3.80	19
Stamp collectors	3.00	32
Arts community (i.e. duck stamp artist)	3.00	32
12. Please rate the importance of undertaking tasks to address the following issues related the administration of Electronic-Duck Stamp program.		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
Finalize plans for all States to sell waterfowl hunting privileges through existing licensing systems	4.27	9
Allow State Fish & Wildlife Agencies to sell a variety of Duck Stamp privileges (e.g. single day, multi-day, half season, multi-season, or lifetime hunting privileges)	3.27	27
No longer require the “physical” stamp to be used for waterfowl hunting	3.20	28
6. How important is monitoring and assessment of Duck Stamp marketing efforts?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
	4.00	13
8. How important is the task of assessing the impact on access to Refuges for hunting and fishing due to the restriction established by Congress that revenue from 2014 price increase of the Federal Duck Stamp can only be used for the acquisition of easements?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
	3.47	25
9. How important is the task of identifying new uses of the stamp (i.e. day-access to refuges) to encourage youth or other non-waterfowl hunters to access Refuges?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
	3.87	15

10. How important is the task of identifying initiatives/actions to use the Federal Duck Stamp to support hunter recruitment and retention?		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
	3.13	30
13. Issues have been raised about complications/shortcomings with the existing e-stamp, including the 45-day expiration of the e-stamp. Please rate the importance of assessing the above approach.		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
	3.87	15
14. Please identify the importance of undertaking tasks to better communicate with Duck Stamp purchasers and others to develop a understanding of how the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund works and how Federal Duck Stamp revenues are used for land acquisition/easements.		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
	3.47	25
15. Please identify the importance of identifying, discussing, and recommending to the USFWS ideas for any changes in how proposals are developed and reviewed for the use of Federal Duck Stamp revenues that are restricted for easements instead of acquisition, due to the 2014 price increase legislation.		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Rank
	3.60	24
5. Significant obstacles exist for collecting Duck Stamp sales data:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	
Yes	66.7%	
No	33.3%	
If YES, what are the most significant obstacles to collecting Federal Duck Stamp sales data?		

Appendix D - Issues Identified by Task Group, in Rank Order (Only top 15 - green/yellow - addressed by recommendations)

AFWA DUCK STAMP TASK TEAM - SURVEY TO PRIORITIZE ISSUES				
	Questions	Sub-issue	Score	Rank
Q11	Importance to increase active support for conservation	Waterfowl hunters	4.67	1
Q11	Importance to increase active support for conservation	Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders)	4.67	1
Q3	Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers	Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen	4.60	3
Q3	Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers	Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders)	4.60	3
Q11	Importance to increase active support for conservation	Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen	4.47	5
Q1	Importance to assess impacts of price increase	Conservation activities (i.e. land acquisition)	4.33	6
Q3	Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers	Waterfowl hunters	4.33	6
Q4	4. How important is improved data collection of Duck Stamp sales?		4.33	6
Q7	Importance to waterfowl hunting access if stamp funds used for land	Land acquired by purchase	4.27	9
Q12	Importance to address e-Stamp administration	Finalize plans for all States to sell waterfowl hunting privileges through existing licensing systems	4.27	9
Q1	Importance to assess impacts of price increase	Federal Duck Stamp sales	4.20	11
Q2	Importance to determine optimal price points	Impact on Federal Duck Stamp sales	4.20	11
Q6	6. How important is monitoring and assessment of Duck Stamp marketing efforts?		4.00	13
Q2	Importance to determine optimal price points	To automatically increase the price by the CPI when the buying power is reduced, or every five (5) years in line with the CPI	3.93	14
Q1	Importance to assess impacts of price increase	Hunting license sales (i.e. state waterfowl permit or stamp)	3.87	15
Q2	Importance to determine optimal price points	To inform the USFWS proposal to have the Secretary of the Interior establish future increase of Duck Stamp price	3.87	15
Q9	9. How important is the task of identifying new uses of the stamp (i.e. day-access to refuges) to encourage youth or other non-waterfowl hunters to access Refuges?		3.87	15
Q13	13. Issues have been raised about complications/shortcomings with the existing e-stamp, including the 45-day expiration of the e-stamp. Please rate the importance of assessing the above approach.		3.87	15
Q11	Importance to increase active support for conservation	Refuge System volunteers, visitors, etc.	3.80	19
Q1	Importance to assess impacts of price increase	Hunting and fishing access on Refuges	3.73	20
Q2	Importance to determine optimal price points	Impact on hunting license sales (incl. state waterfowl permit or stamp)	3.73	20
Q1	Importance to assess impacts of price increase	Non-hunting Duck Stamp customers	3.67	22
Q3	Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers	Refuge System volunteers, visitors, etc.	3.67	22
Q15	15. Please identify the importance of identifying, discussing, and recommending to the USFWS ideas for any changes in how proposals are developed and reviewed for the use of Federal Duck Stamp revenues that are restricted for easements instead of acquisition, due to the 2014 price increase legislation.		3.60	24
Q8	8. How important is the task of assessing the impact on access to Refuges for hunting and fishing due to the restriction established by Congress that revenue from 2014 price increase of the Federal Duck Stamp can only be used for the acquisition of easements?		3.47	25
Q14	14. Please identify the importance of undertaking tasks to better communicate with Duck Stamp purchasers and others to develop a understanding of how the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund works and how Federal Duck Stamp revenues are used for land acquisition/easements.		3.47	25
Q12	Importance to address e-Stamp administration	Allow State Fish & Wildlife Agencies to sell a variety of Duck Stamp privileges (e.g. single day, multi-day, half season, multi-season, or lifetime hunting privileges)	3.27	27
Q7	Importance to waterfowl hunting access if stamp funds used for land	Land acquired by easement	3.20	28
Q12	Importance to address e-Stamp administration	No longer require the "physical" stamp to be used for waterfowl hunting	3.20	28
Q10	10. How important is the task of identifying initiatives/actions to use the Federal Duck Stamp to support hunter recruitment and retention?		3.13	30
Q3	Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers	Stamp collectors	3.07	31
Q3	Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers	Arts community (i.e. duck stamp artist)	3.00	32
Q11	Importance to increase active support for conservation	Stamp collectors	3.00	32
Q11	Importance to increase active support for conservation	Arts community (i.e. duck stamp artist)	3.00	32
Q1	Importance to assess impacts of price increase	Other issues	2.71	35
Q5	5. Significant obstacles exist for collecting Duck Stamp sales data:			
	Answer Options	Response Percent		
	Yes	66.7%		
	No	33.3%		
	If YES, what are the most significant obstacles to collecting Federal Duck Stamp sales data?			

Appendix E – Ducks Stamp Task Group Input for Identification of Actions Underway / Actions Needed to be Undertaken

	Actions already being undertake to address issues; and who is undertaking the actions.	Suggested actions for the Task Team to undertake	Recommendations the Task Team could make to State Directors at AFWA's Business Meeting in September
1. Increase Total Funding			
<p>a. Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers: (i) Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen; (ii) Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders); and Waterfowl hunters</p>	<p>Not aware of any current actions</p>	<p>Determine who is buying stamps (birders, hunters, conservationists)</p> <p>Identify specific sales and revenue targets among user groups.</p> <p>Use HDWG stakeholder survey to determine effective messages for each group.</p> <p>Need to know the groups to target – comfortable; Need a lot of work, lots of work to analyze; need to find a niche in the bird watching community to move forward; this applies to other groups – friend of refuges, non-waterfowl hunters (quail, upland bird hunters)</p> <p>Know who needs to buy now and can figure out hunter breakdown by mining state data, then set up targets for other groups,</p>	<p>AFWA should work with USFWS and OMB to figure out how to get this demographic information.</p> <p>Work with USFWS to determine revenue targets so that conservation goals may be achieved.</p> <p>Aspirational goal is appropriate but a specific target could be scary; Need to look at economic impact and this would affect sales; so how do we factor all these into a goal – we won't know for about 3 years what the real impact of the current price increase is. Only a few people have expressed concerns</p> <p>A lot of work, and setting goals will be challenging, but can express the context based on economic/environmental effects – so is the effort</p>

		<p>key is the groups not required to buy – is it feasible to get some of the demographics – 18 states in e-stamp and 5 start this year. Could go to states and ask if stamp purchasers also bought a hunting license. Consignment operators and Refuge sales won't know reasons. Would require OMB to approve another survey and don't know if Postal Service would participate Note double stamp purchase</p> <p>Provide some mechanism for others to contribute to wetland conservation via the duck stamp program that would be considered a charitable donation.</p>	<p>worth it for ROI</p> <p>We know sales have been 1.1 to 1.4 M so we could establish a number even with a price increase. Would like an aspirational goal.</p> <p>Setting a target is important to be able to assess if marketing efforts are having an impact. There are more non-hunters than hunters and these are the groups we need to target.</p>
<p>b. Importance to assess impacts of price increase: (i) Conservation activities (i.e. land acquisition); (ii) Federal Duck Stamp sales; and (iii) Hunting license sales (i.e. state waterfowl permit or stamp)</p>	<p>Not aware of any current actions</p>	<p>(i) Predict available dollars for conservation activities,</p> <p>(ii) After first year of price increase, model numbers to predict future sales</p> <p>(iii) Select key states and compare sales of state licenses and fed stamps before and after price increase; also need to determine whether there is</p>	<p>(ii) Ask USFWS to Identify acquisition and easement goals for priority regions. Then develop an action plan to achieve goals. USFWS operates on willing seller – willing buyer approach within approved acquisition boundaries. Do no believe action is feasible in short-term. Goal is to contribute to NAWMP population objectives, while</p>

		<p>a correlation between HIP-derived hunter numbers and sales of state and federal stamps</p> <p>Update the public on stamp sales yearly/monthly?</p> <p>Use best available information available to assess the impact and make estimations. Could get info from states that sell e-stamp, but Laurie can only ask 9 states without getting OMB approval. How do we target people interested in conservation, more than just hunters. Need to find out how many people not hunting that have an interest in conservation and may buy stamp. Could work with partners to gather the information</p> <p>It is an education campaign that is for everyone not just hunters. Go to home page on why easements are important with duck stamp dollars. Ken Fowler helped to put info together.</p> <p>Historical data can be used to attempt to predict what will happen with the current increase (increase</p>	<p>providing opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation etc. Few refuges have stepped down the NAWMP habitat/population objectives due to resource limitations. NWRS has asked NAWMP PC and NSST to develop a decision support tool, and NSST has formed a committee to work on this with JVs and NWRS.</p> <p>Could revise statement to read: (ii) Ask USFWS to work with the NAWMP community to identify priority areas for acquisition. Then implement a framework to direct limited MBCF funds in a manner that will maximize the contribution to NAWMP goals.</p> <p>(ii) AFWA should request that individual states graph state waterfowl stamp/permit sales and compare to fed stamp sales.</p> <p>If questions provided to Flyway Councils, they could ask member states. California has been tracking stamp sales vs license sales and thus harvest. Ratio of</p>
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		<p>in revenue of 50% from prior year, decrease in sales of 10%), but this is an experiment and we really won't know for several years—we need to monitor closely</p>	<p>federal stamps to state stamps was 90/1 but now that have switched, but this has been flip flopping and seems to be inconsistent data.</p> <p>Lots of data issues.</p>
<p>c. Importance to determine optimal price points: (i) Impact on Federal Duck Stamp sales; (ii) To automatically increase the price by the CPI when the buying power is reduced, or every five (5) years in line with the CPI; and (iii) To inform the USFWS proposal to have the Secretary of the Interior establish future increase of Duck Stamp price</p>	<p>Lowenthal's cpi bill.</p>	<p>(i) Graph past and current sales; run simulations from past and current data to determine optimal price point for revenue and maintaining optimal sales</p> <p>(ii) Define buying power issue in something other than "land acquisition"</p> <p>(iii) N/A</p> <p>Optimal price point ranks low in priority; consider more of a formula based on CPI; Optimal may be below where we are at today; Scott – as we compile data, look at whether the \$25 is above the optimal</p> <p>I don't think this is a priority as its an economic modeling question, plus we need to define what "optimal" is. If optimal is maximizing revenue, then it's a tradeoff between price</p>	

		and units sold and I'll bet the "optimal" is actually a higher price, but we probably don't actually want that since we also see value in total units sold	
d. How important is monitoring and assessment of Duck Stamp marketing efforts?	Only marketing efforts I'm aware of are related to the Duck Stamp art contest and "first day of sales"	Need to market the value of the stamp in relation to breeding grounds benefits, hunting access improvements, and wildlife viewing benefits. Laurie – establish whether we have benchmarks and what the performance indicators are? Web hits, sales overall, what are we measuring against. Thus need a list of benchmarks. State stamp started at a dollar, and then incremental increases, and could see some trend but the cause and effect is difficult to identify.	
e. How important is the task of identifying new uses of the stamp (i.e. day-access to refuges) to encourage youth or other non-waterfowl hunters to access Refuges?	Some NWRs allow stamps to be used as day-use permits	Make a list of NWRs that allow visitor access with Duck Stamps. Promote these areas similar to National Parks. Few refuges actually (35 currently) use stamp for access; simply don't have the capacity. Some fee refuges Duck stamp to get into all but some have local stamp where money stays	Stamp could provide a "national discount coupon" of perhaps 10%, (national stores suggested, but local sporting-goods, or bird specialty store may be later), NGOs and Stamp Office people could visit the following to sell the idea: - Bass Pro Shops - Cabela's - National car-rental companies

		<p>in local refuge</p> <p>Giving the stamp value beyond allowing hunting or accessing a refuge would be better – for example, getting additional discount at Bass Pro or Avis etc.</p> <p>Thought Wild Bird gave discount on bird seed; some major corps looking at these expanded ideas.</p> <p>This is important, but difficult; can all refuges be made to require a duck stamp if you are on the property, with enforcement being on the honor system?</p> <p>I like the idea of discounts by certain folks, but who's going to pitch them on it (Bass Pro, Cabela's, REI [maybe Sec'y Jewell?], Sportsman's Warehouse)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - REI - Dick's Sporting Goods - Choice Privilege Hotels (Comfort Inn, Quality Inn, Clarion, Sleep Inn, Rodeway Inn, EconoLodge, etc) with HQ in Silver Sprint, MD - Gander Mountain - Orvis - L.L. Bean (mostly in East) - Barnes & Noble for nature books
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	Actions already being undertake to address issues; and who is undertaking the actions.	Suggested actions for the Task Team to undertake	Recommendations the Task Team could make to State Directors at AFWA's Business Meeting in September
2. Improve how money is spent			
a. Importance to assess impacts of price increase - Conservation activities (i.e. land acquisition)	Not aware of anything.	Report on MBCC/USFWS land conservation activities Increased revenue from price increase should make more funds available for land conservation.	
b. Importance to waterfowl hunting access if stamp funds used for land - Land acquired by purchase	Currently, NWRs acquired with MBCF funds are subject to vague statute and administrative guidelines regarding allowance of some uses like waterfowl hunting.	Inventory of waterfowl hunting access at NWRs purchased with Duck Stamp dollars. List provided is not accurate. List was a result of a large NWRS data call in March 2015. A subsequent data call is planned for this fall and will collect the information by county. Increase the amount of land available for waterfowl hunting on NWRs acquired with Duck Stamp dollars. Hunters helped to acquire these lands. Thus, they should be provided additional opportunities. Accounting of new acquisitions – all MBCF acquisitions are identified in the MBCC Annual Report	Suggest changes to existing legislation (Duck Stamp Act, Refuge Improvement Act, etc) regarding hunting access.

		<p>Encourage of require USFWS to inform state wildlife agencies of planned land acquisitions using federal duck stamp funds; Any acquisition should also include the plans for recreational use (fishing and hunting) of the properties. Too often lands are acquired and the public is no longer allowed access to hunt or fish. The net result is lost recreational opportunities at the local level.</p> <p>MBCA already requires FWS to consult with state wildlife agencies on all proposed refuge land acquisitions using MBCF funds. NWRS HQ has directed regional offices to consult with state agencies at least 6 weeks prior to a MBCC meeting. State agency director can attend MBCC meeting (costs paid by FWS) when proposal for his/her state is being proposed.</p> <p>All MBCA proposals must identify current property uses and FWS' proposed management. In updated guidance, we will explicitly</p>	
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		<p>require proposals to address hunting and fishing. That said, virtually all fee lands acquired with MBCF funds were private lands closed to public access, so it is hard to see how recreational opportunities are lost. With fee acquisitions of private hunt clubs – which are rare – there could be a temporary loss of access to former hunt club members until the NWRS takes regulatory action to open those lands to hunting (typically, a 6-12 month process).</p>	
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	Actions already being undertake to address issues; and who is undertaking the actions.	Suggested actions for the Task Team to undertake	Recommendations the Task Team could make to State Directors at AFWA's Business Meeting in September
3. Improve buyer access			
a. Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers: (i) Waterfowl hunters; (ii) Wildlife watchers (i.e., birders); and (iii) Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen	Not of aware of any specific marketing plan.	High priority Use results of stakeholder survey to define target audiences and specific sales targets for each group.	Work with bird conservation community to develop marketing plan.
b. How important is improved data collection of Duck Stamp sales?	Not aware	Identify what information is currently collected by contractor and states. Collect demographic info at point of purchase.	
c. Importance to address e-Stamp administration - Finalize plans for all States to sell waterfowl hunting privileges through existing licensing systems	USFWS is currently working with individual states.	Report on progress of states entering the system. Identify remaining states and allow all remaining states to enter the e-sale system. Consider the creation of a smart phone app that would enable a person to easily purchase a duck stamp; could incorporate marketing information about conservation via the use of duck stamp funds Increase availability ie through FWS website sales, apps, etc...	Request that Sec. of Interior move quickly to accommodate remaining states. Recommend that USFWS advance the schedule of making the e-stamp available to states with automated licensing systems.

d. How important is monitoring and assessment of Duck Stamp marketing efforts?	No marketing plan is in place, so no assessment of marketing efforts is being undertaken.	Define specific sales targets to evaluate marketing plan.	
e. How important is the task of identifying new uses of the stamp (i.e. day-access to refuges) to encourage youth or other non-waterfowl hunters to access Refuges?		High priority	
f. Issues have been raised about complications/shortcomings with the existing e-stamp, including the 45-day expiration of the e-stamp. Please rate the importance of assessing the above approach	This complication is created by the current e-Duck Stamp statute.	Provide a case study on this complication. Change federal law to allow the e-stamp to suffice as the requirement to hunt waterfowl and coots for the duration of the hunting seasons; the physical stamp to be sent to hunters after March 10 each year	Report findings to AFWA and USFWS and recommend necessary changes to law. Change federal law to allow the e-stamp to suffice as the requirement to hunt waterfowl and coots for the duration of the hunting seasons; the physical stamp to be sent to hunters after March 10 each year.

	Actions already being undertake to address issues; and who is undertaking the actions.	Suggested actions for the Task Team to undertake	Recommendations the Task Team could make to State Directors at AFWA's Business Meeting in September
4. Increase knowledge of conservation			
a. Importance to increase active support for conservation: (i) Waterfowl hunters; (ii) Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders); and (iii) Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen	Friends of the Migratory Bird / Duck Stamp is attempting to inform the birding community about the benefits of buying a stamp.	Use results of stakeholder survey to define target audiences and specific sales targets for each group. Can we mount a coordinated effort to get organizations and magazines to all run the PSA (see Friends web site) for several years in every issue of their publications?	Work with bird conservation community to develop marketing plan.
b. Important to develop marketing plan & increase customer numbers: (i) Non-waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen; and (ii) Wildlife-watchers (i.e. birders)	Not aware of any formal actions.	High priority	
c. How important is monitoring and assessment of Duck Stamp marketing efforts?	Not aware of any actions.		

Appendix F – National Wildlife Refuge System Division of Realty Observations About Task Group Recommendations (email to Dean Smith, dated July 8, 2015)

We have an observation about the following item under 1b: (ii) Ask USFWS to identify acquisition and easement goals for priority regions. Then develop an action plan to achieve goals.

We operate on a willing seller basis, meaning we only pursue fee and easement acquisitions within approved acquisition boundaries from willing sellers. We do not believe this action item is feasible as a short-term goal. Our overall objective for MBCF land acquisition is to contribute toward meeting NAWMP population objectives while providing and/or improving public opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, etc. Due to limited resources, few refuges have stepped down NAWMP and Joint Venture (JV) habitat and population objectives. Stepping down these objectives in refuges is an ongoing effort that will require years as part of a coordinated effort with LCCs.

In the near term, to improve our methodology for allocating MBCF funds, NWRS Headquarters sought the assistance of the NAWMP Plan Committee and NAWMP Science Support Team (NSST) to develop a science-based decision support tool (DST) to inform MBCF investments. Earlier this year, the NSST formed a committee to help the NWRS develop this DST, and efforts are ongoing to produce a DST that leverages the latest JV science and planning to help the NWRS direct limited MBCF funds in a manner that will maximize the contribution to NAWMP goals. We plan to continue to work with JVs to improve this DST each year.

If we were to revise this 1b item to reflect current USFWS efforts, it might say:

(ii) Ask USFWS to work with the NAWMP community to identify priority areas for acquisition. Then implement a framework to direct limited MBCF funds in a manner that will maximize the contribution to NAWMP goals.

Under 2b, suggested actions, the table states: “Inventory of waterfowl hunting access at NWRs purchased with Duck Stamp dollars. List provided is not accurate.”

Although Eric and I were not involved in the compilation of this list, we would be interested to hear more about how this list is inaccurate, so we can pass that information along. This list was the result of a large NWRS data call in March 2015. A subsequent data call planned for this fall will collect the information by county.

“Accounting of new acquisitions.”

All new MBCF acquisitions are identified in the [MBCC Annual Report](#).

“Encourage of require USFWS to inform state wildlife agencies of planned land acquisitions using federal duck stamp funds.”

The MBCA already requires FWS to consult with state wildlife agencies on all proposed refuge land acquisitions using MBCF dollars. NWRS Headquarters has directed Regional offices to consult with state wildlife agencies on proposed acquisitions at least six weeks prior to a MBCC meeting. In addition, the State wildlife agency director, or his/her designee, represents the State at the MBCC meeting when there is a MBCA proposal in his/her State, with FWS paying all travel costs plus per diem.

“Any acquisition should also include the plans for recreational use (fishing and hunting) of the properties. Too often lands are acquired and the public is no longer allowed access to hunt or fish. The net result is lost recreational opportunities at the local level.”

All MBCA proposals must identify current property uses and FWS’ proposed management. In updated guidance, we will explicitly require proposals to address hunting and fishing. That said, virtually all fee lands acquired with MBCF funds were private lands closed to public access, so it is hard to see how recreational opportunities are lost. With fee acquisitions of private hunt clubs – which are rare – there could be a temporary loss of access to former hunt club members until the NWRS takes regulatory action to open those lands to hunting (typically, a 6-12 month process).