



## Wetlands America Trust

President  
Steve Maritz

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Chief Operating Officer  
Dan Thiel

Secretary/Treasurer  
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Dear WAT Trustees,

Hello everyone! We hope this letter finds those who traveled with us to Canada well-rested and enjoying what's left of summer vacation.

Following the wonderful gathering of several trustees and DU officers to dedicate the Dave and Marg Grohne Waterfowl Production Area, we conducted WAT's summer meeting in the heart of the eastern Boreal Forest at the historic Triton Lodge, more than 200 miles north of Montreal. Luckily, most trustees' spouses were able to join us on the trip, and everyone enjoyed the wilderness charm and remoteness of this 120-year-old lodge. The Triton has hosted many distinguished guests including Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Trumann and Winston Churchill during its storied history as one of the premier lodges in Canada.

We enjoyed very comfortable weather, modest fishing for brook trout and amazing scenery in a tranquil setting. The rustic accommodations and excellent food provided a wonderful backdrop for our meeting.

### Boreal Forest Update:

As most of you recall, four years ago we ventured into the western Boreal for a tour of our work near Yellowknife and Fort Mackenzie. Our most recent meeting focused on the eastern Boreal, and thanks to the fine work of Fritz Reid, our top objective of experiencing the eastern Boreal Forest firsthand was accomplished. Boreal Quebec provides habitat for breeding ducks that migrate to the Atlantic and Eastern Mississippi Flyways. The Grand Chief of the Innu welcomed us and provided an overview of the First Nations in Quebec and throughout Canada. The chief's engagement was outstanding and everyone appreciated his insights and vision for his people and conservation.

We are currently in the 17th year of our Boreal partnership with Pew Charitable Trusts. So far we have secured nearly 200 million acres of fully protected refuges and nearly 240 million acres of sustainable development lands. We have Boreal framework pledges from Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba that result in a total of 867 million acres delivered or pledged. Our goal for the next five years is to fully secure pledged landscapes and reach beyond one billion acres of conservation





in the Boreal. Fritz shared that more than 90 percent of the philanthropic match dedicated to our Boreal partnership with Pew has come from WAT trustees.

Fritz's presentation and our discussions revolved around the two-principle policy efforts to secure conservation: Indigenous led Land Use Planning and Wetland Protection Policy. Both of these programs will be dominated by sustainable development, where avoidance of wetlands becomes a fundamental tenet.

We visited with both Innu and Attawapiskat Indigenous leaders on strategies and challenges. Karla Guyn, DU Canada CEO, spoke on recent successes in a 10-year process to secure wetland protection for significant wetlands of Quebec, including the entire Boreal

portions. DUC Provincial Manager Bernard Filion was instrumental in reaching this milestone. Several other provinces and territories are working with us now, and both strategies have a strong DU presence.

Our ability to deliver the \$60 million in the Boreal partnership and exceed one billion acres in conserved lands is dependent on our ability to attract an additional \$10 million in direct major donor funding to the Boreal and DU in the next five years. Our prospects are exciting for the largest terrestrial conservation project in the world.

#### Public Policy Update:

John Tomke reported on the great success of our events in Washington, D.C. earlier this year. WAT's Monday reception was hosted jointly by the Canadian Ambassador and CN Rail at the Canadian

Embassy and featured Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, who made his first "official" speech at our event.

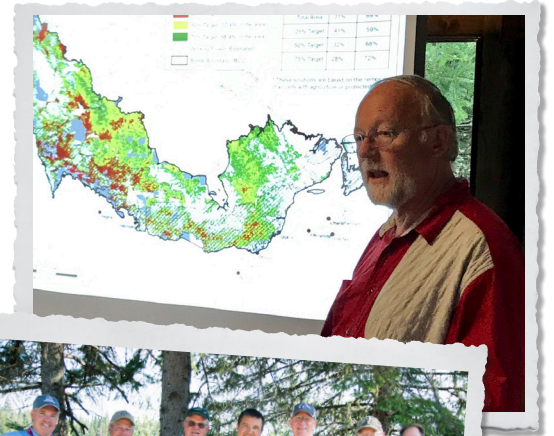
The following day, the Wetlands America Trust board meeting was held in the Capitol Building. Those in attendance

included Secretary Perdue, Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Congressman Rob Wittman (R-VA). Both Heinrich and Wittman are key members of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. Later that evening, the annual dinner set new records for attendance. More than 70 members of the House and Senate were in attendance and total attendance exceeded 600 for the first time. Although the primary purpose of this event is to raise the visibility of Ducks Unlimited and its mission, the event also netted more than \$230,000 for priority conservation projects. This event is highly successful because of the fantastic participation of both the WAT and the DU Boards.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the 2018 Farm Bill are our current highest legislative priorities. The House has submitted their budget that

suggests NAWCA appropriation of just over \$38 million, which is identical to the current appropriated level. We're working with the Senate to increase this to \$40 million.

With regard to NAWCA re-authorization, the House Natural Resources Committee, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the Senate Energy and





Natural Resources Committee have all submitted language to re-authorize NAWCA for five years at \$50 million. This language is part of a larger Sportsmen's Bill. DU CEO, Dale Hall, recently testified before the Senate EPW Committee on behalf of the Sportsmen's Bill and NAWCA in particular.

#### **Treasurers Report and Easement Update:**

Treasurer Wendell Weakly provided the treasurer's report which focused on WAT finances. He provided information that highlighted the significant growth of the WAT endowment during the Rescue Our Wetlands campaign. WAT's endowment has more than doubled in size to \$60 million. In addition, Wendell reminded everyone of the critical role conservation easements play in our land protection efforts. WAT/DU closed on 13 easements in FY17 and permanently conserved an additional 6,091 acres. WAT remains one of the largest accredited land trusts in the country with more than 533 easements and 423,773 acres protected.

#### **Rescue Our Wetlands Update:**

WAT trustee Doug Frey was recently elected to the DU board of directors as Senior Advisory Vice President for Development. Doug provided a brief update on the Rescue Our Wetlands campaign, which currently sits at more than \$1.82 billion toward an ambitious \$2 billion goal. He encouraged everyone to not become complacent, but to stay the course as we finish out the final years of the campaign. If we continue on the current path, we will most certainly exceed our goal of \$2 billion!

#### **Wetlands America Trust Winter Meeting:**

Trustee Dan Ray will welcome the WAT board to the Lowcountry of South Carolina, December 8-10, 2017. Arrivals on Friday in time for drinks and dinner, duck hunting Saturday and Sunday morning with our meeting Saturday afternoon. We will lodge at Annandale Plantation and White House Plantation and hunt the famed Santee River Delta. Details to follow.

Best wishes for a strong finish to summer and good luck with dove season!

For the Ducks,

Dan Thiel  
Chief Operating Officer







