

STATEMENT OF DR. SCOTT W. MANLEY

DUCKS UNLIMITED, INC.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

193 Business Park Drive, Suite E

Ridgeland, MS 39157

BEFORE THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

CONCERNING THE

FOOD, CONSERVATION, AND ENERGY ACT OF 2008

TITLE II – CONSERVATION

JULY 1, 2010

Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) is pleased to testify before the House Agriculture Committee on the successes of the ongoing Conservation Title of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act 2008 (i.e., Farm Bill). We also appreciate the opportunity to provide general recommendations for improved conservation delivery in the upcoming 2012 Bill. The Farm Bill is the most important legislation in assuring a safe and abundant food supply for citizens of the United States and for conserving our precious natural resources on which the strength of this country has been built. We commend Congress for its focus on ensuring the long-term strength and viability of this important legislation.

Ducks Unlimited is a non-profit wetlands and wildlife conservation organization with affiliates in both Canada and Mexico. I am one of a team of Conservation Directors for DU with responsibility of building and delivering on-the-ground programs to improve wildlife, water and soil resources. In particular, I work in our Southern Region, which covers 15 south-central states from Kansas to New Mexico east to the Atlantic Coast. Our region hosts some of the most productive lands in the United States for both agriculture and wildlife, including the Lower Mississippi Valley, Gulf Coastal Prairies, and the Southern Great Plains. It is in these fertile regions of the country that great examples of Farm Bill successes and challenges are demonstrated.

Highlights of Success:

1. Balance of Working Lands and Restored Natural Lands – The current Farm Bill has what I believe to be a good balance in programs that conserve wildlife, water, and soil resources on working production lands and programs that restore natural communities such as wetlands, grasslands, and forest. A prime example of a working lands program would include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) while an example of a restoration program would be the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Together, these programs give landowners choices to address conservation issues in light of what the land needs and in consideration of what works in their agribusiness operations. Simply put, it promotes DU’s shared philosophy of “Farm the Best – Restore the Rest.”
2. Landscape Initiatives – Other highlights of success from the 2008 Farm Bill are the various landscape initiatives to address targeted resource concerns. Examples include the Agriculture Water Enhancement Program which allows producer and conservation groups to address aquifer depletion concerns throughout the southern region. Another example is the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI), encompassing the floodplain throughout the Upper and Lower Mississippi Valley, to address soil and nutrient loss leading to the hypoxia issue in the Gulf of Mexico. DU will be working with several partners to deliver an MRBI project in the Illinois River watershed this coming year. This particular project will help restore and enhance critical waterfowl and wildlife habitat while also reducing nutrient runoff that would end up flowing into the Gulf of Mexico.

And as we are aware, given the current human and ecological tragedy involving the Deepwater Horizon spill, the fragile ecosystems of the Gulf Coast will need additional resources to protect and restore these essential marshes, not just for the millions of migratory birds and other wildlife that depend upon them for their survival, but for the people and communities that depend upon them for their own economic survival. DU, working with partners like the NRCS and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, are responding. Working with these partners, DU will focus on restoring and enhancing upwards of 20,000 acres of wetland habitat on lands adjacent to or near Gulf Coast marshes, in particular the Chenier Plain of Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana.

These initiatives are invaluable in addressing specific resource concerns that if left unchecked, would be devastating to agricultural and wildlife resources, and also impact citizens across the United States in the future.

3. The level of future interest in WRP enrollment in several regions of the country, particularly the Great Plains and Intermountain West, will hinge on the ability of NRCS to implement a WREP reserved rights program that most importantly is supported by working ranchers. WREP represents an outstanding opportunity to achieve wetland conservation through partnerships between ranchers and the wildlife community. Reserving the grazing rights to the landowner with a reduced easement payment will be critical to protecting and restoring areas critical to wetland dependent wildlife. We commend NRCS for its efforts thus far in implementing this and look forward to working with them to make WREP a success.
4. State and Local Governance of Programs – In large part, the various conservation programs in the 2008 Farm Bill are governed and administered at the state and local levels. This is critical to success, as resource needs, socio-demographics, and economics of states and locales differ. These differences can be an asset to programs given one has flexibility in program implementation and administration. Conversely, the differences can render a program ineffective with no flexibility. A good example of success is the current state governance over the appraisal process of easements values in WRP. Each state is given latitude to develop values with various appraisal techniques and offer easement purchases at various prices across a state. This is great progress compared to past practices of individual and complicated appraisals on an easement by easement basis and has in part contributed to the resurgence of this popular conservation program. Another example of success is EQIP, where the various locales within a state are responsible for developing practices that address resource concerns, and applying those practices to conserve natural resources.

Challenges to Address:

1. Capacities to Deliver – There are challenges remaining that if addressed in the 2012 Farm Bill, would set the stage for this country to make unprecedented strides in agricultural conservation. One of the most important challenges is lack of capacity to deliver conservation practices and programs on the land. Overall, the actual conservation programs have ample funding for practices (what we call Financial Assistance), but do

not have ample funding to administer and apply the practices on the ground (Technical Assistance). This FA:TA balance is not sufficient to help the people help their land. This is evidenced by backlogs of conservation program applications and unobligated FA funds at the end of the federal fiscal year. We believe a balance in funding must be restored.

2. **Diversifying Capacity to Deliver** - Once a balance is restored, one must diversify sources of increased capacity. Certainly adding staff within various USDA offices (e.g., Natural Resources Conservation Service) is needed. But also, bringing various conservation partners into the mix, including DU and others, adds capacity and diversity. Partnerships and partner organizations need the same technical assistance funding as do our various agencies, as at the end of the day even a not-for-profit must break even and be a not-for-loss. These partnership organizations have the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, positive attitude, and landowner/producer trust to make Farm Bill programs a success. Providing the avenues and funding to diversify capacity to deliver programs is crucial to helping people help the land.
3. **Benefits of Partnerships** – The following example demonstrates the need to form conservation partnerships to deliver Farm Bill programs. Through 2008 just over 2 million acres of wetlands were protected and restored across the United States under WRP. Just over half (1.1 M acres) were within the 15 states of DU’s Southern Region. Partnerships, either with Ducks Unlimited or the state conservation agencies (e.g., Missouri), were present in nearly every one of those 15 states. The states with partnerships accounted for a significant portion (1.0 M acres) of accomplishments leading to the 2008 Farm Bill. Capacity and progress afforded by conservation partnerships cannot be underestimated.
4. **Administrative Flexibility** - Beyond limitations imposed by capacity to deliver, the other main challenge to success is the need for more administrative flexibility within states and locales. The very thing that has led to program success (state and local governance) can still at times be limiting. Examples include state’s preclusions on rulings regarding WRP 7-year ownership rule and Conservation Reserve Program county caps blocking enrollments. We believe that to all degrees possible, the states should be able to assess resource needs, socio-demographics, and economics and make decisions to foster success of programs. In the end, we must position ourselves and our programs for conservation success.

On behalf of Ducks Unlimited, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to address the successes of the 2008 Farm Bill and provide general recommendations for improved conservation delivery in the future. We are truly committed to conservation of wildlife, water, and other natural resources, and believe in the motto – “Farm the Best – Restore the Rest.” The Farm Bill is the most important legislation in assuring a safe and abundant food supply for citizens of the United States and for conserving our precious natural resources –especially the land that is the very foundation of both agricultural and wildlife productivity - on which the strength of this country has been built. We commend Congress for its focus on ensuring the long-term strength and viability of this important Act.

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3. Business Phone Number: (601) 206 – 5443
4. Organization you represent: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
5. Please list any occupational, employment, or work – related experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee:
 - a. Years experience with this firm: 8 years
 - b. Years experience with other firms: 11 years
 - c. Member: The Wildlife Society
 - d. Member: Soil and Water Conservation Society
6. Please list any special training, education, or professional experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee:
 - a. BS /1987 / Wildlife Biology: University of Texas – San Marcos
 - b. MS / 1994 / Wildlife Ecology: Mississippi State University
 - c. PhD / 1998 / Wildlife Ecology: Mississippi State University
7. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list the capacity in which you are representing that organization, include any offices or elected positions you hold:

Dr. Manley has over 10 years experience in the wildlife biology and wetland habitat conservation fields. From 1987 to 1992, Mr. Manley worked as a biological technician on several waterfowl research teams located throughout North America and Antarctica.

From May 1992 to July 1994, Mr. Manley returned to school and earned a Masters of Science degree at Mississippi State University. Research objectives focused on the habitat relationships between restored grasslands and Northern Bobwhite Quail in the southeastern United States.

From August 1994 through August 1998, Mr. Manley earned his Doctor of Philosophy in Wildlife Ecology from Mississippi State University. Research focused on ecological and agricultural values of winter flooded rice and soybean lands in the Mississippi River Valley. Results are being used to

demonstrate compatibility of agriculture and natural resource conservation in this important region.

From 1998 to 2001, Dr. Manley served as Regional Biologist for Ducks Unlimited Southern Regional Office. Responsibilities included working with agricultural producers throughout the Mississippi River Valley to alter agricultural practices to benefit migratory waterfowl. Coordinated the administration and planning of watershed scale projects funded by several federal grants.

From 2001 to present, Dr. Manley has served as Director of Conservation Programs for Ducks Unlimited Southern Regional Office. Responsibilities include all conservation efforts undertaken by Ducks Unlimited throughout Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. Duties include conservation planning, program administration, grant development and administration, fundraising, and staff development.

Federal grants received since October 1, 2007.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Project Name	Amount
A & E SERVICES FOR WRP	68,377
BEAR RIVER RESTORATION	10,587
CHARLES BOETCHER ET AL.-2008	122,762
CONSERVATION PROGRAMS BIOLOGISTS - NRCS	109,316
COTEAU RANCH - EQIP/CCPI PROGRAM	16,638
COTEAU RANCH - EQIP/CCPI-TNC PROGRAM	32,936
COTEAU RANCH - WHIP PROGRAM	24,349
CRIPPLE CREEK LLC RESTORATION	30,389
CRIPPLE CREEK LLC RESTORATION	515,617
CRP-SAFE ASSISTANCE, EASTERN WASHINGTON	33,032
DRUMMOND FLAT I	191,920
EQIP 2002 746526082NF	10,802
EQIP 2002 746526082SP	30,432
EQIP 2002 74652608346	1,012
GOEBEL RANCH - WHIP PROGRAM	18,699
GOEBEL RANCH - WHIP PROGRAM	75,541
ILLINOIS RIVER BASIN WATER QUALITY INIT.	169,200
ILLINOIS RIVER BASIN WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE	96,520
JAMIE LEWIS-2008	5,148
K. RAY CAMPBELL-2008	1,873
LA NEW WRP MOD-14	1,439,971
LA NEW WRP AGREEMENT MOD #16	101,060
LA WRP	9,495
LA WRP	4,267
LA WRP	742,505
LAKE TERRELL WA, NOOKSACK WRP SHARE	18,863
LEVY LAKE DIKE RELOCATION	13,806
MALLARD SATELLITE TELEMETRY PILOT STUDY	63,000
MALLARD SATELLITE TELEMETRY PILOT STUDY	12,484
MICHIGAN WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM - NRCS CA	69,000
MICHIGAN WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM - NRCS CA	130,000
MORAN WRP PROJECT	98,043
MT WRP - ROCK CREEK CE #5	54,570
NE-155-1 EQIP	28,534
OREGON CLOSED BASIN, FARM BILL WETLAND BIOLOGIST	27,113
OSTER PROPERTY - EQIP PROGRAM	33,552
SHOTGUN SPRINGS, LLC WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM EASEMENT	4,700
THORNBURG WRP	27,374
TX NRCS A & E ORDER FOR SERVICES- BREWINGTON % TUPPEN	87,928
TX NRCS A & E ORDER FOR SUPPLIES OR SERVICES-MOSER, MARTIN, FOX FRANKS	25,836
TX NRCS A & E ORDER FOR SUPPLIES OR SERVICES-MOSER, MARTIN, FOX FRANKS	48,053
TX NRCS A & E ORDER FOR SUPPLIES OR SERVICES-MOSER, MARTIN, FOX FRANKS	28,465
TX NRCS A & E ORDER FOR SUPPLIES OR SERVICES-MOSER, MARTIN, FOX FRANKS	38,611
WASHINGTON WRP, WILLAPA RIVER	153,328
WEST RIVER WETLAND DEVELOPMENT - PETE BUER WETLAND	109,980
WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM - STATEWIDE #2	98,000
WHIP SWANSON	29,994
WILDLIFE EXTENSION AGREEMENTS - FECHT	25,882
WRP FARM BILL BIOLOGIST - NRCS	38,885
	Sum: 5,128,447

Federal grants received since October 1, 2007.

Farm Service Agency

Project Name	Amount
COTEAU RANCH - CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM	15,659
COTEAU RANCH - DIRECT COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM	3,904
FENDER FSA DCP	1,454
FLESNER FSA DCP	3,074
HAERTER/HECKENLAIBLE - DIRECT COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM	1,185
HINZ FSA DCP	5,783
HOFFMAN RLS - DIRECT COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM	1,315
HULTQUIST FSA DCP	3,629
OLSTON FSA DCP	1,965
OSTER PROPERTY - DIRECT COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM	1,807
SCHURR/STONER - DIRECT COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM	4,426
VERONA COMPLEX - DIRECT COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM	4,090
	Sum: 48,291