

TESTIMONY OF DAVID E. NOMSEN
PHEASANTS FOREVER, INC.

BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES AND OCEANS
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON THE WETLANDS LOAN ACT
H.R. 4315

SEPTEMBER 21, 2006
1334 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, my name is Dave Nomsen. I am the Vice-president of Governmental Affairs for St. Paul, MN based Pheasants Forever and I reside in Garfield, MN. My primary duties involve supporting a strong framework of federal policies and programs supporting natural resource conservation that complement our habitat-focused mission at Pheasants Forever.

I am pleased to be here today to offer Pheasants Forever's and many others' strong support for H.R. 4315 a bill to amend the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act and Wetland Loan Act. As part of my background, I was a faculty member of the Wildlife Department at South Dakota State University in Brookings, where I worked on various projects related to the function and values of prairie wetlands and directed staff working on the US Fish and Wildlife Services' National Wetlands Inventory across much of the northern Plains. I have served as a member of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC) since 1998.

Pheasants Forever's 650 chapters nationwide complete on average more than 20,000 individual projects annually with conservation minded farmers and ranchers. The vast majority of these projects is completed on private lands and involves grassland establishment and management. Projects involve the establishment of nesting, brood rearing, and winter cover for pheasants, quail, and a wide array of wildlife.

PF chapters also support targeted land acquisitions to improve wildlife habitat and provide public hunting opportunities. Many of these projects include wetland protection and restoration. These projects provide valuable permanent wetland protection, and public recreational opportunities including hunting.

Wetlands provide tremendous public benefit. Wetlands serve as natural filters to reduce soil erosion, filter runoff and improve water quality, and recharge groundwater. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita showed how healthy wetlands provide valuable hurricane damage relief, just as healthy wetland bases within inland watersheds can provide reduced damage from flooding.

Wetlands provide important habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife. I would be remiss if I didn't point out the importance of wetlands to resident wildlife. As wetlands go through periodic drying and reflooding periods they provide important nesting and overwintering habitat for resident wildlife including pheasants and deer.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to include as part of my testimony the following letter that was sent this past March in support of H. R. 4315 by the following groups:

-Archery Trade Association-Bear Trust International-Boone and Crockett Club –

-Bowhunting Preservation Alliance-Campfire Club of America-

-Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation-Conservation Force-

- Dallas Safari Club-Delta Waterfowl-Ducks Unlimited-

- Houston Safari Club-Izaak Walton League of America-

-International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies-

-National Wild Turkey Federation-North American Bear Foundation-
-North American Grouse Partnership-Orion The Hunters' Institute-
- Pheasants Forever-Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation-
-Ruffed Grouse Society-Safari Club International-Texas Wildlife Association-
-The Wildlife Society-Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership-
-Wildlife Forever-Wildlife Management Institute-

March 28, 2006

Dear (members of Congress, Administration officials):

The undersigned organizations representing millions of our nation's sportsmen and sportswomen respectfully request your support for and co-sponsorship of H.R. 4315, a bill to reinstate the Wetlands Loan Act and protect wetland and grassland habitats critical to migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. Introduced by Representative Mark Kennedy (R-MN), and Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA), the bill already has 81 cosponsors.

America's sportsmen and sportswomen have a strong tradition of supporting our nation's waterfowl heritage through the purchase of federal duck stamps. Funds are used to preserve and protect critical wetland and grassland habitats important for migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. A new Wetlands Loan Act will support accelerated efforts to protect vital wetland resources and expenditures will be repaid with future stamp sales.

Borrowing against future sales of federal duck stamps is a practical solution ensuring valuable habitats for waterfowl and other wildlife are protected. We realize this effort will require raising the price of the federal duck stamp and proudly observe that once again, the sportsmen and sportswomen of this Nation lead the way in "on the ground" conservation of our fish and wildlife resources. All of society will benefit from multiple environmental benefits of these habitat protection efforts that include reduced soil erosion and sediment control, water quality protection and groundwater recharge, and benefits to many species of fish and wildlife.

We respectfully request your support and co-sponsorship of H.R. 4315 and look forward to working with you as this bill proceeds through the legislative process.

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Mr. Chairman, additional groups that contacted me and offered support for this testimony include the Sand County Foundation and Whitetails Unlimited.

Clearly, many of our nation's leading wildlife conservation organizations representing millions of sportsmen and sportswomen support H.R. 4315 and we respectfully request your and the Committee's support in moving this important bill forward through the legislative process. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. I'd be happy to address any questions.