

Ducks Unlimited: Big wins for conservation in Wisconsin Gov. Evers' FY21-23 Executive Budget

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MADISON – Feb. 16, 2021 – Earlier today, Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers released his Fiscal Years 2021-23 biennial budget proposal to the applause of the conservation community.

Of primary interest to Wisconsin conservationists and hunters are the adjustment of the state waterfowl stamp fee and the 10-year reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. Both budget inclusions came at the request of the conservation community and have been longstanding priorities for Ducks Unlimited.

Under Evers' budget proposal, the state waterfowl stamp fee, which has not changed in 24 years, would increase to \$12 to help account for inflation. This is estimated to generate nearly \$400,000 of additional funding for Wisconsin wetland conservation work as well as waterfowl breeding habitat conservation in Canada.

These hunter-contributed dollars help leverage additional private investments by nonprofits like Ducks Unlimited as well as federal grant awards such as those secured through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Ducks Unlimited is joined by the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Green Bay Duck Hunters Association, Delta Waterfowl, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress in endorsing this fee adjustment.

The governor's proposed Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program reauthorization is for 10 years and would provide \$70 million per year for the program. For 30 years Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program has been one of the country's premier land conservation programs and its accomplishments include:

- \$1.3 billion invested into Wisconsin's land and water resources
- 650,000 acres conserved
- 99% of Wisconsinites live within five miles of a stewardship project

A robustly funded and authorized stewardship program is critical for Ducks Unlimited and our many conservation partners who help deliver these dollars on the ground for Wisconsin's wildlife and people. Ducks Unlimited commends the governor for his strong show of support for these conservation priorities and look forward to working with the legislature to ensure they are signed into law.

"Wisconsin Ducks Unlimited members and volunteers have worked tirelessly for nearly 10 years to adjust the waterfowl stamp fees to further enhance our state's wetland resources," said Nels Swenson, DU Wisconsin state policy chair and DU National Board Member. "By including the duck stamp price adjustment as well as a bold Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program reauthorization proposal, Gov. Evers has shown that he is responsive to the calls of the Wisconsin conservation community and understands the value these investments bring to the state."