

# MARYLAND WOOD DUCK INITIATIVE

*“A Total Wetlands Experience”*

## *December 14, 2006 Activity Report #18*

*Updates the October 8 report*

### **1. External Affairs**

*Website launched! Continuing to develop content. Numerous general inquiries are now being handled for box data, program advice, volunteer introductions and other things. A few newspaper articles are beginning to surface and Wildfowl Magazine will have a feature in its April 2007 issue. The Wood Duck Society has provided some ongoing coverage in its newsletter for which we are thankful. Website links to the Maryland Waterfowl Association, the Maryland Outfitters & Guide Association, the Refuge and, possibly Waterfowler.com among others are likely.*

*A huge expression of appreciation is due Linda Wiley (MD DNR) for her devoted assistance, patience and expertise in getting MWDI's website launched and professionally presented in such a credible way. Thank you Linda.*

### **Habitat Project**

*MWDI has played an integral role in finalizing a wetland development project at Conquest farms in QA Co along the Corsica River. Advisory Director John Chew had developed an agreement with QA CO for MWDI to review and establish wood duck programs on county property where appropriate. Advisory Director Rich Mason, USF&W, was at the same time assisting MD DNR (Kevin Smith) develop projects for wetland restoration. As a result of some “right hand / left hand” awareness & communications, a multi-faceted project involving some 37 acres of restored wetlands, flooded timber and grass buffers will now be developed on Conquest Beach farm to include a wood duck component. This project represents the type of multi-dimensional synergy between “kindred spirits” that MWDI hopes to foster in the pursuit of its mission. Many thanks to Greg Todd, QA CO Asst Dir of Parks, for his support and vision.*

### **65 box lumber order finalized, kits cut, assembly to occur over holidays**

*MWDI's fall lumber order, kit cutting and box assembly have been finalized. Lumber for 65 boxes was obtained at \$16.72 a box kit. Fully assembled boxes are being provided for \$32.00, MWDI's direct costs. 34 boxes will be for public sector projects and 31 for private sector. High school & college kids will assemble many of the boxes over the holidays being paid \$12.50 a box for private box assembly and then volunteering to assemble public sector boxes. A Boy Scout troop may assemble some others for merit badges. The next lumber order will not likely occur until June 2007.*

### **Presentations & Other**

*An MWDI presentation and Box Building component of the Youth Fair at the Chestertown Wildlife Exhibition (CWE) occurred as planned Oct 21-22. Subsequently, CWE agreed to fund 2 boxes for Radcliffe Creek School where MWDI is assisting the school develop an observation boardwalk and blind project to complement their ongoing wetland study project in proximity to the school. Display materials and informational panels were developed for use at the Annapolis and Kent County Ducks Unlimited functions.*

### **2. Education & Research**

*Monitoring programs for Radcliffe Creek School in Kent and a new Boy Scout troop in Frederick County are being developed to assist public sector programs in their respective areas. Walter Reed vets completed the construction of 20 boxes for the Aberdeen Proving Grounds program.*

### **3. Field Activities – Public Projects**

*Predator Guards arrived and were delivered to various private and public sector projects. See the MWDUI website for more details or contact [www.PredatorGuards.com](http://www.PredatorGuards.com).*

*Chapman's' Landing (Charles) – 8 boxes & poles were installed Oct 13.*

*Piscataway (PG) -3 boxes & poles were delivered to be installed before spring 2007.*

*Black hills (Mont) – 4 box kits were provided and 25 guards, most of which were installed to retrofit PVC sleeves Oct 24.*

*McKee Beshers (Mont) – IWLA had repaired some boxes, replaced 2 others and replaced some predator guards. Enhancement work is continuing.*

*Jug Bay (PG) – Predator guards and salvaged poles were delivered. Installation planned in Jan – Feb 2007.*

*Mt Nebo (Garrett) – 25 predator guards were delivered to replace pvc sleeves and upgrade older ones.*

*Smallwood State Park (Charles) – 5 boxes were removed to use elsewhere to obtain utilization more promptly.*

*Ft Smallwood Park (Anne Arundel) – a new project has been discussed to support an Eagle Scout project.*

*Chicamicomico River (Dorchester) – MWDI volunteers, Jack Wallace and Phil Poux, initiated this project to adopt some of Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage's (CWH) older boxes between New Bridge and Drawbridge. Old hatch data suggested nest dumping and some predation were issues. On Nov 27<sup>th</sup>, MWDI volunteers (Kevin Colbeck, Greg Schenck - DNR, C. Brown, Jack W and Phil P) along with Mike R of CWH, inspected and data based the boxes. Approximately 99 gross boxes were reduced to 77 as 11 double mounted boxes were pulled to de-cluster the inventory and because they had sunk to where the predator guard was at or very near the water enhancing snake and raccoon predation risk. About 1/2 of the remaining boxes were shut-in to provide a relatively well dispersed housing situation. Repairs were made and new nest material added to all boxes. 2 new single boxes were installed as replacements. In mid-season, nest monitoring will dictate which and how many of the closed boxes might be opened to add effective capacity once the main nest dumping phase might have passed. In summer, nest results will be analyzed.*

*Millington (Kent) – A final nest inspection was made for the last 14 boxes which had only interim results noted on April 14. A former bald faced hornet infestation was discovered in 4 boxes within a 1/2 mile radius. See the website for pix*

*Your continued interest and support is appreciated*

**Cliff Brown**