

MARYLAND'S WOOD DUCK INITIATIVE

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ACTIVITY REPORT # 4

Update from January 3, 2005 report

1. ORGANIZATIONAL STATUS

Draft Announcement to be submitted by end of February to Collaborators for formal approval. Internal “Talking Points” memo sent to Ducks Unlimited for their use to verbally represent the intentions of MWDI at recent and near term dinner functions. Initial website formation being drafted; hope to launch it with announcement. Some prospective Advisory Board members have been contacted. Letterhead to be re-done, promotional signs, cards etc to be generated.

2. Collaborator & Kent Co Initiative update

2.1 USF&W – database. With assistance from Jerry McCarty, MWDI volunteer, James Kelly contacted but software code for 1997 BOX and REPORTS cannot be located within F&W. Will create nest box profile and annual nest monitoring forms to include on initial website but will defer database link until needs are further refined and appropriate software / programming course of action better established. Data collection as part of the initial awareness campaign regarded as higher priority than perfecting database aspects.

2.2 Md DNR – Millington WMA. Re-vitalization plan developed with Josh Homyack. 30 predator guards obtained. Feb 14-15 initial work dates.

Proposal to discuss merits creating of a “standard” MD Waterfowl Habitat Agreement” relating primarily to MWDI landowner and volunteer activities being submitted.

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- 2.3 Eastern Neck Refuge – Reviewed new nest box sites and existing box, pole inventory Jan 4. Expect 2-3 day work program by first week in March. 20 Predator guards being obtained from Ches. Wildlife Heritage as swap for 7 Freon canister nest. Refuge volunteer list being evaluated for possible assistance.**
- 2.4 Chesapeake Farms – 2005 program submitted for approval and work date coordination. Starling deterrence, Freon canister testing, use of wheat straw, camouflaged nest boxes, woods margin box placement will all be examined.**
- 2.5 Napley Green Farm – box construction partially completed. Installation planned by early March for 6-8 boxes.**
- 2.6 Ducks Unlimited – introductions, referrals and initial discussions w/ membership at-large are ongoing. Once formally announced, materials and a brief verbal explanation of MWDI goals will be made at DU functions in 2005.**
- 2.7 Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage (CWH) – Meeting in late February to swap canisters and obtain predator guards. Continuing to seek how CWH's prior nest box installation efforts can be pragmatically utilized to help accelerate development of the statewide box inventory during 2005. Millington DNR obtained its 30 guards from CWH.**
- 2.8 Other “collaborators” and early project participants**

Montgomery County Isaac Walton League chapter, Maryland Sportsmen Association, Potomac Waterfowler's Group, Delta Waterfowl, Washington College (Prof. Bell) and the Chestertown Wildlife Exhibition are being or will be contacted for prospective roles in the near term.

The Harford County Educational center (100 boxes), the Bosley Conservancy (Otter Creek –Harford Co - 80 boxes), the Gibson Island Homeowners Assoc (Anne Arundel Co -20 boxes), the Earnest farm (Dorchester Co – 80 boxes), Riggin's Promise (Dorchester Co - 20 boxes) have all been contacted as part of an early awareness campaign and will be participating. Followup meetings with each are planned to help refine standardized nest box and annual nest monitoring forms.

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3. Other activities

- 3.1 Freon canisters – construction in progress. Approximately 20 canister nests are being built this week. 8 will be used at 4 different sites in wooded areas as part of the Kent Co Initiative to test their acceptability in the field. 7 are for CHW who will presumably try some in the field this year. 3 are for Ed Zimmer of Harford Refrigeration – the source of the empty canisters – for use on his Somerset Co farm and the balance will be used for the heat buildup study.**
- 3.2 Aerial photos – still working on internal issues between certain county officials regarding the use of these.**

General Comment – the ability to ID all state wide nest boxes in 2005 is considered very plausible based on recent feedback. The emphasis in 2005 will be to do that as well as build organizational momentum re: recruitment of volunteer project managers for 2006 nest season where programs can be initiated in habitat areas currently under or unutilized. Data collection will be stressed and then refined as the year progresses. Primary database, website interface aspects for nest box profiles and annual nest monitoring will be adopted as confidence of the final product rises and the most cost effective alternative can be adopted.

EOR.