

Since the inception of the Duck Stamp Program, the Department of the Interior has collected nearly \$750 million from the sale of duck stamps. These monies are deposited in the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and they have been used to purchase or lease over 5 million acres of land that has been incorporated within the National Wildlife Refuge System. While the number of duck stamp receipts have varied over the years, the actual number sold has declined from 2.5 million in 1971–1972 to 1.6 million in the 2003–2004 hunting season. For the past 3 years, about \$24 million annually has been deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, an increase in the price of a duck stamp from \$15 to \$20 would raise about \$8 million in new revenues each year and up to \$14 million in new receipts with a price tag of \$25. In short, this provision could provide the Fish and Wildlife Service with a long term revenue source. Under my legislation, however, the money obtained from these increases would not be designated for land acquisition but would be specifically targeted toward refuge operations. The ongoing monies raised from the \$15 would continue to be allocated and spent by the Migratory Bird Commission.

It is my firm belief that instead of acquiring millions of additional acres of Federal lands that we don't have the money to maintain, we would be better served by properly managing those we already own. During the previous congress, there was an effort to raise the price of a Federal duck stamp and this increase was overwhelmingly supported by the hunting and conservation community.

The second provision of this bill would direct the U.S. Postal Service to issue a series of first-class postage stamps depicting various units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. These stamps, known as semipostals, would be available to the general public for up to 3 years, the postal service would be permitted to recover any reasonable costs attributable to the printing, sale and distribution of the stamps and there is a sense of Congress that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service not suffer any offsetting reductions in its operations account.

This provision is modeled after Congressional efforts to raise money for extremely worthwhile causes like the Stamp Out Breast Cancer, the Heroes of 2001 and Stop Family Violence. These semipostal stamps have raised in excess of \$65 million. While it is difficult to project what a National Wildlife Refuge System semipostal stamp would generate, I would hope that these stamps would be readily available to all Americans including the 40 million people who visit a refuge.

The final provision would establish a national wildlife refuge system checkoff act. This would allow all Americans to checkoff a box on their Federal tax form indicating their desire to contribute \$1 or more of their refund or \$1 or more in additional payment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This new checkoff program would not create any new Federal programs and would be implemented without cost to our taxpayers. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would pay all reasonable administrative costs involved in changing the tax form, establishing the trust fund, and transferring the voluntary private contributions to the service.

There are currently 36 States that allow their taxpayers to check off private donations

for various State or local wildlife conservation programs. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a unique network of lands that is the only Federal entity designed specifically for wildlife conservation. It is appropriate that U.S. taxpayers have an opportunity to voluntarily contribute to its effective operation in the future.

I am pleased to introduce this legislation 10 years after the anniversary of the signing of the historic Refuge Organic Act and I want to thank my distinguished colleague MIKE THOMPSON of California for joining with me in this effort. It is my hope that this measure will stimulate debate on the funding crisis facing the refuge system and that members of the 21 national conservation, hunting, and scientific organizations that comprise the Care Group including the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the National Audubon Society, the National Rifle Association, and the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance will endorse this approach.

The options are simple: we can find new long-term funding sources or we can allow the operation of the refuge system to continue to deteriorate to the detriment of both wildlife and the 40 million people who utilize these lands. It is my hope that this Congress will move forward to correct this serious and growing problem.

I urge the adoption of the National Wildlife Refuge System Operations Enhancement Act of 2007.

HONORING OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE OF THE CITIZENS OF ORADELL, NEW JERSEY

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 14, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise to commend two organizations that contribute so much to make the small community of Oradell, New Jersey, such a fine place to live, work, and raise a family. Through their commitment to their neighbors, the volunteers and staff at both Bergen SWAN and the Oradell Public Library raise the quality of life in Oradell to a level bar none.

Bergen SWAN, led by its Co-Directors Lori Charkey and Mark Becker, were instrumental in preserving open space and beautifying this quiet little suburb on the outskirts of New York City. Working to coordinate grant money from a variety of sources, Bergen SWAN closed a \$1.2 million land transaction preserving Hague Park. Land that likely would have been subdivided and developed is now enjoyed by all as beautiful parkland.

The Oradell Public Library is a centerpiece of community life in Oradell. Working together, a variety of citizen groups and individual residents raised funds and developed plans to renovate the library. The Steering Committee, led by James and Louise Lessersohn, raised \$500,000 in contributions and gifts, mostly in the form of \$100–500 donations. The library is now updated for the 21st century. And, I commend the Lessersohns; Diane DiGiovanni, president of the board of trustees; Kate McGivern, president of the Library Foundation; and Sally Isaacs, president of Friends of the

Library for their commitment to their community.

RECOGNIZING THE LATE CAPTAIN ANN BERNATITUS AS A MEMORIAL IS DEDICATED IN HER HONOR IN EXETER, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 14, 2007

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to the late CAPT Ann Bernatitus of Exeter Borough, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, on the occasion of the placement of a monument in her memory in front of her hometown municipal building.

Captain Bernatitus is being honored by the people of Exeter because of her extraordinary service as a United States Navy nurse during the battles of Bataan and Corregidor in the Pacific theater of combat during World War II and also because she was the first person to receive the prestigious Legion of Merit award that was authorized by Congress in 1942. Others who were awarded the Legion of Merit include Dwight D. Eisenhower, George Patton, and Colin Powell.

Captain Bernatitus served as a nurse in the Philippines at the outbreak of the war, always on the front lines of combat. In the citation that accompanied the Legion of Merit award, it was noted that "Nurse Bernatitus courageously withstood the dangers and rigors of tropical combat, rendering efficient and devoted service during the tense days of the prolonged siege and evacuation."

Then a Navy lieutenant, she gained nationwide attention because of her dramatic rescue aboard a U.S. Navy submarine from Corregidor shortly after Japanese forces occupied the island.

Her epic journey aboard the USS *Spearfish* began on May 3, 1942, when Bataan had fallen and Corregidor's fall was imminent. She and 12 other nurses were evacuated and as soon as they were on board the vessel, it was forced to dive to escape the searching lights of the invading Japanese.

During their 17-day saga, the submarine continually ran on the surface from dusk to dawn and submerged during the day to avoid the threat of Japanese surface warships.

Following her arrival in Australia, she was sent home aboard a troop ship, arriving in the United States in July 1942. She was then assigned to Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland, eventually working with the Navy's public relations department assisting in bond drives.

After 22½ years in the Navy, she retired April 1, 1959, with the rank of captain after which she returned to her home in Exeter. She died in March 2003 at the age of 91.

Captain Bernatitus exemplified a life of fearless and selfless devotion to country and compassion for her fellow Americans. Her personal determination, coupled with her highly skilled nursing ability, was responsible for saving the lives of many American warfighters committed to answering the call to duty following the horrific events at Pearl Harbor.

Madam Speaker, please join me in remembering the many sacrifices made by Captain