

## North American Migratory Bird Joint Ventures



Atlantic Coast Joint Venture



APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS JOINT VENTURE



ARCTIC GOOSE



Black Duck Joint Venture



Central Hardwoods Joint Venture  
partnerships for conservation



CENTRAL VALLEY JOINT VENTURE



East Gulf Coastal Plain JOINT VENTURE



Gulf Coast Joint Venture



INTERMOUNTAIN WEST JOINT VENTURE



Lower Mississippi Valley JOINT VENTURE



MONTREAL GREAT PLAINS JOINT VENTURE  
All Bird Conservationists



Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture



PACIFIC COAST JOINT VENTURE



PLAYA LAKES JOINT VENTURE



Prairie Pothole JOINT VENTURE



SANWATER BASIN JOINT VENTURE



Rio Grande Joint Venture



SAN FRANCISCO BAY JOINT VENTURE



Sea Duck Joint Venture



SONORAN JOINT VENTURE  
BIBNATIONAL BIRD CONSERVATION



SOUTH MISSISSIPPI RIVER & GREAT LAKES JOINT VENTURE

# North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture 25th Anniversary Celebration



Rayburn House Office Building

March 21, 2012  
Washington, D.C.

This year, 2012, marks the 25th Anniversary of the North American Migratory Bird Joint Ventures. Since the North American Waterfowl Management Plan called for their creation in 1986, the Joint Ventures have become widely accepted as the model for cooperative conservation. Joint Ventures are inspired by a shared vision of a North American landscape where diverse populations of native birds thrive. We believe the well-being of our nations depends upon the health of our landscapes and our wildlife.

Thank you for joining us this evening as we celebrate twenty-five years of innovative conservation efforts; strong, effective partnerships; and working to protect the wild resources upon which we all rely.



**Hosted by:**



**We** thank all of the North American Migratory Bird Joint Ventures for their support, input, and guidance in developing the materials and events celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Joint Ventures.

**Special thanks to the National Joint Venture Communications, Education, and Outreach Team for its leadership and coordination:**

- Jennie Duberstein, Sonoran Joint Venture, CEOT Chair
- Debra Reynolds, Atlantic Coast Joint Venture
- Roxanne Bogart, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Ashley Dayer, Intermountain West Joint Venture
- Shelley Kirk-Rudeen, Pacific Coast Joint Venture
- Rachel Levin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Jill Shirley, Central Valley Joint Venture
- Caroline Warner, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture

*and*

Bob Shaffer, Central Valley Joint Venture (honorary member)

**In addition to our host organizations, we also thank the following individuals and organizations who made significant contributions:**

- Anne Law/American Bird Conservancy
- Atlantic Coast Joint Venture
- Central Valley Joint Venture
- Gulf Coast Joint Venture
- Intermountain West Joint Venture
- Jay Goble
- Jeremy Roberts/Conservation Media
- John Bowman and Eric Liner/Cornell Lab of Ornithology
- John Schroeder
- Lang Elliott/The Music of Nature
- Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture
- The Macaulay Library
- Norm Brunswig
- Northern Great Plains Joint Venture
- Rainwater Basin Joint Venture
- San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
- Sonoran Joint Venture
- Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- William Majoros/Photographer

# The Pingree Family

In 1820 the Pingree family made large investments in Maine timberlands. Today they are one of the ten largest private landowners in the United States, owning nearly one million acres of Maine timberland. In 1993, the Family initiated an independent, third-party green-certification of their forestland to the highest international standards. These efforts resulted in the Pingree's Seven Islands Land Company becoming the world's largest third-party certified sustainable forest products company.

In 2001 the Pingrees created the world's largest conservation easement—ten years later, it is still the largest in the United States. They sold all development rights on more than 760,000 acres—an area larger than the state of Rhode Island—to the New England Forestry Foundation, forever protecting over three percent of Maine's land base. While allowing for sustainable forestry into the future, the easement protects some of the most spectacular resources in Maine, including more than 2,000 miles of river frontage, 110 lakes and ponds, 215 miles of lakeshore, over 72,000 acres of wetlands, 67 rare and endangered plant sites, bald eagle and peregrine falcon nesting sites, and moose, bear, lynx, and migratory bird habitat unrivaled in the Northeast.

The Pingree Family has pioneered cooperative management agreements with the State of Maine and other landowners to protect valuable wildlife habitat such as deeryards, heron rookeries, falcon and eagle nesting sites, unique natural areas for rare and endangered species, and support for forestry and wildlife research projects. Further, their lands have been open to the public for traditional recreational uses.

For their innovation, dedication, and commitment to finding solutions that allow for both sustainable use of natural resources and long-term conservation, as well as for their landmark conservation efforts, we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Private Landowner to the Pingree Family.

## Program

5:30 p.m.

**Mingling and Refreshments**

6:00 p.m.

**Welcome**

Glenn Olson, National Audubon Society

**Remarks**

Congressman Ron Kind, Wisconsin

Rachel Jacobson, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Greg Siekaniec, FWS Deputy Director for Policy

Dean Smith, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Humberto Berlanga, NABCI-Mexico/CONABIO

**Partners In Flight Award Presentation to the Joint Ventures**

Chris Eberly, Department of Defense

David Pashley, American Bird Conservancy

**Presentation of the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Awards**

Glenn Olson and Arthur Feinstein

.....

**Legislator:** Congressman Ron Kind, Wisconsin

**NGO:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc. and Ducks Unlimited Canada

**States/Provinces:** Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

**Corporation:** ConocoPhillips

**Professional:** Gary Myers

**Private Landowners:**

Clen Atchley

Scott and Susan Freeman

Ronny & Danny Graham and Ronnie Myrick, The Wetlands LLC

The Private Landowners within the Grassland Resource Conservation District

The Pingree Family

# The North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award

Over their twenty-five year history, the North American Migratory Bird Joint Ventures have worked with over 5,700 non-governmental organizations; local, state, and federal agencies; private landowners; tribes; corporations; universities; and other partners.

These collaborations have translated into an array of success stories, including the conservation of millions of acres of critical habitat for birds and other wildlife, leveraging millions of matching and in-kind dollars; innovative partnerships to protect at-risk species, strategic communications and outreach to deliver important messages to target audiences, cutting-edge scientific research to fill gaps in knowledge, and science-based planning to guide resource management actions.

Today, in celebration of these diverse partnerships, we honor key organizations and individuals who have demonstrated a long-term commitment and dedication to the important work of the Joint Ventures and present them with the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award.

In the following pages you will read about the remarkable achievements of these honorees, without whose efforts the success of the Joint Ventures would surely be diminished. We thank them for their leadership, dedication, support, innovation, and participation and look forward to the next twenty-five years of thriving partnerships.

## The Private Landowners within the Grassland Resource Conservation District

This award is being given to the 162 private duck clubs and over 2,000 member hunters of the Grassland Resource Conservation District, located in the Central Valley of California. Accepting the award on behalf of the landowners is Mr. Dennis Campini, who serves on the Grassland RCD Board of Directors and who has made countless contributions to the Grasslands over the years.

The Grassland RCD is located within the Grassland Ecological Area, the largest contiguous block of wetlands west of the Mississippi River. Located in the heart of the Pacific Flyway, the District comprises 75,000 acres of wetlands, riparian, and associated upland habitats, and hosts some of the greatest concentrations of waterfowl and shorebirds on earth.

In 1991, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network recognized the Grassland Ecological Area as an Internationally Significant Shorebird Site. It has also been designated as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy and the National Audubon Society. In 2005, the Grassland Ecological Area was designated as Wetlands of International Importance under The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, making it one of 22 Ramsar sites in the United States.

Sixty-five percent of Grassland Ecological Area wetlands are privately owned and intensively managed to maximize wetland productivity and help meet the needs of the migratory birds of the Pacific flyway. Private landowners continue to make tremendous contributions of time and money to sustain the productivity of the wetlands on an annual basis.

Many of the landowners have worked with Central Valley Joint Venture partners for nearly 25 years, primarily as contributors and beneficiaries of North American Wetland Conservation Act grants. Those grants have protected, restored, and enhanced tens of thousands of acres of bird habitat, which also host a wide range of other wildlife. In addition to this valuable habitat conservation, many of the landowners have supported and advocated for the Central Valley Joint Venture mission at the local, state, and national level.

The Grassland Resource Conservation District is widely recognized as an extremely important area for migratory birds and for its excellent collaboration with the Central Valley Joint Venture. On behalf of the Joint Ventures, we are honored to present the private landowners of this region with the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award.

## **The Wetlands LLC:**

### **Ronny Graham, Danny Graham, and Ronnie Myrick**

Ronny Graham, Danny Graham, and Ronnie Myrick own the The Wetlands LLC, 3,500 acres of intensively managed wetlands located in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana. They are dedicated to wetland and natural resource conservation, as evidenced by their continued involvement with various conservation programs in support of Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture goals. They have entered into several private landowner agreements, including the Louisiana private lands program, which has been an integral part of the LMVJV habitat conservation effort over the past two decades. Additionally, they were some of the early enrollees in the NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley of Louisiana, restoring and permanently protecting emergent and forested wetlands on the majority of their property.

The Wetlands LLC graciously contributed \$100,000 of match toward a North American Wetlands Conservation Act proposal submitted in 2011 – further testimony to their interest and commitment to the landscape vision of the LMVJV. Finally, as recently as January 2012, they hosted a meeting of the newly-established Louisiana Conservation Delivery Committee – a consortium of Louisiana conservation agency leaders, including the Lower Mississippi Valley, Gulf Coast, and East Gulf Coastal Plain Joint Ventures, designed to foster increased communication and coordination among natural resource agencies throughout the state.

For their dedication to the conservation of the wetlands and natural resources of Louisiana, we are honored to present Ronny Graham, Danny Graham, and Ronnie Myrick of The Wetlands LLC with the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Private Landowner.

## **Congressman Ron Kind**

Congressman Ron Kind has been a stalwart champion of bird conservation throughout his tenure representing the people of western Wisconsin's third Congressional district. He is someone who has understood the need for science and good land management practices to ensure healthy populations of birds. Congressman Kind is keenly aware of how important the environment is to our daily lives and has made conserving our natural heritage one of the hallmarks of his work in Congress. Since arriving in Congress in 1996 and until 2010, he has served on the House Natural Resources Committee and has established leadership in many areas including bird conservation. Though he is no longer serving on the committee, his work to protect and preserve our natural resources continues.

As a life-long resident of La Crosse, Wisconsin, Congressman Kind has always appreciated the beauty of birds and understood the importance of conserving their natural habitat. He is proud to sponsor the organic legislation for Joint Ventures in this Congressional session, H.R. 1917, the Joint Ventures for Bird Habitat Conservation Act. He has always strongly supported the innovative and effective public-private conservation efforts Joint Ventures provide for migratory birds throughout North America. Congressman Kind has also been a champion of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, leading the effort to reauthorize the program which supports the long-term protection of Neotropical migratory birds. In 2005, he also authored legislation to create an e-Duck Stamp, which established the online sale of the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp). This makes it easier for hunters and collectors to purchase their stamps and supports both the sporting industry and the conservation initiatives supported by Duck Stamp revenues.

For his dedication and commitment to the Joint Ventures and his sponsorship and support of critical legislation for bird and habitat conservation, we are honored to present Congressman Kind with the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Legislator.

## Ducks Unlimited, Inc. and Ducks Unlimited Canada

Ducks Unlimited, Inc. and Ducks Unlimited Canada have been integral partners, advocates, and leaders in the development of Joint Ventures from their inception. From the earliest days of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan through the advent of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, Ducks Unlimited has invested enormous amounts of staff time and funding to the organization, administration, and operation of Joint Ventures. More specifically, DU has been a consistently active partner in Joint Venture planning, design, delivery, research, and monitoring, all of which are critically important to effective bird habitat conservation.

Whether working in the U.S. or in Canada, Ducks Unlimited has been an unwavering supporter of the Federal, State/Provincial, and private funding streams that fuel much of the work of Joint Ventures - funding that provides critical support to all JV partners. From the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, to the conservation provisions of the U.S. Farm Bill, to the support of private foundations, DU continues to be a leading advocate for maintaining and increasing funding sought by JV partners for meaningful and effective conservation action.

There are few Joint Ventures across the continent in which you will not find Ducks Unlimited staff completely engaged and hard at work as members of Management Boards and Technical Working Groups; preparing project proposals; developing and supporting partner networks; and involved in on-the-ground project delivery. The unprecedented success of JVs as we know them today is in no small part the result of the long-standing participation and dedication of Ducks Unlimited.

Over the past 25 years, the NAWMP partnership in the United States, Canada, and Mexico has played a vital role in bringing together agencies and organizations with a common objective of habitat conservation and has provided critical resources to accomplish that objective. For their participation in the visioning of a North American Waterfowl Management Plan from which emerged Joint Ventures; their commitment to growing these new and novel partnerships into models for cooperative conservation; and their continued support today, we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for an NGO to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. and Ducks Unlimited Canada.

## Scott and Susan Freeman

Pacific Coast Joint Venture partners have been working with Scott and Susan Freeman, from Seattle, Washington, on the Tarboo Watershed since 2004. They have been amazing conservation partners and a huge blessing for the project. Over the past eight years the Freemans have completed five conservation purchases and now own 232 acres of wetland and forest along Tarboo Creek, a tributary to the state of Washington's Hood Canal. But Susan and Scott not only buy land for conservation; they also actively work to restore it as part of the larger effort to protect and restore Tarboo Creek. They have involved their two sons and various relatives and friends in planting and weed control projects over the years. Their son, Ben, a PhD candidate at Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology working on montane bird communities in Papua New Guinea, and his fiancée, Alexa, are also here to accept this award.

In 2003 a 17-acre property on a critical section of Tarboo Creek had been for sale for some time, and Peter Bales, executive director of Northwest Watersheds was increasingly worried about the potential loss of a rare opportunity for restoration. Sarah Spaeth, Jefferson Land Trust's Land Projects Manager, called and said that a conservation buyer from Seattle had contacted them looking for property in the area. She suggested Peter give them a call. In a matter of minutes Peter was talking with Scott Freeman, who said that they were looking for property to conserve and restore, as his wife's family had been doing restoration for generations.

"Really?" Peter asked. "I didn't think anyone had been doing restoration for generations."

"Oh yes," Scott said, "Susan's grandfather kind of invented it."

"Really?" Peter asked, wondering what kind of crackpot Sarah had hooked him up with. "And who was that?"

"Aldo Leopold," Scott said, matter-of-factly.

Indeed, Aldo Leopold, the father of Wildlife Ecology and author of the Sand County Almanac, was Susan's grandfather.

For their deep family legacy and commitment to restoring the land, we are honored to present the Freeman's with the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Private Landowner.

## Clen Atchley

Clen Atchley, from Ashton, Idaho, served on the Intermountain West Joint Venture Management Board for sixteen years, one of the longest stints for any private landowner on a Joint Venture Management Board, and remains active in Joint Venture committee work. He provided instrumental leadership to the Joint Venture community by bringing the voice of a working farmer and rancher to Joint Venture discussions and decisions. He is a proven conservation leader with a vast array of habitat conservation accomplishments on his own farm and ranchland, as well as through many years of active engagement with the Teton Regional Land Trust. Foremost, Clen and his wonderful wife, Emma, are committed to sustaining the agricultural and wildlife heritage of eastern Idaho for future generations.

From the Joint Venture board room to his working agricultural operation to the halls of Congress, Clen has been a pillar of the Joint Venture movement for the majority of its existence. For his many years of leadership and dedication to sustaining the conservation and cultural heritage of the Intermountain West, we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Private Landowner to Clen Atchley.

## Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

A successful partnership is similar to constructing a building. You first must lay the foundation, and it is from that platform that a building gains its strength and stability. This concept is practiced among the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures across North America and the cement that binds our foundations is the State and Provincial Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

From the beginning, some twenty-five years ago, State Fish and Wildlife Agencies have served as foundational members of Joint Ventures. Today, with Joint Ventures essentially covering the entire United States and Canada, State Fish and Wildlife Agencies and their Canadian counterparts serve on every Joint Venture Management Board. The same can be said for their participation on Joint Venture Technical Committees – the States are there!

Their commitment, expertise, and unflappable support are in large part responsible for the achievements of the Joint Ventures over the past 25 years. As anyone who participates in a successful partnership can attest, the key to success is active engagement by the individual partners. Similar to most professions, the conservation community typically has more work than can be addressed in an individual career. If you magnify this fact on a State level, it is a wonder the extraordinary employees in State agencies can find time to commit to “other” activities.

But with Joint Ventures, this is exactly what these individuals have done. Through their active participation, they increased value of Joint Venture activities; accomplished conservation that no single entity or individual could have done alone; and ensured that Joint Ventures became the “gold standard” for approaching landscape-scale conservation throughout our continent.

As the representative of States and Provinces across our continent, we proudly recognize the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies with the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award. This recognition is both for the larger agencies that the Association represents, but also for every State or Provincial employee who has graciously shared their time and talent with the Joint Ventures.

## ConocoPhillips

ConocoPhillips has been a champion of migratory bird conservation through its involvement with Joint Ventures by donating critical non-federal funding, serving on Management Boards, and setting an exemplary standard to the rest of corporate America. In all of these pursuits it has been committed, long-term partners.

ConocoPhillips has been involved with Playa Lakes Joint Venture for most of the JV's existence. Over the past 20 years, it has donated over \$2 million to the PLJV's ConocoPhillips granting program. That funding has been leveraged more than three-fold by PLJV partners, providing a significant boost to local conservation efforts—resulting in over 20,000 acres being restored, enhanced or protected—as well as being an important partner in innovative education and research projects.

In the Intermountain West Joint Venture, ConocoPhillips has served on the Management Board for many years, contributing both annual funding support and expertise in working with corporate partners on bird habitat conservation. ConocoPhillips plays a key role in IWJV bird habitat conservation by supporting the IWJV Capacity Grants Program and its work in the communication arena. Past ConocoPhillips donations have provided the IWJV with critical non-federal spending flexibility that helped establish and maintain the diverse partnership that is the hallmark of this Joint Venture.

As the larger Joint Venture program grows, ConocoPhillips has remained an engaged and effective partner. For example, representatives sit on the Management Board of one of the newest JVs, the Northern Great Plains.

While other corporations have engaged in JV Management Boards across North America, ConocoPhillips stands out among its peers through their tangible and meaningful contributions of resources to JV partnerships. For this and their steadfast support over the many years, we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Corporation to ConocoPhillips.

## Gary Myers

Gary Myers is the Retired (Emeritus) Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency. He has been involved with the Joint Ventures since their inception. After the North American Waterfowl Management Plan was signed in 1986 and called for the establishment of joint ventures to implement waterfowl habitat conservation, Gary set the standard for what a JV would look like and how they would function. He directly helped set up the Lower Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast Joint Ventures in 1987 and 1988, respectively. When the JVs broadened their focus to include all bird groups, a decision in which Gary was extremely influential, he was key in the development of the Central Hardwoods JV, one of the first JVs to be formed with this “all-bird” approach. More broadly, Gary was an advocate for Joint Ventures across the continent and pushed for “wall-to-wall” JVs across the nation.

Gary worked for the enactment of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, recognizing how important that would be for bird populations across North America. By his retirement in 2009, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency had contributed a total of over \$2.6 million to NAWCA projects, which when combined with DU, NAWCA, and Canadian partner dollars put \$10 million worth of conservation on the ground to serve waterfowl habitat needs in Canada. He engineered two efforts by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies that highlighted the need for state contributions to NAWCA projects in Canada. These efforts are in large part responsible for many more millions of dollars of funds sent to Canada for waterfowl habitat conservation across all its provinces.

Gary was one of the three representatives from the U.S. (together with three from Mexico and three from Canada) to get the North American Bird Conservation Initiative up and running. He was influential in the development of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Southern Wings program that is now working with the states to get funds to projects in the Caribbean and Latin America.

For his long-term commitment and dedication to innovatively working across boundaries for migratory bird conservation, we are honored to present Gary Myers with the Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Professional.