

NORTH AMERICAN

WETLANDS

CONSERVATION ACT

project flash

## South Carolina Partnership Receives \$1,000,000 for Wetlands Project

On September 8, 2004, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, as authorized under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, approved **\$1,000,000** in funding for the **Bonneau Ferry Project in Berkeley County in South Carolina's Congressional Districts 1 and 6**. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop and implement wetlands and associated uplands projects to benefit wildlife. Projects must meet certain biological criteria to be considered for funding, and partners must be able to match the grant request 1:1 with nonfederal funds. This project's partnership matched the grant request with **\$2,105,000** and added **\$42,735,054** more in nonmatching funds.

Partners will purchase 10,697 acres, known as Bonneau Ferry, from MeadWestvaco Corporation. This property, together with 1,078 acres in conservation easements, will help to create protected migratory bird corridors. The project's tracts are found along the Cooper and Santee Rivers or the rivers' main tributaries. They abut or are proximate to the Francis Marion National Forest. Other federal and state protected areas are also nearby. Threats to the area come from the State's growing population, much of which is settling in riparian and coastal areas.

The partners will protect a variety of vital wetland types and their associated uplands, advancing the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Atlantic Coast and Black Duck Joint Ventures**, Partners in Flight, South Atlantic Migratory Bird Initiative, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.

As well as providing **Atlantic Flyway** migration habitat, several waterfowl species winter in the project area: northern pintails, mottled ducks, American black ducks, wood ducks, ring-necked ducks, American wigeons, canvasbacks, and redheads. Numerous songbirds, waterbirds, and wading birds have been recorded. Also benefitting from the partners' work are federally listed endangered or threatened species: red-cockaded woodpecker, West Indian manatee, wood stork, shortnose sturgeon, and bald eagle.

The State will hold title to Bonneau Ferry, so the public will have access to the land for birding, hiking, hunting, and fishing. Important to residents, the partners' efforts also will help to maintain the rivers' water quality.

Project partners include The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Lowcountry Open Land Trust, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USDA Forest Service-Forest Legacy Program, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust, Santee Cooper, and South Carolina Forestry Commission.

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