

BY Sean Robertson

*“If I could put together all the virgin landscapes which I knew in my youth, and show what has happened to them in one generation, it would be the best object lesson in conservation that could be printed.”*

—Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling, Editorial Cartoonist and Conservationist

# The Art of Being REMEMBERED

**N**obody ever cherished an oil painting of an R&D lab nor was moved to sketch a novel kind of financial product. Fortunately, the landscapes and wildlife we are all advocating to protect are fundamentally different. They have inspired artists for centuries, and the emotions evoked by their work have the power to transcend even the greatest ideological differences.



That’s something editorial cartoonist J. N. “Ding” Darling instinctively understood when President Franklin Roosevelt named him to lead the agency that later became the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In asking waterfowl hunters to invest in the habitat that sustains their sport, Darling created not a utilitarian license, but a beautiful “Duck Stamp” graced by his own drawing of mallards in flight.

Over the eight decades since, the Duck Stamp Program has generated enormous public interest by hosting the only national art competition sponsored by the federal government. Today, the \$15 stamps are purchased not just as a requirement for hunting, but also by collectors, recreational users of wildlife refuges and other conservationists who

appreciate that 98 cents of every dollar go directly to habitat conservation.

All told, duck stamp purchases have contributed \$750 million to help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partner with land trusts like Ducks Unlimited to add more than 6 million acres of wetland habitat to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Efficient program delivery and widespread public support have also translated into bipartisan political support, but the stamps’ purchasing power has greatly eroded since the last fee increase 23 years ago. Learn about efforts to raise the duck stamp fee at [www.ducks.org/related/duck-stamp](http://www.ducks.org/related/duck-stamp).

Just as Ding Darling recognized the power of conservation art, a group of Pennsylvania

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KAREN A. MYFORD



Pennsylvania land trusts were proud to spot Farmland Preservation Artist Karl Eric Leitzel's painting of historic Round Barn still hanging prominently in Congressman Glenn Thompson's front office two years after Centre County Farmland Trust President Larry Hutchinson presented it to him.

artists and the Centre County Farmland Trust sought to harness this energy by creating the Farmland Preservation Artists of Central Pennsylvania (FPA). This group of 17 talented artists comes together for painting sessions, cooperates on marketing events and supports the trust with a portion of their sales.

"We hope that when people see our art, they won't appreciate just the image," artist Holly Fritchman says, "but that they'll also become more acutely aware of the farmland and the open space we have all around us. We hope they'll do more than just drive past it and look at it but be moved to join in protecting it."

In the Fall 2011 issue, this column celebrated the story of a Centre County Farmland Trust event where FPA artist Karl Eric Leitzel presented an oil painting of historic Round Barn to local Congressman Glenn Thompson (R-PA). When Pennsylvania land trusts joined Alliance staff for a meeting in the Congressman's D.C. office the following year, they were proud to find the painting hanging prominently in his front office (see photos above).

Legislators receive far more commemorative items than they could ever hope to display, but going the extra mile with a beautiful landscape painting will give this influential congressman a daily reminder about farmland preservation for years to come. (If you give art to your legislator, make sure it passes muster under congressional gift rules by presenting it *in person*



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and attaching a nameplate that specifically commemorates the occasion.)

Learn more at [www.farmlandpreservationartists.org](http://www.farmlandpreservationartists.org) and see our webinar featuring the event at [www.lta.org/policy/webinars#home](http://www.lta.org/policy/webinars#home).



## Tax Issues

### Incentive Expires, Champions Retire

The enhanced conservation easement tax incentive took a one-two punch at year's end as congressional gridlock stalled progress on tax legislation, and two of our top champions—Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) and Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-PA)—announced their imminent retirements.

On the bright side, the strong bipartisan support that land trusts like yours have cultivated puts the incentive in a good position as smaller pieces of tax legislation are likely to move in the coming months. We are working every angle to retroactively renew the incentive, and still need your help recruiting co-sponsors for H.R. 2807 and S. 526. Please call your rep and senators. Urge them to support this incentive for the conservation of working farms, forests and wetlands.

Visit [www.lta.org/easementincentive](http://www.lta.org/easementincentive) for the latest news, new support letters, op-eds and details about the conservation tax incentives that remain in effect.



## Farm Bill

### Farm Bill Victory Provides Over \$1 Billion for Land Trusts

As this issue of *Saving Land* went to press, the Land Trust Alliance and its partners scored a major victory with passage of a Farm Bill that will provide **more than \$1 billion dollars for land trusts to save working farm and ranch lands**. The Farm Bill has been a top priority for the Alliance, which has worked diligently with both the House and Senate Agriculture committees to ensure funding for easements was retained and strengthened.

"This new Farm Bill will allow our community to build upon our past successes with new dollars and increased flexibility because of the waiver that will allow land trusts to match federal funds with donated value rather than cash," said fourth-generation cherry farmer Rob Manigold, who as supervisor of Old Mission Peninsula Township in Michigan led the protection of 5,000 acres of farmland.

The Alliance's former western policy manager, **Lynne Sherrod**, coordinated land trust leaders to make this victory possible. Her passion as an advocate for the land will leave a lasting legacy of conserved farm and rangeland across America, even as she retires to spend more time back home working her own ranch in western Colorado.

Learn more about the conservation programs in the Farm Bill at [www.lta.org/farmbill](http://www.lta.org/farmbill).