PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

DEAR COUNCIL MEMBER,

Greetings, fellow waterfowlers! As another season concludes, I hope you cherish the unforgettable moments spent in the field—whether with family, friends, or your loyal retriever. This past year was extraordinary, marked by record-breaking growth in new council members and acres conserved. Every day, new partnerships and collaborations take shape among like-minded individuals and organizations, with Ducks Unlimited supporters like you at the heart of these efforts. Your unwavering commitment ensures that vital projects are completed, creating lasting impacts for waterfowl and their wetland habitats. Together, we are achieving remarkable progress and leaving a legacy of conservation for generations to come.



Hob Span **Bob Spoerl**

President, Ducks Unlimited Inc.



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* Deceased

An exclusive scotch tasting event at The Stewart in Easton, Maryland, was just one of many experiences that DU President's Council members enjoyed during the festival.

President's Council Members Attend the Waterfowl Festival

In early November 2024, more than 30 President's Council members descended on the Eastern Shore of Maryland to participate in an exclusive President's Council experience celebrating the 52nd year of the Waterfowl Festival in the quaint town of Easton, Maryland. The festival is a premier event, attracting waterfowl enthusiasts, artists, decoy collectors, and dog lovers. The festival originated as a DU fundraiser in the 1970s, and last year's festival saw more than 20,000 attendees.

Ducks Unlimited First Vice President Rex Schulz and his wife, Lori, kicked off the event with a welcome in the major donor lounge. Past President George Dunklin Jr. and his wife, Livia, introduced the festival's featured artist, Ronnie Wells, during a special Friday gathering. Ronnie, known for his outstanding work with DU, is the creator of the *Gale Winds and Mallards* sculpture displayed at Ducks Unlimited National Headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee. Decoy carver Charles Jobes also engaged guests in the lounge while showcasing his craft on Saturday.

The event offered exclusive experiences throughout the weekend, including VIP access to all the festival highlights; a private viewing of the *Outlaw Gunner* exhibition with Joe Walsh, the son of festival founder and waterfowling historian



Dr. Harry M. Walsh; and a showing of the IMAX film *Wings Over Water* paired with a scotch and champagne tasting. Additional activities included a ladies' high tea, a conservation breakfast focused on DU's work in the Chesapeake Bay region, and early access to the Brew and Oyster Brawl at the historic Tidewater Inn. The weekend concluded with the Taste of the Chesapeake dinner at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in nearby St. Michaels, featuring wine pairings by the Wine Coach.

Friday's brunch at Shipshead Farm, hosted by President's Council members Ruth and Steve Capranica of the Knapp Foundation, was a standout. Guests enjoyed a sumptuous meal, property tours, and a glimpse into DU's history with Ruth, the great-granddaughter of DU founder Joseph Knapp. (~

Planning for the 2025 experience is under way. To learn more about becoming a President's Council member, contact your local DU director of development or Keri Cincurak, director of donor engagement, at kcincurak@ducks.org.