

10,000 Duck Campaign Underway in March

On Monday March 11th, MGCSA members will have the opportunity to learn about duck habitat and build a take home project...a mallard hen house... for placement in a water hazard on their course. The 10,000 Duck event will take place at the TPC Twin Cities Turf Management Center in Blaine. Considering almost all golf courses have water hazards or wetlands conducive to duck habitat it only makes sense to take advantage of these environments to increase the bird's population through the introduction of hen houses.

Appreciating the public relations

opportunity, MGCSA President Scottie Hines CGCS pursued and received support for the endeavor from the group Delta Waterfowl. Realizing the potential for a strong partnership, Delta Waterfowl representative Adam Benker jumped at the chance to support the program and has hopes to make it a nation wide effort.

Delta Waterfowl is all about increasing duck populations. When waterfowl populations crashed in the Dirty '30s, Minneapolis businessman and sportsman James Ford Bell set out to protect the waning resource. The founder of General Mills, Bell believed the best hope for sustaining waterfowl populations for

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future generations to enjoy was through a science-based understanding of the birds' behavior.

Bell appealed to the scientific world for help, and one of the first to respond was Dr. Miles Pirnie of Michigan State University. To date Delta's student program has produced some 350 alumnus who have written more than 730 research papers that have advanced our understanding of waterfowl immeasurably. The list of students who have passed through Delta's research program reads like a Who's Who in waterfowl management.

Delta remains true to Bell's vision, and believes conservationists have a responsibility to "follow the science" when making management decisions. In 2003 the organization took a bold step by launching the Delta Duck Production Program, an effort to put the findings of its research to work through the application of scientifically proven management tools like predator control and nesting structures called Hen Houses.

Hen Houses enjoy up to 80 percent usage rates and as high as 80 percent nest success, making them one of the most cost-

effective tools for increasing production. Several states have hen house programs in partnership with Delta Waterfowl. This would be the first opportunity for a state golf course association.

"Everyone associated with Delta Waterfowl is proud of the organization's journey of scientific discovery, from Al Hochbaum in the 1930s and to the talented students working in the field today," says Delta

President Rob Olson, himself a Delta student.

"We're committed to continuing our legacy by putting that research to work producing more ducks for duck hunters. We're also committed to educating the next generation of waterfowl hunters, because hunters are the backbone of conservation. Always have been, always will be."

It seems to be a perfect partnership for the MGCSA and Delta Waterfowl. The format includes six volunteer Delta Duck House Construction Masters who will act as team leaders in utilizing a mass production system to generate at least 100 houses in just a few hours. The MGCSA will furnish the labor and distribute the houses to their final destination on golf courses everywhere in the state.

