

A Letter To The President On The Clean Water Act

June 26, 2003

Dear Mr. President,

As our nation's leading hunting and angling organizations, we are writing to express our strong opposition to potential regulatory changes that would eliminate long-standing Clean Water Act protections for millions of acres of wetlands and thousands of small lakes and ponds. For America's 47.8 million hunters and anglers the protection of the wetlands and waters where we hunt and fish is one of the single most important issues pending before the Federal government.

Specifically, we are concerned that the January 15, 2003 Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the Clean Water Act Definition of "Waters of the United States" will ultimately lead to the elimination of Clean Water Act protections for isolated wetlands, lakes and ponds. We do not believe the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should proceed with a rulemaking to redefine "waters of the United States" and ultimately narrow the scope of the Clean Water Act. After three decades as the most important federal statute in the protection of fish and wildlife habitat it is inappropriate from our perspective that the rule making process may be used to significantly weaken the Clean Water Act provisions of great importance to sportsmen.

America's rich hunting and fishing traditions are inextricably tied to the protection of habitat and as sportsmen and Republican Presidents have known for over 100 years isolated wetlands and small ponds are among the most important of all habitat:

"a little pool out on the prairie will show along its edges numerous

traces of animal life; for, though of small extent, and a long

distance from other water, it may be the home of beavers, and

muskrats, the breeding place of different kinds of ducks and the

drinking place for the denizens of dry country roundabouts, such as

wolves, antelope, and badgers."

Theodore Roosevelt

Hunting Trips of A Ranchman – 1885

Today, over half of all the ducks in North American begin their lives in the small prairie potholes extolled by Teddy Roosevelt. However, if Clean Water Act jurisdiction over isolated bodies of water is removed, 96% of these wetlands, and thousands of lakes and ponds enjoyed by millions of fishermen, could be polluted and filled in without recourse.

We are calling upon you, as a fellow hunter, fisherman, and conservationist to stop any proposed rulemaking by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that would abolish long-standing Clean Water Act

protections for wetlands and other small bodies of water. Absent these protections, your goal of "no net loss" of wetlands and the full potential of voluntary wetland restoration and banking programs will never be realized.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months on this matter of critical importance. Your leadership on this issue is greatly appreciated by America's hunters and anglers.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society

American Fly Fishing Association

American Sportfishing Association

BASS/ESPN Outdoors

Boone & Crockett Club

Buckmasters American Deer Foundation

Campfire Club of America

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Dallas Safari Club

Delta Waterfowl Foundation

Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Izaak Walton League of America

Mule Deer Foundation

National Shooting Sports Foundation

National Trappers Association

National Wild Turkey Federation

North American Grouse Partnership

Pheasants Forever

Pope and Young Club

Pure Fishing

Quail Unlimited

Ruffed Grouse Society

Shikar-Safari Club International

Texas Wildlife Association

The Wildlife Society

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Trout Unlimited

U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance

Wildlife Forever

Wildlife Management Institute

cc: COE

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