

## **Michael Luzier, New Castle County**

Mike Luzier of Frederick, MD is the partial owner of a 180 acre farm in Townsend, DE. Approximately 100 acres is farmed while the rest remains in its natural state of tidal wetlands. However, some of the property lies in a transitional state between wetland and land suitable for farming. This marginal farmland seemed ideal for Mr. Luzier to enroll in the Delaware Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). After contacting the program coordinator, Shelley Tovell-DiBona, a site assessment determined several shallow water wetlands would be suited for the property. This was a beneficial way to attract more wildlife while preventing tidal salt waters from reaching crop fields. With wildlife species in mind Mr. Luzier plans and times land management practices such as, postponing mowing, putting up wood duck boxes, and planting food plots to coincide with wildlife activities.

Less than a year after wetland construction, the shallow-water depressions were holding water and supporting diverse populations of wetland vegetation and active wildlife. While walking the property at Mr. Luzier's, we jumped a white-tailed deer fawn, saw a great blue heron utilizing the wetland, flying goldfinches, and several species of butterflies. Earlier in the summer a juvenile bald eagle was also spotted and wood ducks were observed using the newly posted boxes for nesting. Mr. Luzier is an active hunter, but he "didn't just do this for hunting, I enjoy seeing (wildlife)." Happy with the results he has seen so far, Mr. Luzier enjoys watching various species of waterfowl and shore birds utilize his recently constructed wetland. Mr. Luzier would like to share something with other landowners considering enrolling in the LIP: landowners that lease property to hunters could charge more because more available habitat will increase the likelihood of wildlife present.

Habitat monitoring on this property found the following Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN):

### Birds

Bald Eagle

Northern Bobwhite

### Frogs

Cope's gray treefrog



Mr. Mike Luzier on his property.



Above, a view of a wetland on Luzier property

Photo credit: Division of Fish and Wildlife

**Landowner:** Mike Luzier

**City:** Townsend

**Acreage enrolled:** 13 acres

**Type of Restoration:** Shallow-water wetlands

**Length of LIP contract:** 5

**Why did you enroll in the Delaware Landowner Incentive Program?** It's good for what the program says- using marginal farmland in a positive way while creating wildlife habitat.

I'm losing more and more crop field to rising waters; creating a wetland impoundment would keep the salt and tide away from the edges of planted fields.

**Is your property enrolled in any other conservation programs? (such as: WHIP, CRP, easements, etc)** No.

**How do wildlife species influence or play a role in the way you manage your land?** I don't mow until late summer (August) because you never know what could be nesting in there. I put up wood duck boxes and food plots for wildlife such as deer, rabbits, and insects to attract quail. Wildlife affects the timing of what I do.

**What benefits do these species give you?** I love seeing them; I didn't do it just for the hunting.

**Have you seen the results you expected from LIP?** Oh yeah. In the first spring I saw new wetland vegetation and wood ducks were nesting in the new boxes I put out. I would go out just to watch the ducks, it was beautiful. (only 5 months after construction).

**In your opinion, what is (are) the best feature(s) about the LIP?** LIP coordinates everything from getting the permits to getting the engineers for construction.

**How did you learn about LIP?** An advertisement for the program was in the F&W hunting regulation book.