

Foreword:

# The ART of Conservation®

by Douglas H. Grann



Wildlife Forever's State-Fish Art™ (SFA) Contest started out as a homework assignment and became an annual nationwide art competition teaching aquatic conservation through the arts. Back in 1998, Sal DiLeo and his young daughter, Katie, had a big idea, a state fish art idea. Sal sought out the advice of Bud Grant, Minnesota Viking Coach & NFL Hall of Famer and came to Wildlife Forever with their vision. The rest of the story is history.

Over the years sports and fishing legions like Bud Grant, Bill Dance, Steve Pennaz, Ron Schara and Babe Winkelman have served as National Spokesmen and ambassadors for the State-Fish Art® Contest.

The contest is open to all students in Grades 4 through 12. Three categories of winners, from each state, are invited to attend the annual State-Fish Art Expo. We have received thousands of entries from all 50 states plus art from Russia. The best part is always the children's artwork. It is absolutely amazing! Our staff and the panel of judges marvel at the creativity of these young artists.

Throughout the many years of the SFA Contest & Expo we have come to know that the measure of success is more than in the number of students involved and the conservation lessons learned. We have seen communities rally to support winners by giving them airline tickets to attend the Expo. We have seen lives enriched and lives changed.

A few years ago, a grandmother from New Jersey called and told me her grandson was headed to college. Great, but somehow I knew there had to be more to the story. She said he had fallen into the "wrong crowd" and was in a failing pattern. Winning the State-Fish Art contest in his home state lifted his confidence and his self worth. Today he is pursuing a Graphic Art degree in college. Now, that is success!

At Wildlife Forever, we believe conservation education is the key that will ultimately determine the very future of our country's fish and wildlife heritage. When you start on your journey and enter the State-Fish Art contest you will put paint and color to paper. You will have decided to not do something else but to learn, study and create with your skills and imagination a state fish. In doing so, you will join the ranks of one of America's great movements. You will become a conservationist and a steward of our fish, lakes and streams.

Your efforts, talents and decisions may well lead you to the winner's circle. Remember the deadline for entry is March 31<sup>st</sup>. Join us in the Art of Conservation!

Good luck!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Grann", written in a cursive style.

Douglas H. Grann  
President & CEO