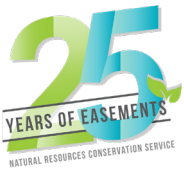


# Easement Landowner Profile

Stuart and Marian Maas

Fremont County



Stuart and Marian Maas purchased three adjacent “wet farmland” properties in 1997 and enrolled them in the Wetland Reserve Program and Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

The Maases learned about easement opportunities from a Missouri River Bottoms landowner who had already enrolled in a USDA easement program. “We felt there was potential to do likewise if we could find the suitable property that lent itself to creating prime wildlife and waterfowl habitat,” said Stuart.

“Iowa’s rather aggressive approach to cropping every possible acre - even marginal acres - crowds out most wildlife,” he said, “so these 377 marginal acres lent themselves to developing such prime habitat. It has given us immense satisfaction in sharing this wonderful resource with hundreds of guests over the years.”

## Education



*The Maas grandchildren enjoy the wetlands in Fremont County, Iowa.*

More than 20 years later the Maas family continues to enjoy and use their easement for educational purposes. “It fulfills our long-held objective of owning a prime waterfowl hunting place, and with that comes prime habitat for quail, pheasants, turkey and deer,” said Stuart.

Allowing access to the easement for educational purposes is important to the couple, and something they take great joy in. “Watching youth groups learn about the wonders of this ancient valley and the longest U.S. river – its wildlife, the migrations of waterfowl and butterflies – always generates a lot of excitement, wonderment and questions,” said Stuart. “We hope that these youth experiences will carry strongly into adulthood.”

## Providing Opportunities

The easements are located less than an hour drive from Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha. This easy access has attracted several wounded warriors to the wetlands for hunting and recreation. Stuart says they love to entertain battlefield wounded military who may not otherwise be able to enjoy hunting. “We have hosted a blinded U.S. Army aviator, a foursome of healing Marines, a paralyzed and chair-bound Air Force Noncommissioned officer, a Vietnam veteran with cancer and malaria, and many military folks stationed at Offutt,” said Stuart.

He says watching all aspects of nature unfolding before his eyes and sharing that experience with others provides great satisfaction. Stuart says they have had bee hives for many years. “Observing these awesome creatures up close with others is fun,” he said. “Having optimal habitat for bees and monarchs is a major objective.”

“This is a 365-day a year task in some aspect. And when native flowers and grasses finally mature and we watch the wildlife flourish, that is priceless satisfaction,” said Stuart.