

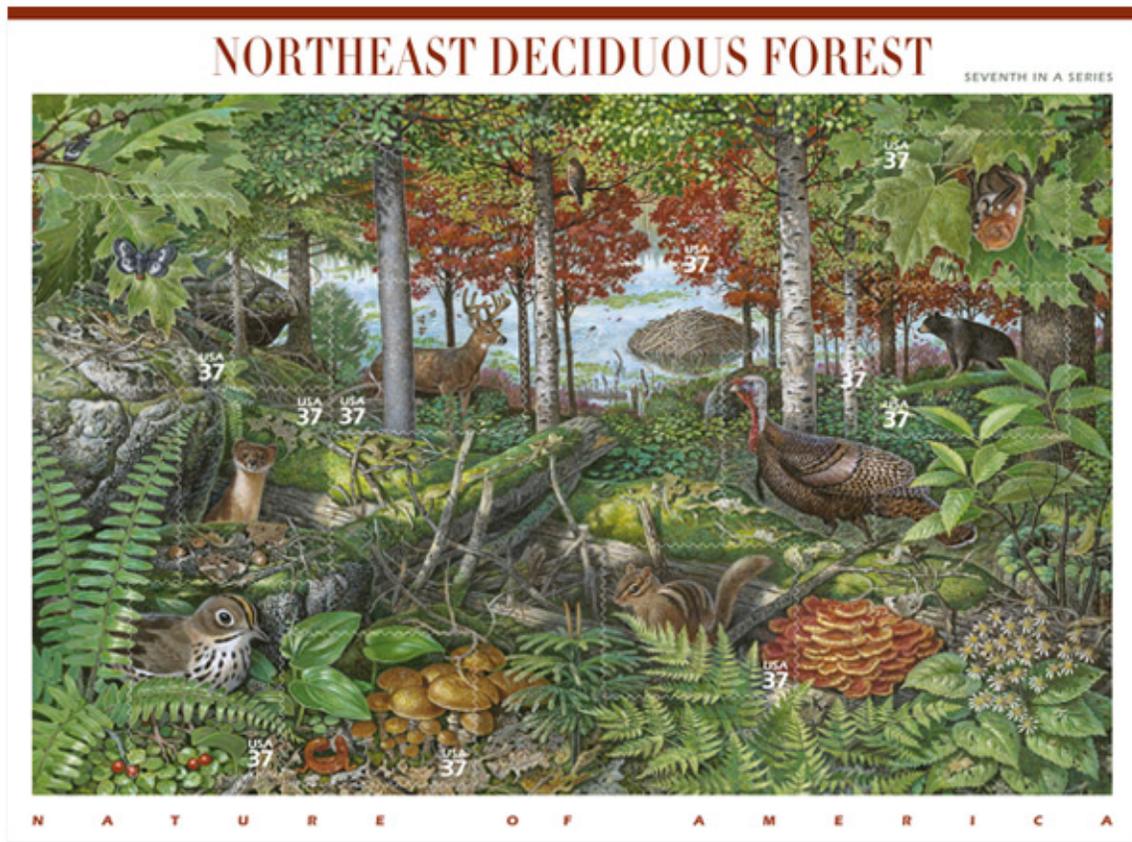
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 24, 2005

Media Contact: Community Relations (202) 268-4924
Postal Service Web Site: www.usps.com
Stamp News Release Number: 05-011

**Northeast Deciduous Forest Stamp Sheet, Artist's Sketchbook,
Provide Vast Forest of Knowledge, Great Educational Tool**

WASHINGTON – Students and families will have fun testing their “forest” of knowledge when the Postal Service issues the *Nature of America: Northeast Deciduous Forest* commemorative souvenir stamp sheet and *Artist's Sketchbook* early next month. Family members can use the stamp sheet as an educational flash card to quiz each other, as the sheet's reverse side provides the common and scientific names of the 27 animals and plants pictured on the front. The 24-page *Artist's Sketchbook*, with stamp sheet included, is a must-have field guide that can be used while exploring the beauty of America's northeastern forests.

The first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony for the *Nature of America: Northeast Deciduous Forest* commemorative souvenir stamp sheet takes place at noon, Thursday, March 3, as part of the American Stamp Dealers Association's New York Postage Stamp Mega Event at New York City's Madison Square Garden, 4 Pennsylvania Plaza, 5th level.



"Our nation has been blessed with some of the most vibrant and productive forests in the world," said Henry Pankey, U.S. Postal Service Vice President, Emergency Preparedness, who will serve as the

dedicating official at the event. "The United States Postal Service is proud to celebrate the rich flora and fauna of America's northeastern deciduous forests with this new sheet of stamps. It is a fitting tribute to an important part of our nation's ecological heritage."

Those scheduled to participate in the ceremony include Elizabeth Pope, President, American Stamp Dealers Association; John Dawson, Artist, *Northeast Deciduous Forest Stamps*; Robert Davies, Director of Lands and Forest/New York State Forester, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; and, David E. Failor, Executive Director, Stamp Services, U.S. Postal Service. Honored guests include Robert Lamb, Executive Director, American Philatelic Society; Vinnie Malloy, District Manager/Postmaster, New York District, U.S. Postal Service; and Joseph B. Savarese, Executive Vice President, American Stamp Dealers Association.

Both philatelic collectibles—the stamp sheet and the sketchbook—will be available at the show and at select New York City Post Offices March 3, and nationwide at select Post Offices on Friday, Mar. 4. Advance orders are now being accepted online at the Postal Store on usps.com/shop.

Stamp artist John D. Dawson, who designed all seven stamp sheets in the *Nature of America* series, which debuted in 1999, will autograph collectibles on Thursday, March 3 from 9:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., immediately following the noon first-day-of-issue ceremony, and again from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. On Saturday, March 5, he will autograph from 9:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. The Mega Stamp event, which runs from March 3 through March 6, is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Previous issues in the *Nature of America* series include: Pacific Coral Reef (2004), Arctic Tundra (2003), Longleaf Pine Forest (2002), Great Plains Prairie (2001), Pacific Coast Rain Forest (2000) and Sonoran Desert (1999).

Northeast Deciduous Forest Souvenir Stamp Sheet

A description of many plants and animals inhabiting this forest community and a numbered key to the artwork appear on the back of the *Northeast Deciduous Forest* souvenir sheet. Available for \$3.70, the souvenir sheet also contains a corresponding list of common and scientific names for 27 selected species. Ten individual stamps depict an Eastern Red Bat, Black Bear, Eastern Buckmoth, Eastern Chipmunk, White-tailed Deer, Red Eft, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ovenbird, Wild Turkey and a Long-tailed Weasel. The sheet was designed by Ethel Kessler and illustrated by artist Dawson. These plants and animals are depicted on the sheet:

1. Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)
2. Eastern Buckmoth (*Hemileuca maia*)
3. Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)
4. Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)
5. Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)
6. Common Polypody (*Polypodium polypodioides*)
7. Long-tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*)
8. Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*)
9. Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)
10. Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*)

11. Red Eft (Eastern Newt) (*Notophthalmus viridescens*)
12. American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)
13. White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)
14. Honey Mushroom (*Armillaria mellea*)
15. Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)
16. Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera*)
17. Ground Pine (*Lycopodium obscurum*)
18. Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)
19. Eastern Chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*)
20. Spinulose Woodfern (*Dryopteris carthusiana*)
21. Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)
22. Chicken Mushroom (*Laetiporus sulphureus*)
23. Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)
24. Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)
25. American Chestnut sprouts (*Castanea dentata*)
26. Eastern Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*)
27. White Wood Aster (*Aster divaricatus*)

The Artist's Sketchbook

The Artist's Sketchbook is available for \$24.95 and includes the stamp sheet. This keepsake offers an excellent opportunity to obtain a picture perfect view of Northeast wildlife—in the wild—as illustrated by Dawson. He uses 24 pages to engage the reader on an imaginary walk in the woods while witnessing the beauty of nature. His artwork shows the transformation of sketches into stamp art that is enveloped into a larger portrait of the forest realm.

Beginning with the majesty of the Northern Red Oak and the complexity of the Eastern Buckmoth, onward to a confrontation with the Black Bear, and the near extermination of the American Chestnut, the reader gains insight into the beauty of the *Northeast Deciduous Forest* souvenir stamp sheet. It also provides a fun activity as stamps from the stamp pane can be placed on the appropriate page which features the stamp image, along with sketches and personal and educational commentary by Dawson. The designer of the *Artist's Sketchbook* is Greg Berger and the Art Director is Ethel Kessler.

The *Nature of America: Northeast Deciduous Forest* commemorative souvenir stamp sheet and the *Artist's Sketchbook* can be purchased through the Postal Store at usps.com, through the Philatelic catalog by calling toll-free 1-800-STAMP24 (1-800-782-6724), and at Post Offices that



display select retail merchandise. Advance orders may be placed at the Postal Store online at www.usps.com/shop.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service® has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume - some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year - and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue:	<i>Northeast Deciduous Forest</i>
Item Number:	459000
Denomination & Type of Issue:	\$3.70 Souvenir Sheet
Format:	Pane of 10 (10 designs)
Series:	<i>Nature of America</i>
Issue Date & City:	March 3, New York, NY 10199
Illustrator:	John D. Dawson, Hilo, HI
Designer:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Art Director:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Typographer:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Modeler:	Avery Dennison, SPD
Engraver:	Keating Gravure
Manufacturing Process:	Gravure
Printer:	Avery Dennison (AVR)
Printed at:	AVR, Clinton SC
Press Type:	Dia Nippon Kiko (DNK)
Stamps per Pane:	10
Print Quantity:	55.6 million stamps
Paper Type:	Nonphosphored, Type III
Adhesive Type:	Pressure sensitive
Processed at:	AVR, Clinton, SC
Colors:	Yellow, Magenta, Cyan, Black PMS 1805 (Brown), PMS 5635 (Green)
Stamp Orientation:	Horizontal and Vertical
Orientation 1:	Horizontal
Overall Size (w x h):	1.560 x 1.225 in./39.624 x 31.115 mm
Orientation 2:	Vertical
Overall Size (w x h):	1.225 x 1.560 in./31.115 x 39.624 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h):	9.125 x 6.75 in./231.775 x 171.45 mm
Verso:	Illustrative diagram and test on reverse
Plate Size:	80 stamps per revolution
Catalog Item Number(s):	459040 Souvenir Sheet of 10 — \$3.70 459062 First Day Cover — \$6.20 459064 Canceled Full Pane — \$6.20 459084 Press Sheet — \$29.60 459093 Full Pane w/FDC — \$9.90 459073 The Artist's Sketchbook — \$24.95

HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE POSTMARK

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamps at their local post office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

NORTHEAST DECIDUOUS FOREST STAMPS
SPECIAL EVENTS UNIT
421 8TH AVE RM 2029B
NEW YORK NY 10199-9998

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by April 3, 2004.

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and postal stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
US POSTAL SERVICE
DEPT 6270
PO BOX 219014
KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014

Orders can also be made by calling 1 800 STAMP-24. First day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.

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