



DUCKS UNLIMITED®
ANNUAL REPORT • FISCAL YEAR 2014

Lifting Waterfowl to New Heights



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Executive Summary

It takes a dedicated team to conserve, restore and manage habitat to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. That's why Ducks Unlimited volunteers band together for waterfowl each year.

Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) was successful for Team DU thanks to our volunteers—all of them proud members of our 2,610 chapters—who dedicated themselves to raising money for the ducks at more than 4,300 events in FY14. This was DU's fourth straight year of fundraising growth and our best fundraising year since 2002. Our volunteers raised \$53.9 million through events across the United States, a 4.5 percent increase over last fiscal year.

Event attendance also grew for the third straight year. DU volunteers worked harder than ever to bring 509,100 attendees to our FY14 events, an increase of 12.2 percent over the previous year. The total number of volunteers grew 10.7 percent to 53,400.

In FY14, new commitments from our Major Sponsors totaled \$26.6 million, new cash totaled \$22.2 million and new gift planning commitments came in at \$21.5 million. Do you see a trend here? DU's growth and continued success are made possible by our dedicated volunteers at all levels of the organization. The strength of our fundraising system relies on the power of the volunteer, and the fact that like-minded individuals so willingly give of their time and talents bodes well for the future.

We have been fortunate to meet one-on-one with our volunteers at events across the country. It doesn't take long to realize that these folks are the backbone of our organization and the reason Ducks Unlimited is a leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation. It is truly a privilege to work alongside such dedicated, selfless and honorable people who stand up for what they believe in.

In FY14, Team DU conducted conservation work on more than 209,000 acres, bringing our cumulative total to over 13.3 million acres conserved in North America since 1937. FY14 also saw significant progress on several legislative issues that are vital to our conservation mission, thanks in large part to active, vocal DU volunteers. The 2014 Farm Bill, which was approved in February, includes proactive and commonsense conservation programs that will help deter wetland losses, provide incentives for habitat conservation and keep farmers and ranchers—our conservation partners—on their land.

The Farm Bill includes the conservation community's top priorities of re-coupling conservation compliance to crop insurance and a Sodsaver program in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. This will help protect some of the nation's most important waterfowl breeding and migration habitats. Other provisions in the Farm Bill also encourage the conservation of our remaining wetlands and grasslands, which help keep our waters clean, prevent soil erosion and provide vital habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

In FY14, DU supporters continued to back legislation to increase the price of the federal duck stamp from \$15 to \$25. In the 23 years since the last price increase, the value of land has tripled and the stamp's conservation impact has greatly diminished. Once again, sportsmen and women are leading the charge to fund conservation that benefits all our citizens.

In July, a target of more than \$34 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) was included in a bill by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies. While this funding is level with FY14 it demonstrates a renewed commitment to this vital program, which delivers on-the-ground conservation for waterfowl, other wildlife and our citizens.

Since 1990, more than 5,000 partners have completed over 2,400 NAWCA projects, contributing to the conservation of 27.5 million acres of waterfowl breeding, migration and wintering habitat. Reflecting their commitment, partners have contributed \$2.7 billion in nonfederal matching funds for the nearly \$1.3 billion made available through federal grants. With appropriate funding for this program, the public will benefit forever from healthy waterfowl populations, increased hunting opportunities and all the other benefits that wetlands provide.

Our work is as important now as it was 77 years ago. We should be proud of what we have accomplished, but as any of our dedicated volunteers will tell you, our job is never done. Thank you for your continued commitment to our shared mission.

George H. Dunklin Jr.
President

H. Dale Hall
Chief Executive Officer





Conservation and Initiatives



North America's ducks and geese are a continental resource. Their survival depends on healthy and adequate breeding, migration and wintering habitats throughout North America. As a result, Ducks Unlimited works in each of these habitat regions to help ensure that the life-cycle needs of waterfowl are met. Because the landscapes most important to waterfowl do not necessarily align with where most waterfowl supporters live, it is crucial that DU volunteers and staff continue to band together for waterfowl in all 50 states, Canada and Mexico.

In 2012, DU volunteers and staff began searching for a way to better connect conservation with fundraising and focus our resources on North America's highest-priority waterfowl landscapes. The solution was 16 regional ini-

tiatives intended to generate philanthropic investment for waterfowl conservation, aligning donor interest with DU's conservation priorities.

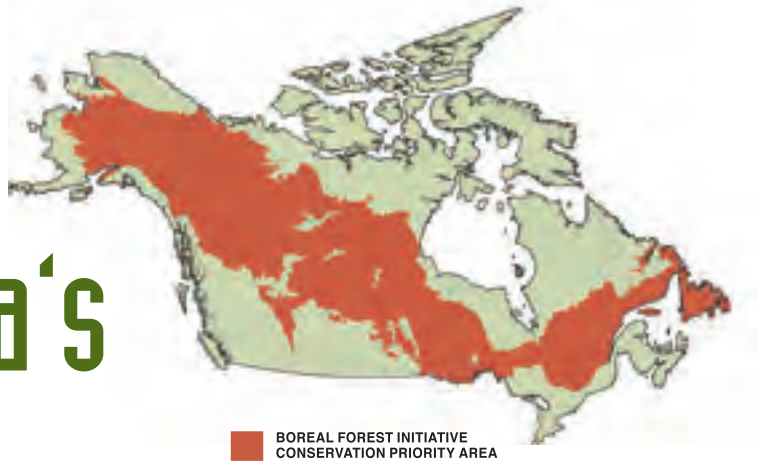
The end of FY14 marked a little more than two years since the initiative planning, creation and marketing process began. We've come a long way in two years but the need to conserve waterfowl habitat remains more compelling and urgent than ever. Habitat work continues daily across North America. It's what we do.

The following pages are filled with DU successes, challenges and opportunities, as well as the personal stories of several volunteers and donors who continue to help us fulfill our vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.



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North America's Boreal Forest

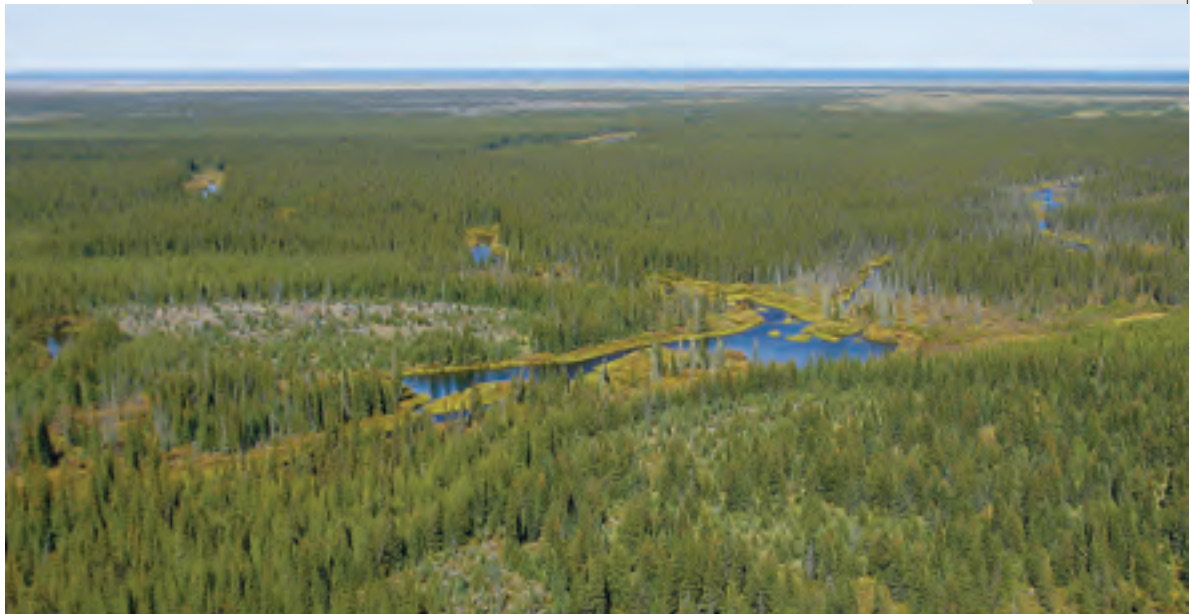


BOREAL FOREST: THE NORTHERN BIRD NURSERY

At 1.6 billion acres, North America's Boreal Forest is the world's largest biome (major ecological community), replete with unspoiled marshes, lakes, bogs, wetlands, streams and rivers. Some 26 species of waterfowl nest and migrate through the Boreal Forest, and on average 35 percent of North America's waterfowl breed on this landscape. Boreal habitat is especially important for scaup, ring-necked ducks, buffleheads, green-winged teal, and American wigeon as well as for a third of the continent's mallards and northern pintails. Other species of fish and wildlife also depend on the Boreal Forest, including many migratory songbirds. In fact, an estimated 3 billion to 5 billion birds fly south from the region each fall, making it the magnificent Northern Bird Nursery. As the world's largest reservoir of surface water and most extensive terrestrial carbon sink, absorbing

more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases, North America's Boreal Forest also plays an important role in helping to regulate our planet's climate.

Through the **Boreal Forest Initiative**, Ducks Unlimited and our partners, a consortium of progressive First Nations, industries, conservation organizations, and governments in partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts, are committed to pursuing a 50/50 mix of protection and sustainable development so that waterfowl and other wildlife will not be forced to survive on small fragments of remaining habitat. By applying leading environmental practices to responsible development efforts in the Boreal, these stakeholders will address the needs of a growing world population while ensuring that natural resources remain plentiful in this vital region forever.



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IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THREE TO FIVE BILLION BIRDS
FLY SOUTH FROM THE REGION EACH FALL,
MAKING IT THE MAGNIFICENT NORTHERN BIRD NURSERY.



SAVING A LAST GREAT PLACE

Jim Konkell – Scarborough, Maine

Jim Konkell has been a philanthropic and volunteer leader of Ducks Unlimited for more than 30 years. His lifelong commitment to waterfowl and wetlands conservation began in Ohio, where he helped start DU's Findlay Sponsor committee. Since then, Jim has served in numerous volunteer capacities across the organization. He is currently an at-large member of DU's board of directors and chairman of the National Shooting Committee.

Jim and his wife, Sue, are Diamond Legacy Sponsors and recently pledged \$1 million to DU's **Boreal Forest Initiative** and \$250,000 to the **Preserve Our Prairies Initiative**. They are also members of

the President's Council, of which Jim is the charter member. Their support for DU's highest-priority landscapes across the continent is well known throughout the organization.

Jim says his love for waterfowl was a gift from his grandfather, James C Donnell II, an avid duck hunter and DU Life Sponsor.

"I thought the world of my grandfather," Jim says. "He ran a successful oil company and was one of those larger-than-life people you couldn't help but admire. When I was starting college in Utah, he took me on my first duck hunt at the Bear River Club on the Great Salt Lake. Though I had been shooting for a number of years, this was my first hunt. It was pretty intimidating—with so many historical traditions, formal evening dinners and the like—but it had such a profound effect on me."

The Konkells' philanthropy also benefits several organizations in Portland, Maine. "We help those who need help—some of it public, some of it anonymous—whatever is needed to make positive things happen," Jim says. "I have tried to honor my grandfather's legacy in the charitable work we do."

THE BOREAL AND ARCTIC

Ducks Unlimited is wrapping up the 14th year of its Boreal and Arctic program and celebrating the first year of a 10-year double-down partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to raise at least \$60 million to fund the International Boreal Conservation Campaign (IBCC).

Thanks to a \$40 million commitment from Pew, with support from the Hewlett Foundation and other partners, and a \$20 million commitment by Ducks Unlimited and DU Canada via the **Boreal Forest Initiative** (with \$4.5 million already pledged), at least 1 billion acres of the Boreal Forest are on track to be conserved by the end of 2022. At least 50 percent of the remaining forested acres will be designated or committed to new refuges, parks or natural areas. Development on the other 50 percent will be subject to new, stricter sustainability and environmental protection standards.

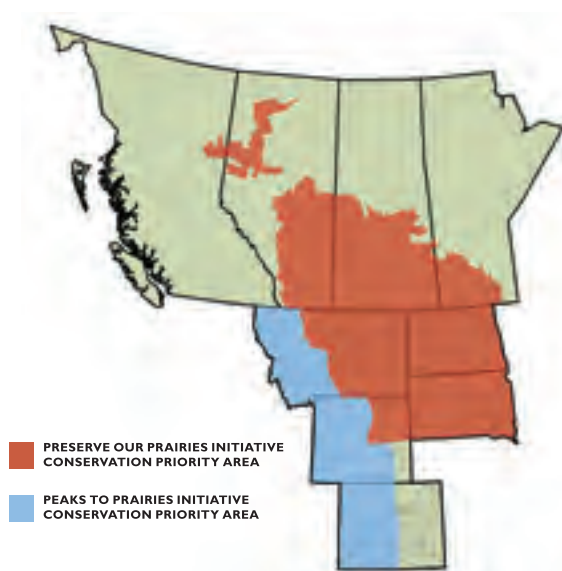
This new partnership allowed Ducks Unlimited to apply nearly \$2.5 million in additional North American Wetlands Conservation Act funds to the program this year. DU and its partners also provided media and communications support that resulted in 110 stories on Boreal conservation from major news outlets, as well as issuing three high-profile policy reports: the “Boreal Biodiversity” report, the “50/50” report and “Top Ten Boreal Issues for 2014.”

As a result of these incredible efforts, the IBCC announced during FY14 that more than 730 million acres in the 50/50 framework had been successfully protected, including new acreage in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories that measures more than four times the size of Texas.



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Prairie Pothole Region

ENJOYING NATURE'S BOUNTY BUT PLANNING FOR DROUGHT

Despite the rapid disappearance of prairie habitat, waterfowl have been responding to extraordinarily wet conditions by producing banner populations of ducks. But we know that weather is cyclical and that drought will eventually return to the prairies. In response, Ducks Unlimited is working across North America's Prairie Pothole Region to maintain the carrying capacity of the world's most productive waterfowl nesting grounds. Through the cross-border **Preserve Our Prairies Initiative**, DU is combating high grassland and wetland loss rates and pursuing a bold goal of conserving more than 575,000 acres.

DU is partnering closely with Ducks Unlimited Canada to provide a suite of programs that will protect the best of the remaining prairie habitat. Preserve Our Prairies allows DU to work with landowners in the United States and Canada to maintain small, shallow wetlands that are vital to waterfowl production, protect working grasslands and encourage farmers to grow winter wheat, which also

provides nesting cover. With the help of landowners and partners, DU conserved 45,214 acres of key prairie habitats during FY14.

The **Preserve Our Prairies Initiative** also brought about successful negotiations on farm policy with a broad coalition of leading conservation, commodity and crop insurance groups. These entities will provide incentives for farmers and ranchers to conserve wetland and grassland habitats while also improving their own operations.

DU's **Peaks to Prairies Initiative** takes a life-cycle approach to conservation, restoring exceptional wetland habitat in the Rocky Mountains and protecting crucial nesting grounds in the Prairie Pothole Region. During FY14, DU was successful in conserving 3,026 acres on these two important landscapes through Peaks to Prairies.





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WITH THE HELP OF LANDOWNERS AND PARTNERS, DU CONSERVED
45,214 ACRES OF KEY PRAIRIE HABITATS DURING FY14.



Steve and Lucy Whatley

ALABAMA NATIVE HELPS PRESERVE OUR PRAIRIES

Steve and Lucy Whatley – Anniston, Alabama

A 1979 flight from Atlanta to Los Angeles set Steve Whatley on his path to becoming one of DU's most steadfast supporters. "Someone left a copy of *Ducks Unlimited* magazine on the plane," he says. "I liked what I read and became a member immediately."

Steve and his wife, Lucy, are two of DU's most recognized members. They have followed a steady path over the past 35 years: membership, event attendance, volunteering, Alabama state leadership, and joining the board of directors and President's Council. "We have met so many good people through *Ducks Unlimited*," Steve says. "It keeps us coming back."

The Whatleys' support of the **Preserve Our Prairies Initiative** began after they attended a Prairie Experience event in DU's Great Plains Region. "It cemented our opinion that the prairies are one of the continent's most important areas for waterfowl and where DU needs to focus its work," Steve explains. "DU is the organization I have the most passion for. I'm able to realize the value of my contributions by being a DU member and a duck hunter. It is easy to measure—you can see the wetlands preserved and the ducks using them."



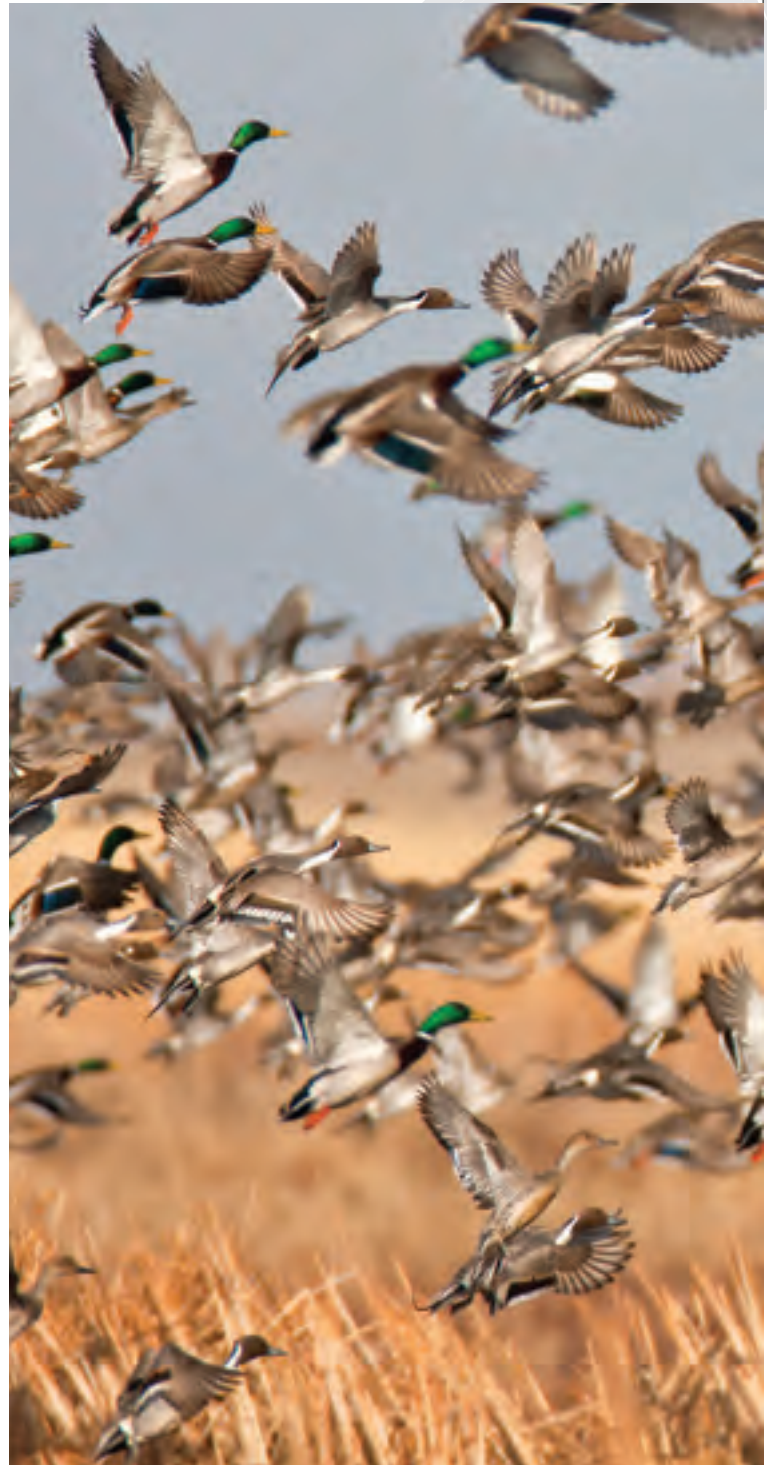
DUCKS UNLIMITED WINS INNOVATION AWARD FOR CUTTING-EDGE PRAIRIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

During FY14, the American Carbon Registry recognized Ducks Unlimited with an Innovation Award for a cutting-edge conservation project in the Prairie Pothole Region. Annual losses of native grasslands to crop production on this important landscape for waterfowl have averaged approximately 50,000 acres per year since 2007. DU is preserving the carbon sequestered in the soil by curbing the conversion of these valuable prairies.

“Ranchers in the Dakotas and Montana are looking for ways to keep their livestock operations viable,” says Steve Adair, director of DU’s Great Plains Region. “DU, with assistance from partners, developed a way to measure carbon captured and stored by native prairie and is working to develop a carbon credit opportunity to provide landowners an extra incentive to maintain grasslands and wetlands, instead of converting them to cropland.”

Currently, DU is working to complete the verification and validation of the pilot project by working with landowners in eight counties in North Dakota to help them produce income from the sale of carbon credits generated through the preservation of their grasslands.

The nonprofit American Carbon Registry, an enterprise of Winrock International, is a leading carbon offset program recognized for its high standards for environmental integrity.



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Mississippi Alluvial Valley

SCIENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT IN THE MAV

The Mississippi River has the third largest drainage basin in the world. In addition to draining at least 41 percent of the continental United States, the river adds immeasurably to the quality of life of local residents by providing drinking water and habitat for fish and wildlife.

Lying at the heart of the Mississippi Flyway, the Mississippi Alluvial Valley (MAV) hosts millions of migrating and wintering waterfowl each year. From greenheads that winter in the flooded bottomlands and rice fields to wood ducks that call the cypress brakes their home year-round, the habitats of the **America's River Initiative** area are crucial to waterfowl. With vast changes in hydrology and more than 80 percent of the historic bottomland forests gone, conserving what little remains and restoring what

has been lost are top priorities for DU. Helping landowners maximize waterfowl habitat on working lands is also vitally important in the MAV.

Science underpins all of DU's work, and we continue to strengthen that foundation each year. In FY14, DU completed a study on the value of rice lands to waterfowl and used geospatial technologies to enhance conservation delivery. On the policy front, we increased engagement in Arkansas water planning and experienced a major victory with the hard-fought passage of the 2014 Farm Bill. With solid science and effective advocacy on our side, DU and its partners protected more than 3,600 acres and enhanced nearly 6,200 acres of critical waterfowl habitat through the **America's River Initiative** last year.



© Bill Buckley



THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER HAS THE THIRD LARGEST DRAINAGE BASIN IN THE WORLD.

PROTECTING BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS IN PERPETUITY

Chuck Smith – Memphis, Tennessee

Ask Chuck Smith why he supports Ducks Unlimited and he will give a familiar answer. “I got involved with DU because I love duck hunting,” he says. “But I’ve since learned that DU is a conservation organization—and habitat is the real mission.”

Chuck joined Ducks Unlimited decades ago, selling tickets for the annual banquet in Memphis, Tennessee. He’s now a Diamond Legacy Sponsor and serves as the organization’s national secretary. After all his years of service, Chuck has come up with a simple recipe for bringing people to DU. “If you really want to attract donors or volunteers, make them aware of what DU really does and take them to meet our staff,” he says. “Show them the passion of these conservation professionals and their commitment to the mission. There’s no way they won’t get on board.”

Chuck supports DU’s **America’s River Initiative**, which helps ensure that the crucial wintering and migration habitats of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley continue preparing waterfowl for their return flight to the breeding grounds for years to come. This support also touches the area where Chuck grew up and still enjoys hunting today.

“In the 1950s, Arkansas had 8 million acres of bottomland hardwood forests that flooded and created an unbelievable haven for waterfowl,” Chuck says. “Now you drive through the Arkansas Delta and see miles and miles of agricultural fields. Maybe off in the distance you’ll see a stand of timber that somehow escaped getting cut. I’d like to see that remaining bottomland forest protected.”

Chuck has done this very thing on his own property, Circle T, where a conservation easement protects 1,500 acres of important waterfowl habitat. His vision for the future of his land and others like it is simple. “I hope more people come to understand and appreciate the value of wintering habitat and work to ensure that it is scientifically managed,” he says.





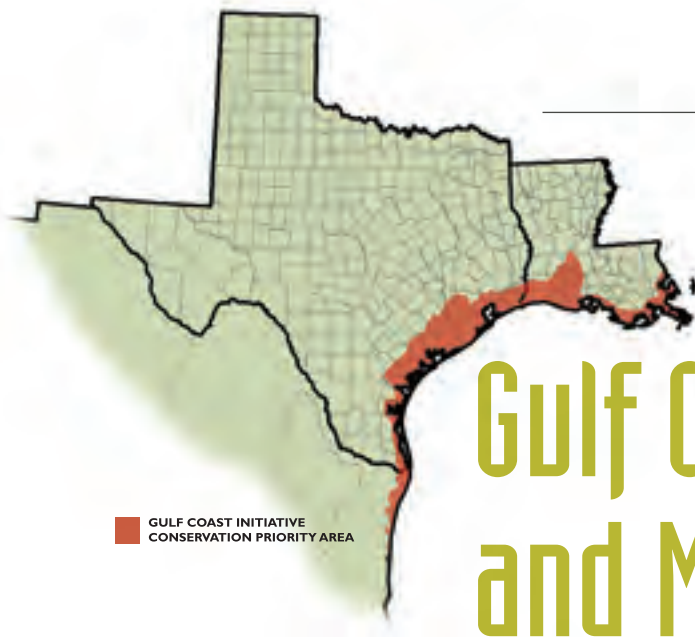
DU President's Council member John Riggs IV (left) examines a new water-control structure with Cache River NWR staff and DU Regional Engineer Matt Willoughby.

A KEY REFUGE FOR MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY WATERFOWL

The Cache River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1986 to protect significant wetland habitats and provide feeding and resting areas for migrating waterfowl. As one of the few remaining areas in the Lower Mississippi River Valley not drastically altered by channelization, the Cache River contains some of the most intact bottomland hardwood forests in the region. These unique and valuable wetlands have been designated by the Ramsar Convention as Wetlands of International Importance and recognized by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan as among the most important wintering areas for mallards. The refuge encompasses more than 56,000 acres located in numerous noncontiguous tracts in Jackson, Woodruff, Monroe and Prairie counties in east-central Arkansas. The boundary of this refuge changes frequently as land acquisition continues along the Cache River, White River and Bayou De View.

Ducks Unlimited has recently completed three enhancement projects on more than 800 acres of the Cache River NWR, all funded in part by North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants. The multi-phase projects improved 287 acres on the refuge's Dixie Farms Unit, 493 acres on the Plunkett Farms Unit, and 40 acres on the Bank of Brinkley Unit through the installation of water-control structures and improvements in management infrastructure. These areas are managed as moist-soil or cooperatively farmed units that are flooded to benefit waterfowl.





Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes

RESTORATION CONTINUES ON THE GULF COAST

The Gulf Coast prairies and marshes of Texas and Louisiana make up one of the most important waterfowl wintering areas on the continent. Historically, this area wintered up to 15 million waterfowl in a given year. Louisiana alone may host nearly half of the Mississippi Flyway population. Sadly, this area also faces staggering habitat loss.

Louisiana accounts for 90 percent of the coastal wetland loss in the continental United States. Rising sea levels, erosion and settling are turning valuable marshes into open water. Confinement of the Mississippi River withholds the land-building sediment and nourishing fresh water that could combat these destructive forces. Threats to Gulf Coast habitats are large and diverse, but workable solutions do exist.

Working collaboratively with partners, DU is the only conservation organization addressing Gulf Coast habitat loss through a combination of science, advocacy and habitat restoration. In FY14, DU and its partners protected 8,736 acres and enhanced 13,918 acres of important wetland habitat through the **Gulf Coast Initiative**. On the policy front, DU continued its engagement in water discussions in Texas, and DU Conservation Outreach Biologist Kirby Brown was selected to chair the Lower Colorado River Basin Coalition. Strides in science included completing a Texas marsh delineation model that will help determine food availability for waterfowl along the Gulf Coast and estimating the economic value of rice lands as wintering waterfowl habitat.





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THE WISDOM OF AGE

George Stokes – Lafayette, Louisiana

With age comes wisdom. Our time afield is not always about getting a limit of birds. The antlers don't have to be quite as large. The miles covered and the coveys flushed, not as many.

"I used to hunt ducks as a teenager. Then I discovered elk and started hunting them in Colorado," says George Stokes, 74. "I built a home there, mainly so I had a place to go to when I was hunting. Now I head for the mountains for the summer every year and it is more about family than anything else."

George has four sons. "Three chase big game, one chases feathers and fish," he says. "We have been lucky—blessed is more like it. I've enjoyed hunting big game more than waterfowl, but a few years ago I got into a lease in Louisiana with my sons. I started going to Ducks Unlimited banquets and buying things I didn't need. Still I felt we needed to do more."

George's generous Life Sponsor gift will support the **Gulf Coast Initiative**. Two beliefs drive his philanthropy: that success brings with it a responsibility to make a difference and that hunting and fishing improve a person's character. "Kids who hunt and fish don't get into trouble," he explains. "The objective is to produce good citizens."

Pictured Above: From left to right are sons Winston and Brent, nephew Robert, George, grandson Drew, and sons Keith and Brett.



LOUISIANA
ACCOUNTS FOR
90 PERCENT OF
THE COASTAL
WETLAND LOSS IN
THE CONTINENTAL
UNITED STATES.

RICE LANDS PROVIDE VALUABLE HABITAT

A report commissioned by the USA Rice Federation and authored by DU staff estimated a \$3.5 billion capital cost of replacing flooded rice habitats with managed seasonal wetlands across the United States. It also estimated that winter flooded rice lands on the Gulf Coast provide 42 percent of available food resources for dabbling ducks. As coastal marsh losses mount, the importance of rice and other working lands continues to grow.

In Texas, DU works hard to promote policies that ensure that limited water supplies do not disproportionately impact waterfowl habitats, including rice agriculture and coastal prairies. In FY14, the Texas Prairie Wetlands Project provided important water management infrastructure and facilitated flooding for waterfowl habitat, producing more than 5,200 acres along the Gulf Coast.

DU's Rice Stewardship Program (RSP) also made great strides in southwest Louisiana during FY14, completing 74 pump efficiency tests and 35 resource inventories on 40,193 acres. Additionally, direct outreach visits led to the enrollment of more than 22,000 acres in Conservation Stewardship Program contracts through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

RSP provides producers a full spectrum of solutions for conservation and greater profitability. The Louisiana NRCS recognizes the program as a shining example of a forward-thinking, collaborative effort. President of the National Association of Conservation Districts Earl Garber provided congressional testimony in which he specifically mentioned Ducks Unlimited and the need to expand RSP. RiceTec, known for their innovation in hybrid rice seed,



lent its support to the program this year. This key partnership will increase staff capacity and improve breadth of knowledge for the rice producer.



California's Central Valley and Beyond



WORKING FOR CALIFORNIA WETLANDS

California provides diverse habitat for large numbers of waterfowl that migrate down the Pacific Flyway each year, most notably northern pintails and white-fronted geese. However, nearly 95 percent of California's historical wetlands have been lost to urban and agricultural development. This loss of habitat, especially when combined with the state's current severe drought, puts a massive strain on available resources for migratory waterfowl. DU's **California Wetlands Initiative** helps ease this stress by funding the restoration of threatened and degraded wetlands through science-based projects, focusing on three regions of particular concern: the Central Valley, San Francisco Bay and Lower Klamath Basin.

By working with federal, state and private landowners to deliver numerous projects that restore habitat, maximize

water-use efficiency and optimize available wetlands to provide as many food resources as possible, DU is meeting these challenges head-on. DU also works hand in hand with the rice industry to ensure that important rice farming practices, primarily winter flooding of harvested fields, remain in place on the landscape.

The **California Wetlands Initiative** accounted for nearly 11,000 conserved acres in FY14, with dozens of DU projects taking place across the state, including on Bair and Twitchell islands, in the Klamath Basin, and in the Grasslands Ecological Area. Through generous donations to this initiative, Ducks Unlimited is able to restore and enhance quality waterfowl habitat that will provide opportunities for public hunting and other waterfowl-related recreation for generations to come.



© Gary Kramer

IMPROVING SAN PABLO BAY

The Joseph & Vera Long Foundation – Walnut Creek, California

In Northern California, the baylands of the San Francisco Estuary serve as breeding, migrating and wintering areas for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife, including more than half of the diving ducks that winter in the Pacific Flyway. To protect this important landscape, DU was recently awarded a \$1.5 million grant from The Joseph & Vera Long Foundation for planning and restoration work on 5,400 acres of habitat within the estuary's San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

The Joseph & Vera Long Foundation is committed to supporting conservation, education and healthcare in Northern California and Hawaii. "We're proud and honored to partner with DU and all the other stakeholders who are making such important contributions to these projects," says foundation President Nick Piediscalzi. "We look forward to seeing tangible and lasting restoration

that will benefit the public and numerous aquatic and terrestrial species alike."

The grant will be spread over three years and will fund nearly 1,000 acres of habitat restoration on the Sears Point section of the refuge. The funding will also jumpstart planning for another 4,400 acres of conservation work on Skaggs Island. A minimum of \$500,000 in grant funds will be dedicated to these habitat restoration efforts, which will also improve public access to both sites. These landmark projects are two of the largest in the San Francisco Bay area and the latest in a series of efforts to restore wetlands on San Pablo Bay.

The
JOSEPH & VERA
LONG
Foundation

THE CALIFORNIA WETLANDS INITIATIVE ACCOUNTED FOR NEARLY 11,000 CONSERVED ACRES IN FY2014.



DEALING WITH DROUGHT

All of California, particularly the Central Valley, is in the throes of a massive drought that threatens to change the face of the state's remaining wetland habitats. One of the most fertile agricultural hubs in the world, the Central Valley provides important food resources and habitat for 4 million to 6 million wintering waterfowl every year, making it one of DU's highest conservation priorities. However, with reservoir levels at historic lows and 100 percent of the state under severe to exceptional drought conditions, waterfowl face dire circumstances as they arrive in the fall only to find many wetlands dry or in poor condition.

Most managed wetlands are irrigated in summer to increase food production, but few saw water in 2014, which may significantly reduce the amount of resources available for wintering waterfowl. In fact, a combination of fewer flooded wetlands and little summer irrigation could reduce the amount of food provided by managed wetlands by up to 50 percent compared to an average year.

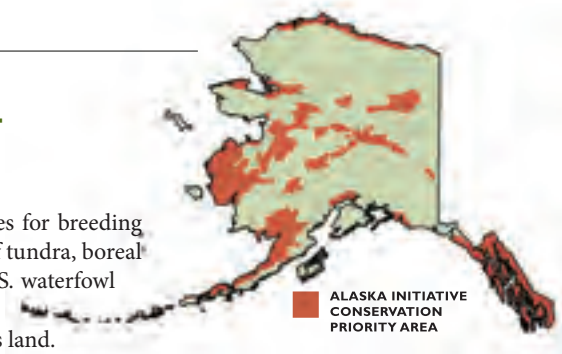
The most obvious effect of the drought may be the impact on rice. The Central Valley usually averages about 550,000 acres of planted rice, but saw only about 415,000 acres this spring. Even more ominous, the amount of winter-flooded rice may decline from 300,000 acres to as little as 50,000 acres. Waterfowl rely heavily on these fields for nourishment, which may be largely unavailable or depleted by early to mid-winter if duck numbers in the Central Valley are similar to recent years.

THE ALASKA INITIATIVE— BORN TO FLY

Alaska is unique in terms of its geographic scale and the habitat it provides for breeding waterfowl. Nowhere else in the United States can one find such vast expanses of tundra, boreal forest and untouched wetland habitats. With 15 to 20 percent of the entire U.S. waterfowl population visiting the state each year, Alaska is also unique in terms of the bountiful natural resources it harbors and the relatively pristine condition of its land.

With the world's energy and other resource needs ever growing, Ducks Unlimited recognizes that currently untapped Alaskan oil and gas deposits may be developed in the near future. Therefore, it is critical to map and classify areas that are important to waterfowl and other wildlife so that informed and science-based decisions can be made regarding the utilization of these resources. Through **The Alaska Initiative—Born to Fly**, DU has mapped more than 194 million acres to date, roughly 52 percent of the entire state's land base, allowing state, federal and industry partners to create realistic and comprehensive management plans.

Mapping and classification of habitat on this scale takes a lot of time, talent and effort, and yet still pales in comparison to the cost of restoration. Losing valuable Alaskan wetlands would cause irreversible harm to waterfowl populations and DU is counting on private donations through **The Alaska Initiative—Born to Fly** to keep its work in the state going strong.



DUCKS IN THE DESERT INITIATIVE
CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREA

DUCKS IN THE DESERT INITIATIVE

Despite rugged terrain and vast swaths of desert and mountains throughout Utah, Nevada and Arizona, wetlands do exist in this arid region of the West and are tremendously important to waterfowl migrating to and from their breeding grounds. DU created the **Ducks in the Desert Initiative** to preserve these priceless wetland oases for waterfowl and waterfowl enthusiasts whose water supply is threatened by a number of factors, including drought and population growth.

The Lahontan Valley region of Nevada, in particular, provides a major wetland link for several million waterfowl coming from Prairie Canada, flanked by Utah's Great Salt Lake to the east

and wintering grounds in California's Central Valley to the west. The continued loss of habitat in these areas will have extremely negative impacts on waterfowl and the people who enjoy them. The two major stressors to this wintering and migration region include water availability and invasive plant species.

During FY14, DU restored wetlands and improved water delivery on more than 3,000 acres in the **Ducks in the Desert Initiative** area. Of particular note was DU's work with 16 partners to successfully obtain the first-ever North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant for the Lahontan Valley in the spring of 2014, which will eventually conserve 8,780 acres of habitat in western Nevada.



© Scott Fink



COMPLETING THE CYCLE INITIATIVE

The Atlantic Flyway supports millions of waterfowl and thousands of dedicated waterfowl hunters and other enthusiasts. DU designed the **Completing the Cycle Initiative** to support waterfowl from Chesapeake Bay to the islands off Canada's Atlantic coast. In FY14, Ducks Unlimited and its partners restored and protected more than 2,900 new acres in this region.

One program adding habitat to Completing the Cycle is the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program. In FY14, Ducks Unlimited and the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust partnered to place conservation easements on more than 300 acres of critical wildlife habitat in Jefferson County, New York.

Conservation easements can help meet the needs of owners of working farms, ranches, timberlands, sporting properties and other recreational lands who wish to protect valuable natural resources while retaining ownership of the property. DU's program accepts easements in perpetuity through its affiliate, Wetlands America Trust, as well as accompanying donations to cover associated costs including annual monitoring. Conservation easements preserve precious wetlands, riparian habitats and resource-rich uplands for the benefit of waterfowl and other wildlife and the enjoyment of future generations. The resulting partnership between the landowner and DU often also results in the reduction of income and estate taxes.



Through a conservation easement, Diamond Life Sponsors Nickie, Eaton and Chris Phinney of Clayton, New York, permanently protected 70 acres of critical wildlife habitat in the St. Lawrence Region.



A PASSION THAT SPANS THE GENERATIONS

**Peter Hearn –
Fort Washington, Pennsylvania**

Peter Hearn's work as chairman of Willis Re takes him around the globe 200 days a year, so time with the people he cares about is extremely valuable. Growing up on Long Island, New York, his time afield with his grandfather and great-grandfather nurtured his connection with marshes and wetlands. "Taking in the natural beauty of a morning in a marsh on Long Island was special," Peter says. "I was looking for time with my grandfather and great-grandfather, and hunting was how I did it. Hunting is the tie that binds me to the people I care about."

Peter cares about conservation too. "Hunting can be controversial; it shouldn't be, but it can be," he says. "What I like about Ducks Unlimited is that they push past that discussion and use science to deliver waterfowl habitat." As a supporter of DU's **Completing the Cycle Initiative**, Peter sees that science in action firsthand and how wetland restoration is making a difference. "I want my children to see the magnificent flocks of black ducks I saw 50 years ago," he says. "I want to see those ducks feeding and resting around oyster walls instead of cement walls. I may not see it in my lifetime, but I want my children to. It's what drives me."

BIG RIVERS INITIATIVE

Focusing on the central United States, the **Big Rivers Initiative** conserved more than 6,500 acres of habitat in FY14. Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana and Wisconsin all saw improvements for migrating and breeding waterfowl.

During the fiscal year, Ducks Unlimited took an important step in protecting the last vestiges of undeveloped wetland habitat remaining in central Illinois. Stewart Lake is a remote and largely inaccessible natural backwater lake near the village of Browning. It is part of a complex of lakes, wetlands, sloughs and forested islands that cover nearly 30 square miles at the confluence of the Sangamon and Illinois rivers. According to DU Manager of Conservation Programs Eric Schenck, the purchase of 744 acres at Stewart Lake is part of a larger five-year conservation strategy to protect 3,000 acres of Illinois River wetland habitat through the **Big Rivers Initiative**.



Stewart Lake is one of the sites on the Illinois River that is annually surveyed by the Illinois Natural History Survey.

“Stewart Lake is a fantastic example of what the Illinois River Valley probably looked like a hundred years ago,” Schenck said as he announced the land purchase at DU’s state convention in East Peoria. “Stewart Lake has a ‘wilderness-like’ character and is one of about two dozen important wetland sites along the Illinois River that migrating waterfowl depend on year after year.”

Outgoing Illinois State Chairman Galen Johnson thanked DU members and supporters and Conservation Pioneer Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation for the \$834,000 that made the Stewart Lake acquisition possible. “DU is fortunate to have the kind of support that allows us to protect the vital wetland habitat remaining in Illinois,” Johnson said.

IT’S ABOUT MORE THAN BAGGING BIRDS

Jay and Jane Jorgensen – Fort Wayne, Indiana

Jay Jorgensen grew up like a lot of Midwestern kids, following in his father’s footsteps as they hunted and fished in several states across the region. From pheasant hunting in Ohio to fishing for steelhead in Michigan, Jay spent much of his childhood outdoors.

“I think you can grow up a lot of ways, but it sort of depends on what your dad does for fun. Mine hunted and fished, so that’s what I think of as recreation,” Jay says. “Things could have been different if my dad was the kind of guy who chose to watch football instead, but he was from South Dakota and grew up hunting rabbits and foxes, so he passed that lifestyle on to me.”

To further pursue their passion for the outdoors, the Jorgensen family acquired land on Michigan’s Pere Marquette River. In 1976, Jay opened an outdoor outfitting store in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and started to learn more about waterfowling. “When you have a store like that, people just come in and talk,” he says. “My dad and I joined in on some duck hunts and I started to hear about Ducks Unlimited.”

For Jay, time in the marsh is special. “There is something about being outside when the sun comes up,” he says. “The water sparkles on the spider webs. It really is beautiful. For me, hunting isn’t about the hunt so much as it is about being out in nature. It’s the whole process of hunting, not just harvesting the bird.”

That’s why Jay contributes to Ducks Unlimited. “It’s not that DU is the only group I support,” he explains. “But it’s important to me because of the scale at which DU operates. I know that when I’m supporting Ducks Unlimited, they are out there building relationships and amplifying the work they do. And honestly the habitat that DU preserves isn’t just for waterfowl. It’s for many, many species, and it’s for clean air and water. The footprint they leave on the landscape is bigger than the sum of their projects.”



Jane and Jay Jorgensen



GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

Inland lakes, interior marshes and coastal wetlands compose the complex ecosystem of the **Great Lakes Initiative** area. This region provides critical resources for waterfowl throughout their journey, whether they are migrating or settling in to breed. During the past fiscal year, more than 4,400 new acres of habitat were restored across this vital area.

There were successes in every Great Lakes state in FY14.

Utilizing a 2011 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant of

\$1.04 million from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through a sub-award agreement with The Nature Conservancy, DU provided the topographic survey, engineering design, bidding, contracting and construction management services needed to complete four coastal wetland restoration and enhancement projects on Ohio's Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. These projects resulted in the conservation of more than 350 acres of Lake Erie coastal wetlands. They also included the enhancement of coastal wetland habitat on the refuge's Helle Unit, Moist Soil Unit #2, and Pool 2a.

The refuge's showcase project was the 125-acre farmland-to-coastal-wetland restoration project on the Blausey Unit, immediately adjacent to the Toussaint River. This project included the design and installation of levees, a pump, multiple water-control structures, and a fish-passage structure to provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the tools necessary to manage for sustained high-quality coastal wetland habitat. The fish-passage structure hydrologically reconnected the restored wetlands to the Toussaint River and now provides for the exchange of fish and other aquatic organisms that had been absent for decades.



A NEW PARTNERSHIP IN THE GREAT LAKES

The Fund for Lake Michigan – Milwaukee, Wisconsin

While The Fund for Lake Michigan has been working to improve the health of Lake Michigan and communities in southeastern Wisconsin for years, the organization recently partnered with DU on its first project in the northeastern portion of the state. "We were ready to stretch our portfolio a little by participating in the Cat Island, Dunes Lake and Barkhausen projects," says the fund's program officer, Casey Eggleston. "Coastal Green Bay is one of the most productive wetland resources on Lake Michigan, but also one of the most challenged."

Ducks Unlimited is creating spawning marshes for pike, adding water-control structures and implementing revegetation and invasive species control measures in several areas around Green Bay. The improvements should result in more productive wetlands to help control sediment from inland sources that could otherwise flow directly into Lake Michigan without healthy marshes in place to serve as filters.

"We have a lot of wonderful partners with whom we have achieved great results," Eggleston says. "But the scale at which Ducks Unlimited works is much larger than most. Our work in southeastern Wisconsin is necessarily on smaller parcels; it's a more crowded environment. You can see Cat Island from the moon. While we need everyone to participate in doing what they can to improve conditions for Lake Michigan, the larger projects definitively offer big results."

The Fund for Lake Michigan solicits water-related proposals for projects that will improve local quality of life. Project staff and consulting professionals evaluate the proposals and make 25 to 30 awards annually to promising projects. The size of DU's projects attracts a diverse group of partners, from local stakeholders to state and federal authorities.

"Between DU's membership and others who are familiar with what they do, there's a lot of excitement and publicity around a DU project," Eggleston explains. "That's important to our fund, as it amplifies our involvement and helps us engage with other stakeholders who share our goals."



Brian Glenzinski, DU regional biologist; Paul Huberty, Oconto County DU area chairman and Silver Sponsor; Greg and Marsha Meissner, Door County DU volunteers and Sponsors in Perpetuity; Bruce Deadman, Wisconsin DU 2013 Conservationist of the Year and Heritage Sponsor; Casey Eggleston, program officer for the Fund for Lake Michigan; and Doug Gorby, DU director of conservation programs, pose with a check from The Fund for Lake Michigan.

MAINTAINING WATERFOWL TRADITIONS IN AMERICA'S HEARTLAND

Waterfowl require quality habitat to support their fall and spring migrations, especially in dry places like the Southern Great Plains. Here, DU has established two initiatives to ensure that waterfowl find the resources they need in this critical migration corridor. DU's work in the mid-continent is also important to maintaining waterfowl hunting traditions.

Heartland Heritage and Habitat Initiative

In the face of a growing population relying on an already thirsty landscape, DU works through the **Heartland Heritage and Habitat Initiative** to bring public and private partners together to protect and restore wetland habitat that serves both people and waterfowl. In FY14, innovative solutions were the key to conserving 5,178 acres in Nebraska's Rainwater Basin and along the Platte River in Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado, as well as restoring key publicly managed wetlands in Kansas. Along with work on the ground, DU has also taken to the air, completing its first spring aerial waterfowl and crane survey on the North and South Platte River to help deliver more effective habitat projects.

Southern Prairies and Playas Initiative

The **Southern Prairies and Playas Initiative** provides important habitat for waterfowl in Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico. To ensure adequate migration habitat for waterfowl in both spring and fall, DU focuses on restoration and management of publicly owned wetland complexes. In FY14, DU protected 577 acres and enhanced 304 acres of important waterfowl habitat in this initiative area. DU also added staff capacity in Oklahoma and New Mexico to facilitate the partnerships that foster the delivery of critical migration habitat.



HEARTLAND HERITAGE
AND HABITAT INITIATIVE
CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREA

SOUTHERN PRAIRIES
AND PLAYAS INITIATIVE
CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREA



JEFF TREEMAN LEAVES A LEGACY IN OKLAHOMA

Treeman Family Foundation – Salina, Oklahoma

Jeff Treeman, founder of the Treeman Family Foundation, passed away in 2001. His family asked friends and colleagues to honor Jeff's memory by sending donations to Ducks Unlimited in lieu of flowers. That was just the beginning of the relationship between DU and the Treeman Family Foundation.

Jeff established the foundation to honor his family and support the causes he cared about most. Now run by two of his brothers, Christopher and Michael, and his son, Judd, the foundation has committed long-term support to DU as a Legacy Sponsor.

"We have always tried to steer the foundation in ways that Dad would have wanted," Judd says. "Supporting DU's work in Oklahoma is a slam dunk for that."

Like his father before him, fishing and hunting—especially duck hunting—were among Jeff's greatest loves. He passed on his love of Oklahoma, wildlife and hunting to his



Jeff, Chris, Rick and Mike Treeman

son. With Jeff's incredible generosity, Oklahoma's waterfowling heritage will be passed on for generations to come.

"We know DU will do quality work and use our funds wisely," Judd says. "We chose DU because of their unrivaled reputation in wetlands and waterfowl conservation and their unwavering mission to preserve opportunities for hunters."

The Treeman Family Foundation has supported DU habitat projects on Drummond Flats and Waurika Wildlife Management Area.



**LIVING LAKES INITIATIVE
CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREA**

LIVING LAKES INITIATIVE

The wetlands and shallow lakes within the **Living Lakes Initiative** area provide important migration habitat for a number of waterfowl species, including scaup, ring-necked ducks and mallards. In FY14, the Living Lakes Initiative funded the conservation of more than 3,700 acres in Minnesota and Iowa.

The **Living Lakes Initiative** experienced increased support when Minnesota voters passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment in November 2008. A portion of the state sales tax is now dedicated to conservation, and state grants from the Outdoor Heritage Fund have been appropriated to Ducks Unlimited for the acquisition of new public lands for agency partners. This is relatively new conservation work for DU and involves the appraisal, negotiation and acquisition of fee-title land from private landowners willing to sell. Lands acquired by DU are restored and transferred to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for state wildlife management areas and federal waterfowl production areas, respectively. In 2013, DU successfully purchased five new parcels totaling 155 acres and is now restoring and transferring these lands to the Minnesota DNR while also pursuing future land purchases. During the brief window these properties are held by DU, they are open for public use, including hunting, as required by state statute.



Ruth Hoefs – Le Center, Minnesota

"I farm," DU volunteer and Heritage Sponsor Ruth Hoefs states proudly. "I own 350 acres and lease another 1,200 with some other farmers. We have a mix of crops—corn, soybeans, wheat and hay along the Minnesota River, south of the Twin Cities. We have a mixed herd of beef cattle and even some goats."

The Minnesota River is a significant migration corridor for waterfowl, and Ruth enjoys wildlife almost as much as farming. "There is a time and place for cropland and a time and place for potholes," she says. "Too many potholes are being lost. There is a natural balance and when we change it too much there will be less for the future."

Fifteen years ago, Ruth was invited to a DU banquet by a friend. "They were looking for people to volunteer, so I did," Ruth says. "I've enjoyed making many, many friends. I serve as a regional vice-chair in southwest Minnesota, and I'm very proud to be a volunteer."

Ruth is pleased to see others support waterfowl conservation as well. "There is a family close by that did a DU restoration project on their property," she says. "It is fun to see the projects, which are used by all sorts of animals. Fifty years from now I'd like to see more wetlands restored to their natural condition. Many help combat climate change naturally. They were meant to be here, so we need to conserve and restore them."





SOUTHEAST WETLANDS INITIATIVE

From Chesapeake Bay and the coastal Carolinas to the St. Johns River, Mobile Bay, the Everglades and the Tennessee River, some of the Atlantic and eastern Mississippi flyways' most famous and threatened wetland systems can be found within the boundaries of DU's **Southeast Wetlands Initiative**.

Aside from the region's habitat diversity, perhaps its most impressive characteristics are the strength of the local DU supporters' conservation ethic and their passion for their hunting heritage. Not only are the men and women of the southeastern United States dedicated to carrying on and passing down outdoor traditions, but they are also committed to leaving a legacy of conservation. The notion that we borrow the world from our children rather than inherit it from our parents is strongly rooted throughout this region.



The greatest threats to waterfowl habitat in the **Southeast Wetlands Initiative** area stem from land conversion. Therefore, DU focuses on the permanent protection of remaining habitats on private lands through donated conservation easements. DU also works with state and federal partners on public lands to maximize habitat for waterfowl and increase public hunting opportunities. In FY14, DU protected 5,072 acres and enhanced more than 36,500 acres of prime waterfowl habitat in the initiative area.

SHARING THE PASSION MOTIVATES DU SPONSORS

Billy and Stephanie Owens – Charlotte, North Carolina

Billy Owens grew up in Georgetown, South Carolina, surrounded by rivers, historic rice plantations and waterfowl hunting. "I think I've always been aware of Ducks Unlimited through the men in my community," he says. "In high school, I volunteered for the Georgetown committee, so I've been involved with DU close to 40 years."

What motivates Billy to continue his support for DU? "Like all duck hunters, I've got it. Some call it a disease, but I call it a passion," he says. "I've seen the good work DU has done in executing conservation and promoting hunting, and I'm a believer in both of these efforts. I think there's a need now more than ever to make sure we don't lose the legacy of hunting, and I see DU addressing that with things like DU Varsity chapters."

Billy's son, Bo, helped found a chapter at Myers Park High School two years ago. "I have two sons and two daughters, all of whom enjoy the outdoors," Billy says. "My wife, Stephanie, and I support DU's **Southeast Wetlands Initiative** so that DU can continue to protect the important habitats that are left and provide more access for young hunters."



John, Billy and Bo Owens

Billy also supports several community efforts through his church, and founded Turn Two for Youth, a charity that collects and provides used baseball gear to needy kids. But Ducks Unlimited is where he finds the unique fellowship that occurs when people with similar outdoor passions and principles come together.

"Through DU I've met so many avid outdoorsmen and women who have gone a step further," Billy says. "They're acting on their passion and supporting conservation and the heritage of duck hunting to make sure future generations can experience it and pass it on again."



**WINGS AND WETLANDS INITIATIVE
CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREA**

WINGS AND WETLANDS INITIATIVE

Washington, Oregon and Idaho not only offer a vast array of picturesque scenery but also some of the Pacific Flyway's most important wetland habitats for migrating and wintering waterfowl. The Puget Sound, Channeled Scablands, Idaho panhandle and SONEC (Southern Oregon/Northeastern California) areas host hundreds of thousands of waterfowl annually thanks to expansive estuaries, seasonal wetlands and vital floodplain marshes. However, urban encroachment and competition for limited water resources are putting pressure on these important areas.

Fortunately, progress in conserving waterfowl habitat has been made throughout the region, thanks in part to the **Wings and Wetlands Initiative**. In FY14, Ducks Unlimited conserved more than 3,600 acres through this initiative. In Idaho's Snake River Plain, DU completed the acquisition of a second property in the Market Lake area that will provide key habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. And in western Oregon, DU kicked off a partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a restoration and waterfowl hunting plan on 900 acres around Wapato Lake, which will pay big dividends for waterfowl.

The annual passage of Pacific Flyway ducks and geese connects the migration and wintering areas of the Pacific Northwest to breeding habitat in Canada and Alaska. As a result, contributions to DU's **Wings and Wetlands Initiative** support waterfowl habitat conservation both in the initiative area and on critical breeding grounds in the Western Boreal Forest of Canada and Alaska, where many Pacific Flyway birds nest.



MAKING A PLACE FOR DUCKS IN WASHINGTON

Scott and Lisa Gunning – Seattle, Washington

Scott Gunning shared a special bond with his grandfather. That relationship ended up touching the lives of others.

"When I was eight years old and my grandfather wanted to take me hunting, I wondered why he wanted to be around a young kid like me," Scott says. "When he was 90, he wondered why I wanted to be around him." Their relationship explains why Scott does what he does for conservation.

Fifteen years ago Scott began assembling what has become the French Creek Hunt Club near Snohomish, Washington. Once a series of old dairy farms, the club is now a 1,200-acre oasis within DU's **Wings and Wetlands Initiative** area. DU has completed several conservation projects on the property. "After a while it became a legacy issue, sharing what we were doing with people who had the same vision," Scott explains. "We all came into this world wired to be farmers, ranchers, hunters and fishermen. Once you have experienced this place, you know that others will enjoy it as well. Experiencing this with others is what I want to do, and I hope to give something back."

While Scott's wife, Lisa, doesn't accompany him

to the duck blind, she is heavily involved in the critical social aspects of Scott's support for DU. "I am incredibly thankful that we support each other's interests, and our shared passion for conservation lasts year-round," he says.

Scott's role in helping reinvigorate and grow DU's Seattle chapter has been especially rewarding. "We reignited the fundraising dinner in 2004 and I'm still heavily involved in it," he says. "We are competitive, but we really want to show others what is possible; we want to challenge other chapters to be part of the rising tide that lifts all the boats."



Scott, Lisa and Grant Gunning

©Greg Woodman





Fundraising

The promise of a future with an abundance of wetlands and waterfowl requires that we do good conservation work every day. Each and every successful Ducks Unlimited fundraising event, foundation or government grant, conservation easement, major gift pledge or planned gift is a stepping stone to skies filled with waterfowl.

FY14 was another incredibly successful year for Ducks Unlimited. Fundraising teams of volunteers and staff generated astounding growth in the event system, and generous Major Sponsors stepped up to generate important funds for conservation programs across the continent.

This year's annual report features stories about DU's fundraising events, membership activities and our important partners. It is all underscored by the commitment of our volunteers and donors to do what needs to be done each day

**FISCAL YEAR 2014 WAS ANOTHER
INCREDIBLY SUCCESSFUL YEAR
FOR DUCKS UNLIMITED.**

to conserve prairies, marshes, swamps, bayous, sloughs—all types of habitats important to the birds we love.

Thank you for what you do for Ducks Unlimited every day. You are what drives this organization and what will ensure our continued success in FY15 and beyond.





Event Fundraising

HISTORIC GROWTH CONTINUES

Local chapter fundraising events are the foundation of Ducks Unlimited's philanthropic support. This nationwide network of volunteer-led gatherings generates millions of dollars and produces the bulk of the organization's members annually. The vast majority of DU's Major Sponsors also originate through event fundraising efforts. DU's success depends on the success of local events.

Ducks Unlimited's event fundraising program continued to shine in FY14 with its fourth straight year of surpassing budget goals and an overall revenue growth of more than \$2.3 million. Total revenue from events reached its second highest mark in a 12-month period, a testament to the dedication of the more than 53,000 volunteers who gave their time and talents in hosting over 4,300 events.

This success was widespread. All seven field management units across the country achieved regional fiscal goals. Attendance at DU events grew by over 12 percent, with more than half a million people choosing to support the organization by taking part in a local gathering.

Staff and volunteers worked to facilitate future success by growing existing volunteer ranks by 10 percent in FY14, a vital achievement to ensuring that the future of event fundraising is just as bright as its past.



DU VOLUNTEERS: THE LIFEBLOOD OF EVENT FUNDRAISING

Volunteers have always been crucial to DU's success, whether in the boardroom or out selling tickets to a local event. The organization's event fundraising system would not exist without the tens of thousands of devoted men, women and youth who plan, organize and host local events across the country.

Since the start of the organization's chapter-based fundraising system in the 1970s, more than a million people have volunteered with a local DU chapter. The countless hours that have been gifted to the organization through these efforts are directly responsible for the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been raised through the event fundraising system over the past four decades.

While society has changed significantly since the first local DU fundraiser, one thing has remained constant: DU volunteers are the lifeblood of the organization's event fundraising system.

DU YOUTH CHAPTERS MAKE HISTORY

While DU's event fundraising system came close to setting all-time revenue records in FY14, one segment did reach that mark: DU's youth chapters. Consisting of collegiate and high school committees, the organization's youth chapters raised more than \$1 million for the first time ever.

Eighty-three collegiate chapters held at least one event in FY14 through the organization's Ducks University program. Thirty-two states now have at least one collegiate chapter operating within their borders. While an impressive source of funding, the future conservation leaders this program has created are invaluable.

DU's high school chapter program, known as DU Varsity, is proving just as popular among young people as Ducks University. While still a relatively new program nationally, scores of high school students have expressed interest in bringing DU to their campuses, as other service organizations have for decades.

Ducks Unlimited is ensuring a healthy tomorrow by engaging leaders now through fun and popular programs on high school and college campuses across the country.







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Membership

CALLING IN THE FLOCK

Ducks Unlimited's membership grew to 691,000 in FY14, surpassing our membership goal by 27,000 members. Adult members comprise the majority of DU membership with 639,000, while youth members number 52,000. Many others have been a part of the flock by donating within the last three years, enabling DU to enjoy more than a million supporters.

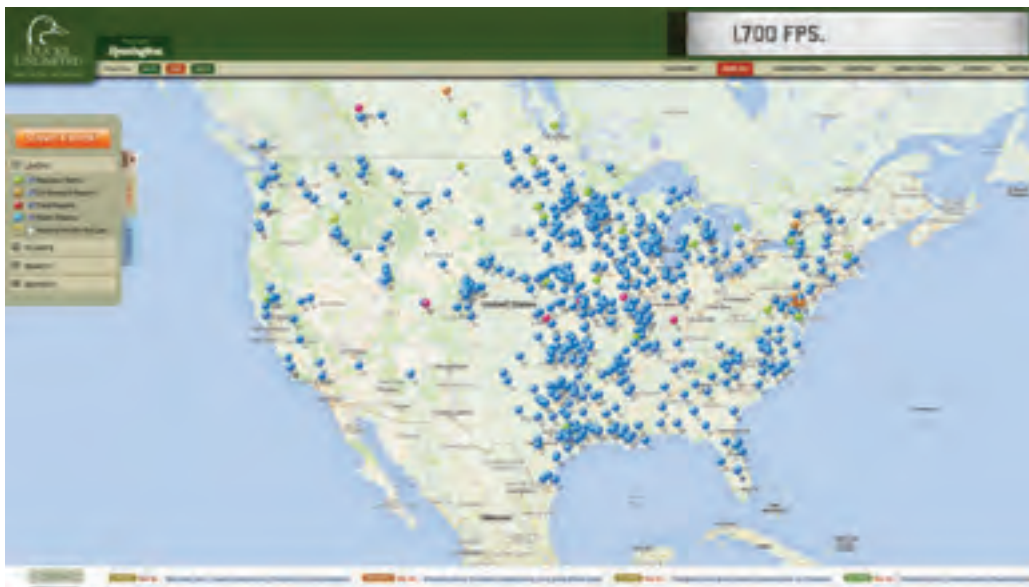
In addition to events and direct mail, DU has had great success in acquiring and retaining members through digital sources, including the Ducks Unlimited website, on line marketing, Facebook and other social media platforms. DU's website garnered 4.7 million unique visitors and more than 59 million page views in FY14, an increase of 42 percent over the previous year. Page views for the Waterfowl Migration Map, which is part of DU's popular Waterfowl 360 program, exceeded 24 million, an increase of 94 percent over FY13.

Ducks Unlimited's popularity also grew on Facebook

over the past year. At the end of FY14, DU had more than 920,000 Facebook fans. That's an increase of 45 percent over FY13. In addition, revenue from Facebook accounted for approximately \$331,932, an increase of 179 percent over FY13 revenue. All that growth was achieved through a coordinated effort between DU's Web and Direct Response teams.

Ducks Unlimited's Facebook fans exceeded one million in October 2014, an exciting milestone for our organization and a testament to the strength of our brand.

DU continues to make good progress toward a June 2016 goal of 675,000 adult members by achieving its membership goal for the third straight year. A strong membership helps protect the future of waterfowl hunting and enables us to support the next generation of waterfowl hunters and conservationists. Our volunteer leaders play an integral part by inviting more than 200,000 new guests to DU events each year.



The migration map is one of the most popular features of DU's Waterfowl 360 program, available online at ducks.org.

Major Sponsors



PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL MEMBERS CELEBRATED

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of DU's President's Council we want to say thank you to the more the 850 members who have participated in the council since its creation in 2004. An important thank you is also due to the members of DU's leadership who developed this important program, which allows us to help the organization meet its most vital philanthropic and conservation goals.

"Ducks Unlimited has earned a place in our hearts. As the earth and its many ecosystems become more fragile, it is critical that organizations like Ducks Unlimited grow and work to preserve all that we love about the outdoors but also need to sustain our lives." – Rich Johnson, President's Council charter member

A landmark anniversary is not only the perfect time to reflect on past accomplishments, but also an opportunity to recognize a special group of people who have been with us year in and year out as council members. Our very first council member was Jim Konkel, who has been a member each year since. Joining Jim and his wife Sue as 10-year members are Jackie and Ron Bartels, August A. Busch III, Virginia and Hazard Campbell, Donald J. Galligan, Marg and David Grohne, Joyce and Rich Johnson, Debra and Mack Karnes, MD, James C. Kennedy, Susie Konkel, Charles and Virginia Lane, Shelly and Craig Larson, Susan and Charles F. Smith, Judy and John Tomke, and Susan and Tom Waldbuesser.

Thank you again for your ongoing dedication to DU's conservation mission.

George H. Dunklin Jr.
President, Ducks Unlimited Inc.

Steve Maritz
President, Wetlands America Trust



George H. Dunklin Jr.



Steve Maritz



Kitty and Bob Wilson

DRAWN TO "BIG WORK"

Bob and Kitty Wilson – Johnstown, Colorado

DU President's Council members and Diamond Legacy and Grand Slam Sponsors Bob and Kitty Wilson aren't afraid to think big. Growing up in Iowa along the Mississippi River, Bob, his brother, and their father chased bluebills on the Big Muddy. "Groups of 10 or 12 big birds were coming at you at what seemed like 80 miles an hour," Bob recalls. "It was pretty exciting."

Over the past 40 years, Bob built a successful medical services company, Columbine Health Systems, which employs 1,400 people in Fort Collins, Colorado. Kitty, a retired Navy nurse and barrel-racing cowgirl, runs nine horses and oversees the couple's latest "big work"—restoring 160 acres along the Big Thompson River.

"Starting eight years ago we took 21 dumpsters of trash off the property," Bob says. "We removed a horse and cattle operation and restored the riverbanks and vegetation." Now planted with cottonwoods and willows, more than a mile of the river is on the mend. The property hosts a heron rookery and is frequented by bears, coyotes and bald eagles.

Bob recounts how he and Kitty became acquainted with Ducks Unlimited. "The local game warden stopped by to examine the rookery and suggested we look at a conservation easement with DU," he says. "I want to see the property kept from development. I don't want to see it change. It is the way it is supposed to be."



FIELD EXPERIENCES

Ducks Unlimited field experiences are two-day hands-on field and classroom encounters that bring DU donors, staff and partners in touch with the projects and programs they help deliver across the continent. From the Maritimes of New Brunswick and the prairies of Canada and North Dakota, these experiences drive home the importance of wetlands to waterfowl and people.

Members of DU's science staff guide participants through our conservation mission and delivery and take them to the field to see it all in action. From how DU funds conservation programs to how we determine the most im-

portant landscapes to conserve, guests come away with an in-depth understanding of the importance of wetlands and the waterfowl they support.

DU field experiences offer the unique opportunity to walk among hidden nests; along the edges of nutrient-rich potholes, marshes, bogs and swamps; and through the uplands critical to the life cycle of waterfowl. There are many conservation successes and challenges to witness on the landscape. Ducks Unlimited field experiences never fail to educate, entertain and inspire our supporters.

DU donors, staff and partners got hands-on conservation experiences in Canada, North Dakota, and other areas in FY14.





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WETLANDS AMERICA TRUST

WAT: CONSERVATIONISTS LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Since its founding as the Ducks Unlimited Foundation in 1955—and its renaming in 1994—Wetlands America Trust (WAT) has provided specialized financial leadership and philanthropic support to Ducks Unlimited. The primary responsibilities of the WAT board are to ensure that DU achieves its philanthropic potential and to serve as the organization's land trust. WAT has also become increasingly involved in critical public policy issues impacting wetlands conservation.

The WAT board is composed of three committees: Development, Government Affairs and Governance. Each committee is tasked with fundraising, policy influence and board governance, respectively.

As one of the country's largest land trusts accredited by the Land Trust Alliance, WAT administers more than 400,000 acres of conservation easements and fee-title properties. In addition, WAT trustees work closely with DU staff and volunteers in pursuit of significant philanthropic support. The WAT and DU boards work as cohesive partners to put DU's mission at the forefront of all decisions regarding support for the organization and for wetlands conservation.

WAT trustees are among America's top business leaders and they have the capacity to meet with other corporate and industry leaders throughout the United States. These meetings provide an opportunity to put DU front and center with the decision makers of the business world. WAT trustees also work closely with lawmakers from their home



Steve Maritz

states to provide support for conservation efforts that effectively shape policy beneficial to DU's mission.

In 2013, Steve Maritz agreed to serve as president of Wetlands America Trust. Maritz also holds a position on DU's board of directors. His leadership and business acumen as CEO and chairman of Maritz Holdings bring to WAT and DU a unique perspective as a landowner, conservationist and businessman. His company is one of Forbes' top 500 largest privately held companies. An avid duck hunter, Maritz and his family enjoy upland bird and big game hunting worldwide.

MARITZ LEADS THE WAT CHARGE

"We face a big challenge," says Steve Maritz, president of Wetlands America Trust. "We have a growing population that is increasingly urbanized. How do we get this population to care about the environment beyond an emotional feeling?"

Steve's connection to DU started in his 30s. "I've always had a love of the outdoors. I enjoyed shooting clays, but I never put the two together until I took a client bird hunting. Then friends got me going to DU banquets, and Deke Welles asked me to take a big step and join the WAT board. The rest is history."



Steve Maritz and his sons Willie, Ted and Jack spend as much time hunting together as they can.



Ted Maritz and his mother Jeanne proudly display the catch of the day.

Steve sees the continent's wetlands as truly worth his commitment. "My wife, Jeanne, and I have three sons and all of them grew up hunting," he says. "Jeanne loves the outdoors and is very supportive of the passion the boys and I share. Being together in the marshes is one of the joys of my life. It connects us with the outdoors."

With each passing year Steve continues to ramp up his connection to DU and the wetlands he loves. "Good environmental stewardship is not simple," he says. "It requires sound science and clear thinking as well as good policy. It's not about me; it is about the world in which we live and the love we have for it. We can make it better."



In his long career with Marathon Oil, Lyndon Ibele worked from Ohio to Alaska. Along the way, he discovered Ducks Unlimited.

"My father was on a DU committee when I was in college in Ohio," Lyndon recalls. "I started to go to events then, and I remember how important it was to him."

Once Lyndon put down roots in Anchorage, he joined the local DU committee. He served Alaska as state chairman and presently serves as the state campaign chair. Lyndon also served on DU's board of directors.

"I love to hunt, and what appeals to me about DU is that it is a science-based organization that is collaborative and non-confrontational," Lyndon explains. "DU has a great reputation. What I'd like to see 50 years from now is a growing, thriving organization that sticks to its singleness of purpose to strengthen the conservation efforts in this country, balanced with the needs of people."

To help accomplish that, Lyndon is providing for DU's WAT Endowment in his estate planning. "My fiancée, Janyce Harpel, was a part of making my decision for including DU in my will."

Janyce chairs DU's Anchorage ladies event. "Janyce and I support four charities and want to plan for them," Lyndon says. "For 20 years I have volunteered for DU. The organization means a lot to both of us."



Lyndon Ibele and Janyce Harpel



Ducks Unlimited Canada

DELTA MARSH MAKES A COMEBACK

Delta Marsh is one of the most famous wetlands in North America. It's also one of the most endangered. As a premier waterfowl breeding and staging area in the southeastern Canadian Prairies, the 47,000-acre marsh on the southern shore of Lake Manitoba once supported millions of birds and other wildlife. Over the last 50 years, the health of the marsh has declined significantly. The main culprit is the invasive common carp. Fortunately, the marsh is starting to make a comeback thanks to a special Ducks Unlimited Canada project called Restoring the Tradition.

If you visited Delta Marsh in the spring, you would have heard lots of banging and splashing. Thousands of migrating common carp were trying to make their way into the marsh from Lake Manitoba. However, sophisticated barriers developed by DU Canada's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research kept them out.

Carp use the marsh for feeding and spawning. These activities disturb the marsh bottom, causing vegetation to die out. The water becomes so murky that sunlight cannot get

through to help important plants grow, including those species that ducks require as food to fuel their migration.

In February 2013, DU Canada and other project partners built large steel screens to keep carp out of Delta Marsh. Soon after, the largest freshwater coastal marsh in North America started rebounding. By early summer, plant life and water quality had improved dramatically. DU Canada is now conducting research, monitoring and evaluation to gain a clearer picture of the impact of the carp exclusion.



BUILDING ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

Scott and Susan Stamerjohn – Quincy, Illinois

"A picture may be worth a thousand words, but being the one taking that picture is even better," Scott Stamerjohn said after attending the Canadian Experience with DU Canada last year. Scott sees the prairie breeding



Drew, Ellie, Christopher, Luke, Susan and Scott Stamerjohn

grounds in Canada as the foundation upon which waterfowl populations are built, so it was a natural fit for him to direct his Heritage Sponsor commitment to DU Canada's conservation efforts. This commitment also makes him a member of DU's President's Council.

Scott became active in Ducks Unlimited because of his longtime friendship with DU board members Doug Schoenrock and Mike Duggan. The two men asked Scott to join DU's Corporate Relations Committee, where his experience as an executive with DOT Foods lends important guidance to the group.

An avid fisherman, archer, duck hunter and conservationist, Scott is an example of the multi-faceted outdoorsman that is the backbone of conservation. "Hunting and conservation are part of our American heritage," he says. "I've been in the field since I was three years old. My dad would let me carry a stick for what seemed like the longest time before he put a .410 shotgun in my hands years later. Promoting a lifestyle that fosters great relationships is at the heart of hunting and fishing. It is an important part of my relationship with my wife, Susan, and our three sons and daughter."

Ducks Unlimited de Mexico

MANGROVES, EDUCATION REMAIN FOCUS OF DUMAC

As Ducks Unlimited de México (DUMAC) celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2014, the organization is poised to kick off another 40 years of actively addressing wetland loss and waterfowl conservation across Mexico. DUMAC's staff knows Mexico's landscape better than anyone and, more importantly, understands how to achieve DU's conservation goals in a country with a different culture, economic status and hunting tradition than those found in the United States or Canada.

Since 1974, DUMAC's work with national and local governments, farmers and volunteers has made major improvements to Mexico's wetlands and benefited waterfowl such as pintails, blue-winged teal, redheads and black brant that rely on habitats south of the U.S. border.

To date, DUMAC has conserved more than 1.9 million acres of habitat, and its staff is currently conducting a satellite-based survey of Mexico that has already inventoried 19.8 million acres of wetlands—more than two times what the government thought existed.

DUMAC PARTNERS WITH BISBEE FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FUND

Ducks Unlimited de México (DUMAC) and the Plano, Texas-based Bisbee's Fish & Wildlife Conservation Fund are embarking on a long-term partnership to sustain and restore Mexico's north Pacific coast mangrove swamps and tidal estuaries. A \$165,000 grant from the Bisbee's fund will allow DUMAC, Ducks Unlimited, the state government of Sinaloa, and local organizations to create a comprehensive plan to help guide sustainable development of the shrimp industry and restore degraded marshes and swamps.

"Two and a half years ago we created Bisbee's Fish & Wildlife Conservation Fund and started our work with fisheries," said R. Wayne Bisbee, the fund's founder and director. "Rather than going it alone, we teamed up with organizations like DUMAC and Ducks Unlimited, which have staff with the right expertise to get the job done. Through the science gathered by these partners,

Through its internationally recognized RESERVA program, DUMAC and its partners have also trained 452 natural resource managers from 23 countries across Latin American and the Caribbean, making it unique among the three DU organizations by impacting the entire western hemisphere.

In the coming years, DUMAC will focus primarily on the conservation of mangrove wetlands and on environmental education and capacity-building through the training of conservation professionals.

A relatively high percentage of Mexico's mangrove wetlands remain, but these high-value habitats are disappearing rapidly. To combat this global issue, DUMAC pioneered innovative mangrove restoration techniques and was contracted by CONAFOR, the National Forestry Commission of Mexico, to help train staff in the methods DUMAC has found successful.



Wayne Bisbee, Rogers Hoyt and Brian White pose with a big check for DUMAC.

governments are able to make the correct decisions to benefit fish, wildlife and people."

This effort is the first phase of a long-term project. DUMAC will update its landscape maps and analyze habitat loss caused by the burgeoning shrimp farming industry in these areas, which impacted more than 50,000 acres between 1992 and 2002.

Wetlands along the north Pacific coast of Mexico are recognized as habitats of hemispheric and international importance for shorebirds and brant, and compose one of the 28 key wetland areas for waterfowl in Mexico.



Corporate Partner Program

CORPORATE PARTNERS STRENGTHEN DU'S MISSION

Leading organizations, corporations and brands recognize Ducks Unlimited as the leader in wetlands conservation and one of the most successful membership-based conservation organizations in the world. They understand the importance of our mission and the critical need to support DU with commitments, resources and quality products.

Through DU's Corporate Partner Program, corporate sponsors, product licensees and promotional partners are able to make an impact on wetlands and waterfowl conservation, and share DU's conservation message with millions of people through their marketing efforts.

Since its launch in 1985, DU's Corporate Partner Program has generated more than \$100 million in unrestricted funds for conservation—dollars that can be used where ducks need them most. Our generous corporate partners also play a major role in DU's success by underwriting and donating products to fundraising events across the country.



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OUR PROUD PARTNERS

Academy
 AES Outdoors
 American Luxury Coach
 America Remembers
 Artisans Apparel
 Avery Outdoors
 BALL Watch
 Barton Cotton
 Bass Pro Shops
 Browning
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 Desperate Enterprises
 Discover Financial Services
 Favorite Recipes Press
 Gander Mountain
 Gator-Tail Outboards
 Heining Automotive
 Identity Check Partners
 Itasca Footwear
 Jack Daniel's
 K2 Coolers
 Kimlor Mills
 Lockton Affinity
 Mack's Prairie Wings
 The McGee Group
 MetLife
 New South Access and Environmental Solutions
 Orvis
 Outdoor Cap
 Pyramex
 Remington
 Rico Industries
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 SportDOG Brand
 Star Fish Vision
 United Country
 VPI Pet Insurance
 W.R. Case and Sons Cutlery
 War Eagle Boats
 Western Spirits Beverage Co.
 Winchester Ammunition
 Yamaha



BASS PRO SHOPS

Over the past five years, Bass Pro Shops founder and CEO Johnny Morris and his team have made significant contributions to DU's wetland conservation efforts. From designating the month of October as "DU Month" at all retail locations to giving Ducks Unlimited a presence on the biggest stage on the NASCAR circuit, Bass Pro Shops' support for wetlands conservation is impressive and inspiring.

In addition to these efforts, Bass Pro Shops has taken its commitment to Ducks Unlimited to the next level by providing DU with more than 4,500 square feet of exhibit space at the new Memphis Pyramid Bass Pro Shops location. The Ducks Unlimited Waterfowling Heritage Center will be part of this unique destination retail store. The Waterfowling Heritage Center will provide visitors an opportunity to learn about Ducks Unlimited, wetlands conservation, waterfowl and waterfowl hunting. Plans for the museum also include interactive experiences for all visitors. Inside a small theater, visitors seated in a duck blind will be able to experience the excitement of a flooded timber duck hunt through a realistic video game. Other attractions for the downtown Memphis store include a waterfowl aviary, lodging and a restaurant at the peak of the Pyramid overlooking the Mississippi River and Arkansas Delta.

"We're particularly excited to partner with DU to celebrate the proud history and great work they do," Morris says. "We will utilize the unique retail environment we're creating to celebrate the Mississippi Flyway and make this store the waterfowl center for the whole company."

Today, Bass Pro Shops continues to be one of DU's staunchest corporate partners. Together we are protecting our outdoor heritage and furthering DU's conservation mission today and for future generations.





State Agency Partners

STATE CONTRIBUTIONS PROGRAM PUTS DOLLARS ON THE GROUND IN CANADA

Fifty years ago, when waterfowl numbers were painfully low and hunting seasons short, leaders from the wildlife agencies in Louisiana, Ohio and South Carolina initiated an innovative partnership with Ducks Unlimited to help ensure healthy breeding grounds in Canada and maintain the waterfowl populations that migrated to their states each winter.

State and DU biologists studied decades of banding data to target the Canadian habitats most important to producing the birds harvested in each state. With as many as 50 to 70 percent of surveyed waterfowl breeding across Canada, other states quickly recognized the importance of the habitat conservation goals of this partnership, and by 1985, 20 states had joined and were contributing about \$1.25 million annually.

Four years later, Congress provided encouragement for this federal-state partnership by passing the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). NAWCA

required that every dollar of federal money invested in wetlands be matched by at least one dollar of nonfederal funding. Recognizing the continental scope of waterfowl populations and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), it also required that a portion of the federal funding be used for projects in Canada and Mexico.

Within five years, state contributions for NAWCA habitat projects in Canada had doubled to about \$2.5 million annually, and they have continued to grow since. In FY14, 37 states contributed \$3.13 million to the cause.

DU has matched every state-contributed dollar since this partnership began, and NAWCA now matches these combined contributions with federal funds. This means that every quarter that a state invests results in at least a dollar of habitat conservation. And because DU's match is composed of member and supporter contributions, DU is getting the same return on investment: more than \$12 million in habitat conservation for the \$3.1 million contributed by supporters in 2014.



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MAKING CONSERVATION A PRIORITY

Public Policy



DU PROMOTES FARM BILL AND MORE IN FY14

Each year, Congress makes important decisions about habitat conservation and other programs that directly impact the long-term health of waterfowl populations. DU's office in Washington, D.C., exists to promote these programs and other wildlife-friendly legislation.

FY14 saw Team DU hard at work promoting several pieces of legislation vital to our conservation mission. That legislation included the 2014 Farm Bill, which will provide \$28 billion over the next five years for conservation on private lands; the renewal of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act; a bill that would increase the price of the federal duck stamp; and a bill making tax incentives for conservation easements permanent.

Federal investments in natural resources and outdoor recreation are equivalent to less than 1 percent of the federal budget. However, this funding accounts for 60 percent of the direct investments in conservation in the United States, making these dollars critical for waterfowl, their habitats and the people who value them.

Ducks Unlimited is the only waterfowl habitat conservation organization with staff based in our nation's capital specifically to educate members of Congress, their staffs, federal agencies and our conservation peers on the importance of wetlands conservation to wildlife and people.



Ducks Unlimited CEO Dale Hall (left) and Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Jason Weller discuss the importance of rice farming and waterfowl.



USDA ROLLING OUT NEW FARM BILL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has launched some of the new conservation programs and initiatives authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. The bill, critical to DU's mission, will provide \$28 billion over the next five years for conservation on private lands while streamlining several old programs and creating new ones such as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

The RCPP will provide \$400 million in FY15 for multi-year partnerships among the USDA, private landowners, universities, organizations, corporations and local governments. These new partnerships will leverage conservation resources in several high-priority landscapes including the prairies, Mississippi Alluvial Valley, Gulf Coast, Central Valley, Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay.

The 2014 Farm Bill reduces the national Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) cap from 27.5 million acres in 2014 to 24 million acres by 2017. This reduced cap is concerning for DU and our partners, since CRP provides critical habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. However, the USDA and its partners are exploring and developing new ways to modernize and provide incentives for working lands conservation programs that are both attractive to landowners and beneficial to wildlife.

As implementation continues, DU will work with our partners and the USDA to develop new rules for other key conservation provisions enacted in the bill, including wetland and native prairie conservation provisions linked to federal crop insurance.

DU AND RICE FEDERATION WORK TOGETHER FOR RICE LANDS

The rice industry is crucial to feeding the nation and North America's wetland wildlife. All three rice-growing regions of the United States—the Mississippi Alluvial Valley (MAV), Gulf Coast and California's Central Valley—overlap directly with the continent's most important waterfowl wintering grounds. To help ensure that rice lands continue to deliver food and habitat, Ducks Unlimited and the USA Rice Federation developed an innovative partnership in 2013. This aggressive, collaborative approach to solution-oriented wildlife conservation benefits farmers by combining the interests and influence of two prominent rice industry and conservation groups. This partnership also reflects the spirit and intent of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program established in the 2014 Farm Bill, opening the door to federal funding to match partner contributions for rice lands conservation.

In FY14, DU scientists authored a report for the USA Rice Foundation that estimated the cost of attempting to replace rice lands with natural wetland habitat at more than \$3.5 billion. The study also determined that more than 40 percent of the food resources available to wintering dabbling ducks along the Central Valley and Gulf Coast derive from flooded rice fields. In the MAV, 11 percent of the available food was provided by flooded rice lands, but ratooning (leaving the roots and lower portion of the plant for secondary growth) and flooding just 20 percent of the MAV rice crop could largely eliminate any waterfowl food shortfalls in the region.

Rice farming is critical to ensuring that we meet the current population goals set forth in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Unfortunately for waterfowl and rice producers, all three regions face challenges. Water supplies for rice production are under increasing pressure, and many producers may be forced to adopt practices that provide far fewer benefits for waterfowl. DU continues to work for local and federal policies that positively impact the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of working rice lands.

For more information: www.ducks.org/ricelands



FEDERAL CONSERVATION FUNDING

Total federal budget investments in natural resources and outdoor recreation programs are equivalent to less than 1 percent of the federal budget, yet these conservation programs create thousands of jobs that cannot be outsourced. Just as significant, outdoor recreation participants, including sportsmen and women, spend nearly \$650 billion a year on their outdoor pursuits. DU continues to work with Congress to ensure adequate funding for wildlife and habitat conservation programs, which drive the economy and provide priceless benefits, including clean water and flood abatement.

Farm Bill

The 2014 Farm Bill signed into law in February streamlined and consolidated several existing programs and created new conservation partnership programs while allotting \$28 billion over the next five years for conservation work on private lands. Ducks Unlimited provided significant leadership in creating a historic partnership between the agricultural, crop insurance and wildlife conservation communities, while achieving three significant conservation goals. First, the Farm Bill re-couples conservation compliance with crop insurance, protecting wetlands and highly erodible soils. Additionally, it creates a Sodsaver program in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota to conserve some of the nation's most important waterfowl breeding and migration habitats. Finally, cuts to conservation program funding were kept to acceptable levels in a bill that significantly reduced agricultural spending.

Packed with on-the-ground conservation value for private lands, the 2014 Farm Bill is good for working farmers and ranchers, waterfowl and other wildlife and our citizens. It keeps agricultural producers on their land by allowing them to work the most productive acreage while enrolling less productive areas in conservation programs. The bill also provides vital wetlands, grasslands and other habitats for waterfowl and other wildlife, with additional economic benefits to landowners and their communities that include recreational opportunities, affordable food and fiber and other environmental services.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) is a voluntary, non-regulatory, incentive-based program that brings public and private partners and funds together to deliver wetlands conservation across the continent. NAWCA utilizes a rigorous grant process to ensure that only the best projects are funded. Partners include state fish and wildlife agencies, local governments, nongovernmental organizations like Ducks Unlimited and private landowners. Federal dollars require a 1:1 match in nonfederal funds, but are typically matched by two or more dollars from these important partners. Since 1990,

more than 5,000 partners have delivered over 2,400 projects resulting in the conservation of more than 27.5 million acres of habitat on the ground. Ducks Unlimited continues to advocate program reauthorization, and bills have been reported out of the Senate and House committees of jurisdiction, although they differ significantly. We also continue to advocate annual NAWCA funding at the highest possible level.

Federal Duck Stamp

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Federal Duck Stamp. Since its enactment, this landmark initiative has generated almost a billion dollars – paid for and supported by waterfowl hunters and other wildlife enthusiasts – to conserve more than 6 million acres of wetlands across the United States. The program is a model of user pay-public benefit conservation funding, public-private partnerships, and government efficiency. Approximately 98 cents out of every duck stamp dollar is spent to acquire or lease lands for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Unfortunately, the price of the stamp has not been increased since 1991. During this time, land prices have tripled, our conservation investment power has diminished greatly, and consumer good prices have increased greatly. Ducks Unlimited strongly supports the House and Senate bipartisan bills that would raise the price of the stamp to \$25, and dedicate the amount of the price increase to use for conservation easements.

Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements

For more than 20 years, Ducks Unlimited has used conservation easements to protect waterfowl habitat on private lands across the nation from development. Conservation easements provide an invaluable tool that allows landowners to retain ownership, continue to meet their individual land management objectives and provide conservation benefits to the public, all while keeping working lands working for the landowner. DU supports and has collaborated for several years with the land and wildlife conservation communities to create permanent tax incentives for landowners who make an easement on their property.

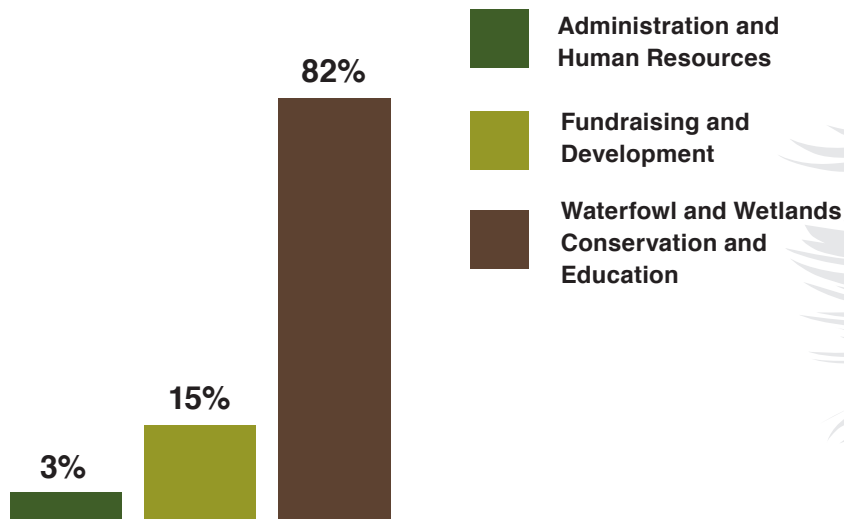


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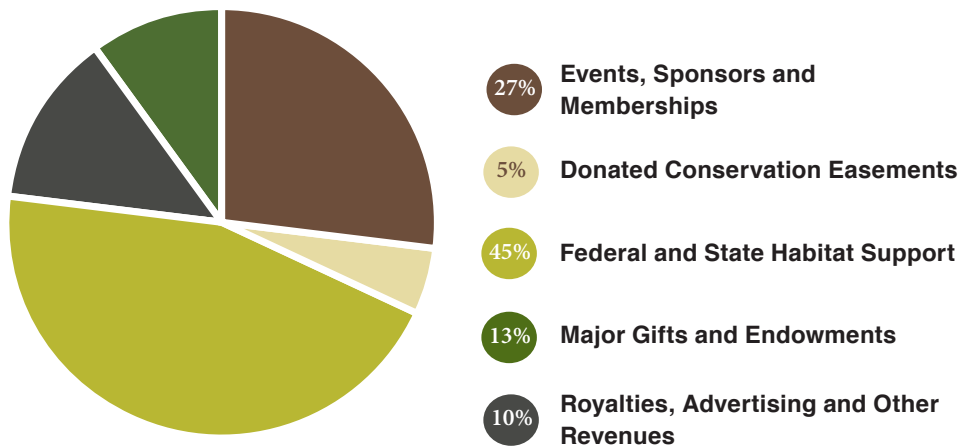
ANOTHER STRONG SHOWING IN 2014



Financials



WHERE YOUR DU DOLLAR GOES



SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE



DUCKS UNLIMITED, INC. AND AFFILIATE
COMBINED BALANCE SHEETS
JUNE 30, 2014 AND 2013

| Assets | 2014 | 2013 |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$ 26,279,911 | 25,739,753 |
| Restricted cash | 3,203,721 | 1,474,749 |
| Events receivable, net | 822,853 | 612,358 |
| Pledges receivable, net | 29,542,587 | 28,068,500 |
| Habitat conservation and other receivables | 26,789,720 | 25,305,209 |
| Event merchandise inventory | 3,427,239 | 2,861,818 |
| Investments | 48,424,054 | 40,824,852 |
| Land held for conservation purposes | 34,094,050 | 22,914,798 |
| Land, buildings, and equipment, net | 8,596,084 | 8,383,915 |
| Other assets | 2,559,301 | 3,257,262 |
| Total assets | \$ 183,739,520 | 159,443,214 |
| Liabilities and Net Assets | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses | \$ 16,567,330 | 11,985,738 |
| Compensation and related accruals | 7,003,666 | 6,833,854 |
| Pension and deferred compensation accruals | 3,764,636 | 6,288,143 |
| Accrued postretirement benefits | 1,571,445 | 1,950,812 |
| Other liabilities | 499,975 | 526,397 |
| Total liabilities | 29,407,052 | 27,584,944 |
| Net assets: | | |
| Unrestricted | 59,780,062 | 41,771,105 |
| Temporarily restricted | 80,585,509 | 73,747,026 |
| Permanently restricted | 13,966,897 | 16,340,139 |
| Total net assets | 154,332,468 | 131,858,270 |
| Total liabilities and net assets | \$ 183,739,520 | 159,443,214 |

DUCKS UNLIMITED, INC. AND AFFILIATE
CONDENSED STATEMENT OF UNRESTRICTED OPERATIONS
YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2014 AND 2013

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| Support and Revenue: | | |
| Philanthropic sources: | | |
| Net proceeds from committee events | \$ 40,928,409 | 39,595,886 |
| Direct response membership | 12,735,445 | 11,731,311 |
| Major gift | 23,859,653 | 24,718,244 |
| Planned gift maturities | 1,000,000 | 243,545 |
| Royalties | 2,247,302 | 1,910,460 |
| Total philanthropic revenue | 80,770,809 | 78,199,446 |
| Other support and revenue: | | |
| Federal and state habitat reimbursements | 65,085,331 | 57,853,522 |
| Nongovernmental partnerships | 21,180,520 | 18,153,915 |
| State grants | 3,125,021 | 3,207,352 |
| Donated conservation easements | 10,047,750 | 8,396,228 |
| Advertising revenue | 2,422,323 | 2,963,770 |
| Donated educational programming | 4,371,270 | — |
| Non-operating revenues | 11,132,571 | 5,709,364 |
| Appropriated endowment and quasi-endowment earnings | 1,114,549 | 524,664 |
| Other revenues | 184,346 | 19,583 |
| Total support and revenues | 199,434,490 | 175,027,844 |
| Operational expense: | | |
| Program service expenses | 153,521,743 | 132,803,182 |
| Fund-raising expenses | 28,361,294 | 25,576,145 |
| Administration expenses | 6,012,432 | 5,008,423 |
| Total operational expense | 187,895,469 | 163,387,750 |
| Excess of unrestricted support and revenues over expenses | 11,539,021 | 11,640,094 |

2014 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

UNPARALLELED GENEROSTY



HONORING DU'S MAJOR SPONSORS

Major Sponsors have chosen to make an immediate and significant impact on wetlands conservation today through their support of Ducks Unlimited's mission. These philanthropists are leading the charge to secure our continent's wetland and waterfowl habitat to make the vision of full skies a reality.

The donors listed on the following pages represent those who have given more than \$1,000,000 to Ducks Unlimited in their lifetime or who made a gift in FY 2014. Please contact Kathy McCollum at (901)-758-3710 or kmccollum@ducks.org for information about being included in next year's annual report.



A LETTER FROM DU SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT MIKE WOODWARD

The Pas, Laguna Madre Tamaulipas, Sabine and Amherst are storied marshes that invoke in my mind the splendor of our continent. They are magnificent wetlands where, since prehistoric time, man has sought food, wrested agriculture as well as inspired many a hunter, many a conservationist, to make sure these places remain relevant, historical, even legendary for future generations.

On the pages that follow are people who continue the uniquely North American legacy of conservation. We want to recognize you for taking the necessary, the critical step in assuring a place on this still unique green earth, for wetlands and waterfowl.

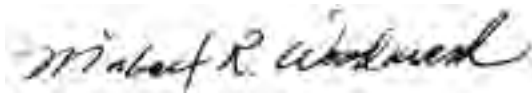
Whether you made a major gift commitment, increased an existing pledge to do more, included DU in your long term financial planning, established an easement on your land, chaired a state campaign committee, helped organize a DU event or brought a new member to the cause— thank you. You are what make this organization the family it is for millions of people and guarantee it will continue to fulfill its mission for generations to come.

Would the founders of Ducks Unlimited recognize the organization today? I think they would. They knew that the work to be done was worth doing and the beauty of this land was worth saving. How could that not inspire people to action?

Many of you started with the organization after coming to a Ducks Unlimited banquet event or becoming a volunteer and have continued to support the organization, for decades in so many cases. The impact these years have had on waterfowl cannot be measured and they are the foundation of the mission we undertake and the incredible success we have seen.

You are what makes this organization what it is and your past, present and future commitments will ensure our continued success for wetlands and waterfowl for you and me and those we love to share it with.

Thank you for making a difference,



Michael R. Woodward
Senior Vice President of Development





President's Council

Recognition in the President's Council honors DU's staunchest supporters and is open to those who annually give \$10,000 or more in cash to our conservation mission. President's Council members understand that an ongoing and significant annual commitment is necessary to achieve our goals, and they are dedicated to making DU one of their highest giving priorities each year.

Ducks Unlimited is pleased to recognize the following individuals as current members of the President's Council for the prior and current calendar year (as of July 1, 2014):

Philip C. Ackerman
John and Emily Alexander
Anonymous
Duane and Annamaria Arnister
Adam and Leslie Arnold
Sherwin and Kaycie Artus
Paul C. Aughtry III
James W. Ayers
Lamar Q. Ball IV
Chris and Marna Bame
Matthew and Dawn Barr
Peter Barrett
Ron and Jackie Bartels
Annette D. Barton
John W. Barton, Jr.
Patrick G. Beaulieu
Henry "Peter" C. Beck
Murray Bercovich
John F. Bergstrom
John and Shirley Berry
James T. Blair IV
Gerald A. Boelte
Sandi and Paul Bonderson, Jr.
Joe W. Bourne, Jr.
Forrest W. Brehm
Joel N. Broussard
J. Terrell and Mary Kay Brown
Thomas R. Brown
Charles Bruning III
David and Denise Bunning
Dean and Rosemarie Buntrock
August A. Busch III
Brit and Ellin Busch
Benjamin and Karyn Campbell
E. R. Campbell, Jr.
Hazard and Virginia Campbell
Mike and Robbi Carey
Blake M. Carlson
Eleanor and Henry Carlson, Jr.
John W. Childs
Randal L. Coffin
James and Bernadette Cogdell
John Stafford Comegys

Ripley S. Comegys
William M. Comegys III
Tim and Julie Conaway
Peter and Marilyn Coors
David P. Crosby
Scott A. Cunningham
Greg J. Currell
Bill and Sarah D'Alonzo
Patrick and Stephani Davis
William W. Deupree, Jr.
Paul and Beverly Dickson
Skipper and Cindy Dickson
Michael E. Dillard
Eric and Holly Dillon
Jan M. Dillow*
John H. Dinkins
John Hull Dobbs, Jr.
Ray A. Doering
Scott Doll
Patricia and Dr. James Donelan
Rodney W. Dow
Bill and Mary Downey
William L. Driscoll and Dr. Lisa Mae Hoffman
Mac and Susan Dunfield
Tom Dunkin II
Livia and George H. Dunklin, Jr.
E. Bradford duPont, Jr.
Ron and Michelle Dusseau
Ralph Eads
Fred Eckhardt
Joel and Mary Ann Elftmann
Kathryn and David Ellison, Jr.
Richard Emmerich
Thomas and Ora Enos
Douglas and Carol Federighi
Randi Fisher
Robert J. Fisher
Clark P. Fitz-Hugh
Jim and Cherie Flores
Robert Fogelman II
Timothy D. Foster
Doug Fout

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Past California state chair, Ducks Unlimited de Mexico Life Sponsor and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. Diamond Sponsor in Perpetuity Eric Rudgers (center) was recognized for his service on the DU Board of Directors by Regional Director Jim Giapaolo (right) and DU Director of Development Anne Hansen.



Members of the John W. Barton, Sr. family and project partners were recognized for their support in the restoration of the 348-acre Sherburne Project in Louisiana.

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Heritage Sponsors Gretchen and Woody Lovelace of Virginia enjoy a quiet moment at the 2014 DU convention.

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Paxton and Jolie Lichenstein, Legacy Greenwings, got a lift after a long day of DU activities with their grandmother, Jackie Bartels, who with her husband Ron, are long serving volunteers and Diamond Benefactors.

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Diamond Feather Society member Clarence Klaus Jr. and his troop of retrievers visit the Pymatuning restoration project in Pennsylvania.

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Ducks Unlimited de Mexico was recognized by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council staff for its significant work in Mexico.



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Please direct questions regarding the Ducks
Unlimited annual report to :

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