



YEARS OF WETLANDS
CONSERVATION



ANNUAL REPORT

2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
<i>Rescue Our Wetlands</i> : Banding Together for Waterfowl	5
Conservation Initiatives: 80 Years of Rescuing Wetlands and Waterfowl	7
Regional Reports: FY17 Project Highlights	8
Ducks Unlimited's Financial Success Continues in FY17	10
Event Fundraising System Continues Historic Growth	14
Out and About: DU's National Convention and Field Experiences	15
Carvers for Conservation	16
California's Skaggs Island: Bringing Back the Baylands	18
ConocoPhillips Receives DU Corporate Conservation Achievement Award	20
USA Rice/DU Partnership Growing Stronger	21
Corporate Partners Help DU Help the Ducks	22
Public Policy: News from the Capital	24
Information Technology Upgrades Continue	27
President's Council: The Backbone of <i>Rescue Our Wetlands</i>	28
Wetlands America Trust: Leading the Way Since 1955	30
Generous Supporters Take Prairie Easement Program to a New Level	32
Prairie Initiatives Conserve Wetlands and Nesting Cover	34
Ducks Unlimited de México: Partnerships Benefit Wildlife and People	36
State Contributions Drive Canadian Habitat Projects	37
Pass-A-Loutre WMA: Creating Marsh at the Mouth of the Mississippi River	38
DU's Conservation Easement Program: Conservation for Generations	40
Ducks Unlimited Digital: New Online Magazine and Website	41
Ducks Unlimited Canada Celebrates an Important Year in Conservation History	42
Black Ducks: New Tools Protect the King of Eastern Waterfowl	44
Varsity and University Chapters Raising Money and Awareness	46
2017 Honor Roll of Donors, Volunteers and Chapters	47
Ducks Unlimited Leadership	97



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Team DU is celebrating 80 years of conservation. Think about that.

We are applauding eight decades of conserving wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl, mindful that these habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

January 29, 2017, marked Ducks Unlimited's 80th anniversary. DU was founded by a small group of sportsmen on a mission to save the continent's waterfowl and waterfowling traditions amid the tumult of the Great Depression and one of the worst droughts in history.

Reaching our 80th anniversary wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers and supporters, as well as the many partners who have helped us succeed. Thanks to you, fiscal year 2017 (FY17) was another exceptional year for Ducks Unlimited. We continue to set the standard for all habitat conservation organizations, and it's all because of your commitment to our mission.

FY17 marked the seventh consecutive year in which we surpassed our budget goals, with total revenues approaching \$224 million. More than 58,000 DU volunteers hosted over 577,000 attendees at 4,050 events in FY17. Some 5,000 major donors and 700,000 members contributed over \$86 million in philanthropic revenue—\$1.8 million more than last year.

For 80 years, Ducks Unlimited has put those conservation dollars to work for wetlands and waterfowl. Each year, our goal is to dedicate at least 80 cents of each dollar that we spend to conservation. We met that goal again in FY17, with 83 percent of expenditures going toward our mission.

In FY17, Team DU conserved more than 248,000 acres, bringing our cumulative total to over 14 million acres conserved since DU was founded in 1937! We have come a long way from our humble beginnings.

DU's efforts, including the current Rescue Our Wetlands campaign, are funded by supporters and partners who share our conservation goals. Significant support also comes from advertising, licensing agreements, and royalties generated through the power of the Ducks Unlimited brand.

One special partner, ConocoPhillips, a multinational energy corporation headquartered in Houston, received the inaugural Ducks Unlimited Corporate

Conservation Achievement Award at DU's 80th annual convention in San Antonio. This award recognizes corporations from the United States, Canada, and Mexico for their exceptional contributions to conservation in North America. ConocoPhillips was given the award for its conservation work on the Gulf Coast.

Our partnership with Bass Pro Shops (BPS) continued in FY17. Each year since 2013, this vital partner has promoted DU to millions of racing fans by featuring our brand on their BPS Chevrolet at NASCAR's Coke Zero 400 in Daytona, Florida.

In August 2016, Ducks Unlimited and Axalta Coating Systems celebrated the first full year of a five-year conservation partnership that has led to enhanced wetland habitats for waterfowl, wildlife, and communities across the United States and Mexico.

Our goal for the ongoing Rescue Our Wetlands campaign is to raise \$2 billion for wetlands conservation by December 2018. When we achieve our goal, DU will have successfully completed the largest wetlands and waterfowl campaign in history. We are almost there. When FY17 ended in June, Rescue Our Wetlands had already raised \$1.82 billion.

FY17 was another successful year for Ducks Unlimited in Washington, D.C., as well. Our policy team moved to a new office location, and DU staff and volunteers advocated for continued support of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) as well as the conservation provisions in the upcoming Farm Bill.

We thank Congress and the president for recognizing the importance of conservation provisions benefiting sportsmen and women around the country in the omnibus spending package passed in FY17. Ensuring that programs like NAWCA and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative receive adequate funding helps provide wildlife with the habitat they need and deserve. These investments also help provide clean, abundant water and other vital resources.

These are only a few of our FY17 success stories. You will read more about these and many other FY17 achievements on the following pages. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to Rescue Our Wetlands, Ducks Unlimited, and our mission to conserve North America's wetlands for the benefit of waterfowl, other wildlife, and the people who cherish them. Here's to the next 80 years of filling the skies with waterfowl. Keep up the great work!



Rogers Hoyt Jr.
President



H. Dale Hall
Chief Executive Officer



ACRES CONSERVED

In FY17, Team DU conserved more than 248,000 acres, bringing our cumulative total to more than 14 million acres conserved since Ducks Unlimited was founded in 1937.

Ducks Unlimited – working with partners – provides valuable, on-the-ground solutions that benefit waterfowl populations and maximize water resources through the dynamic natural functions of wetlands. In addition to providing habitat for waterfowl, wetlands naturally slow and store water to help recharge watersheds and aquifers, improve water quality through biological and physical processes, and provide important wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.



**CONSERVATION
BY THE NUMBERS**

RESCUE OUR WETLANDS

Banding Together for Waterfowl

Rescue Our Wetlands is DU's comprehensive, continental campaign. Launched in 2012, this seven-year, \$2 billion campaign is critical to preserving the future of our wetlands and waterfowl.

FY17 was an important year for the campaign. At the end of the fiscal year, Ducks Unlimited Inc., Ducks Unlimited de Mexico and Ducks Unlimited Canada had already raised \$1.82 billion towards our goal.

Rescue Our Wetlands is an active fundraising and conservation campaign focused on immediate impacts. Dollars raised have already been put to work and are making a difference right now.

"It's incredibly motivating to see all the conservation projects already being funded by money raised through the campaign," said DU Board member Doug Federighi, past senior vice president for conservation programs. "Seeing the dollars we raise converted into habitat for waterfowl is what it's all about."

The campaign includes five priorities that are integral to the overall goal:

Breeding Landscapes

DU is working in the Prairie Pothole Region and the Boreal Forest to conserve and protect important breeding habitats. One of the major highlights of FY17 is a \$25 million gift from a private donor for conservation easements on the breeding grounds in the United States. This is the single largest gift in DU's history. This donor is also giving an additional \$3 million for further conservation work in Canada. These gifts will unlock and leverage many more millions of dollars through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act as well as funding from other partners.



Migration and Wintering Landscapes

Rescue Our Wetlands touches all the habitats important to the continent's migratory waterfowl. For example, the Market Lake basin in Idaho presents a prime opportunity to acquire, restore and enhance thousands of acres of wintering and migration habitat in a large contiguous block. The basin was once a 12-square-mile floodplain of the adjacent Snake River, but by the 1920s nearly all the wetlands and riparian habitat were gone. DU is working with the ALSAM Foundation and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to implement landscape-scale wetland conservation in the basin. The ALSAM Foundation recently approved a \$2 million grant to acquire additional properties that will adjoin a current state wildlife management area and will be open to public hunting.

Youth and Education

The campaign's focus on youth and education reflects an increasing awareness of the need to reconnect our nation's youth with the outdoors. In addition to establishing high school and college DU chapters across the country, DU has established an endowment to fund youth-oriented programs for the long term. Funds from the endowment will be used for a new college scholarship program for high school seniors who are active in their DU Varsity chapter.

"We can conserve millions of acres of habitat today, but to make a long-term difference we also need to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders," said DU President Rogers Hoyt.

Conservation Legacy

Gifts to DU's permanent endowment are a far-sighted approach to DU's mission, safeguarding our wild resources not just for this generation, but for many generations to come. Including Ducks Unlimited in your estate plans is an easy and important way to help secure the future of our vital wetland and waterfowl resources and to leave a lasting conservation legacy.

Waterfowl Forever

The engine that drives DU's conservation mission is the volunteer fundraising effort to acquire the unrestricted dollars that are so important to DU's conservation work. This priority encompasses the entire spectrum of the Ducks Unlimited organization. Funding comes from a variety of sources, including DU events, online gifts, sales of DU-branded merchandise and much more.

"Everyone contributes to *Rescue Our Wetlands*, from the once-a-year event attendee to members of the President's Council," said DU Board member Pete MacGaffin, past senior vice president for event and volunteer management. "Once again, our tens of thousands of volunteers across North America are really stepping up to get us closer to our campaign goals."

Calendar Year 2018 will be a capstone year for the campaign.

Rescue Our Wetlands will conclude in December 2018.

"We have made good progress to date," said DU Board member Mike Woodward, past senior vice president for development. "We have the tools and programs in place to meet our goals. But none of us should be under any illusions that it will be easy. Calendar Year 2018 will be a capstone year for the campaign. It will be the year when much of the hard work gets done as we continue to build on the foundation we have established for success."



Idaho's Market Lake region presents a prime opportunity to restore and enhance thousands of acres of wintering and migration habitat in a large, contiguous block.

RESCUE OUR WETLANDS

Banding Together for Waterfowl

Through this unprecedented campaign, Ducks Unlimited and Wetlands America Trust are committed to raising at least \$2 billion for wetlands and waterfowl conservation by the end of 2018. These funds will be used to conserve habitats on North America's most vital waterfowl landscapes.

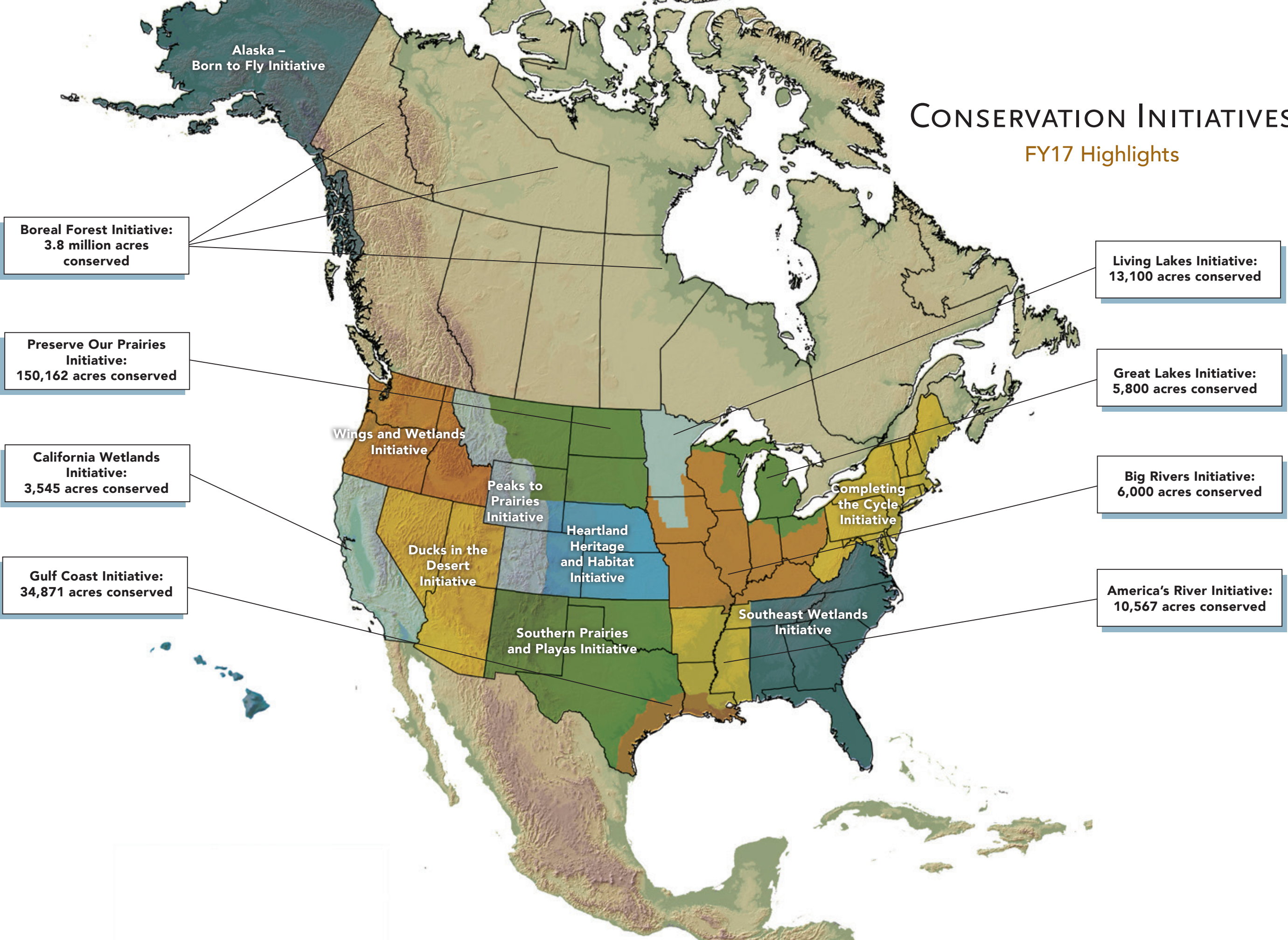
Goal →
\$2 Billion

\$1.82
BILLION



CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

FY17 Highlights





CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Celebrating 80 years of wetlands and waterfowl conservation would not be complete without also celebrating a landmark year for conservation delivery.

Since 1937, Ducks Unlimited has worked across North America to deliver a strong future for wetlands, waterfowl, other wildlife and the people and communities that cherish these shared resources.

We take great pride in the fact that Ducks Unlimited's conservation programs, and the methods we use to determine our conservation priorities, have always been science based. Over the past 80 years, Ducks Unlimited has done extensive habitat work and answered many important questions about ducks, but we still have much to learn about how waterfowl respond to changes in habitat and environment.

For those reasons, DU constantly monitors, evaluates and refines its conservation programs. This adaptive management approach to our mission ensures every dollar invested in conservation is used as effectively and efficiently as possible.

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In 2012, Ducks Unlimited volunteers and staff developed 16 regional initiatives covering North America's highest-priority waterfowl landscapes, highlighted on the map on the preceding pages. Habitat work on these Ducks Unlimited initiatives continues throughout the year, fueled by the generous contributions of volunteers and donors like you.

In FY17, Team DU conducted conservation work on 398,448 acres, including more than 248,000 new acres, bringing our cumulative total to more than 14 million acres conserved in North America since Ducks Unlimited was founded in 1937.

"As we celebrate our 80th anniversary, this conservation milestone is a fitting tribute to the hard work of each and every volunteer, partner and staff member who has contributed to our mission over the past 80 years," said DU CEO Dale Hall. "If not for their dedication and commitment to conservation, this accomplishment would not have been possible."

How DU Conserves:

- Restoring wetlands and grasslands
- Restoring forested floodplains
- Restoring watersheds
- Working with landowners
- Working with partners
- Acquiring land
- Securing conservation easements
- Developing management agreements
- Using Geographic Information Systems to refine conservation programs

Ducks Unlimited: Our Mission

Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

REGIONAL REPORTS

For 80 years, Ducks Unlimited volunteers, staff and partners across the country have made a conservation impact in DU's highest-priority areas. Here are a few FY17 project highlights.

Southern Region

Virginia's Princess Anne WMA Enhancement

Ducks Unlimited, in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), enhanced wetland habitat on the Princess Anne Wildlife Management Area (WMA). DU constructed two pump stations, multiple water-control structures and water delivery systems to aid in the management of wetland habitat for shorebirds, wading birds and waterfowl on 200 acres.

Work on the 150-acre Whitehurst Unit provided independent water delivery throughout the 12-impoundment complex. DU then secured a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant to finalize the funding needed for the 50-acre Beasley Unit, which was completed in May 2017.



Located on Back Bay in extreme southeastern Virginia, Princess Anne WMA serves as the VDGIF's major waterfowl hunting area.

Blind Lake structure complete in Texas

Ducks Unlimited installed a massive water-control structure at Blind Lake near Port Arthur, Texas. The project was funded through a NAWCA grant as well as by partners including private land-



owners, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Jefferson County Drainage District 6. The structure enhances water level management on more than 4,000 acres of freshwater marsh on private property and the J.D. Murphree WMA.

The recently completed structure at Blind Lake will enhance 4,000 acres of Texas Chenier Plain wetlands for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Great Lakes/Atlantic Region

Missouri

Ducks Unlimited and its partners dug in and enhanced more than 3,000 acres at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Missouri. The refuge is part of the largest remaining block of bottomland hardwood forest in the state, and the project replaced and improved aging infrastructure.

Mingo National Wildlife Refuge provides numerous public use opportunities including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education. Ducks Unlimited used a \$1 million NAWCA grant, and partners include private donors, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Missouri Department of Conservation and DU conservation easement holders.

Michigan

Wildlife and outdoors enthusiasts have 1,250 additional acres of managed wetlands near Saginaw Bay thanks to a major Ducks Unlimited project completed at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. The Maankiki Marsh project converted agricultural land back into wetlands for the first time in nearly a century. Ducks Unlimited designed and oversaw construction that allows refuge managers to control water levels. The effort was funded in part by a \$1.5 million National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes grant through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, Dow Chemical Company and Ducks Unlimited supporters provided additional financial support.



Ducks Unlimited staff and partners watch water flowing into part of the Maankiki Marsh restoration project area for the first time in nearly a century.



Western Region

Phase I at California's San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge Completed

Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently completed a 350-acre restoration on White Lake in central Stanislaus County. Funding was provided by a NAWCA grant, in conjunction with USFWS and Ducks Unlimited. This backwater lake on the Hagemann tract of San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge was drained for agriculture in the 1930s and was farmed until the 1990s. A historic 1997 flood prompted the sale and transfer of the site to the USFWS. Over the course of a decade, River Partners and USFWS restored more than 1,000 acres of riparian forest, but floods in 2006, 2010 and 2011 illustrated the need to further manage floodwaters.

South Fork Crab Creek

Ducks Unlimited and the Bureau of Land Management partnered on a wetland, riparian and creek restoration project involving a portion of the south fork of Crab Creek in Lincoln County, Washington. Set on a 30-acre, formerly farmed meadow, the project includes ditches that connect a spring-fed area to the south fork channel. The spring and creeks flow year-round and are a critical water source for wildlife during the hot, arid months of June through September.

The project built a cattle crossing for the south fork of Crab Creek to prevent further bank erosion and allow equipment access across the creek, created a riparian bench, and regraded the banks of Crab Creek to a gentler slope. The project also restored riparian trees and shrubs and excavated shallow depressions in the meadow that function as seasonal wetlands.



Ducks Unlimited and the Bureau of Land Management partnered on a wetland, riparian and creek restoration project on the south fork of Crab Creek in eastern Washington.

Great Plains Region

Lake Seldom works hard for the people of Holdrege, Nebraska

The Lake Seldom wetland improves water quality for residents in nearby Holdrege, Nebraska, by filtering excess nutrients that could otherwise go directly into municipal water supplies. Holdrege gets a lot of rain and the wetland helps moderate flood impacts in the area by capturing runoff. Ducks Unlimited is working with part-

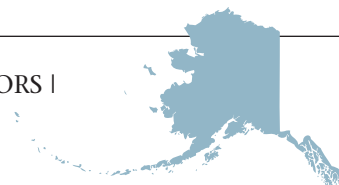
ners to enhance the wetland, as well as the grasslands around it, on property DU and partners purchased and donated to the city. The area includes about 325 acres of wetlands and grasslands, and is open to the public for wildlife viewing, hiking and biking.

Ducks Unlimited property to help Wyoming reservoir through dry periods

Bump-Sullivan Reservoir is one of the most important migratory stops in southeastern Wyoming and can also be one of the area's best places to hunt waterfowl. An extended drought period in the early 2000s left the reservoir mostly dry. DU purchased a property and its water rights near the reservoir, which is part of the Springer Wildlife Management Area. The plan is to restore habitat on the 340-acre parcel, keep the property in agricultural production, and provide water for waterfowl at the reservoir.



Wyoming's Bump-Sullivan Reservoir is an important stop for migrating waterfowl.





DUCKS UNLIMITED'S FINANCIAL SUCCESS CONTINUES IN FY17

Ducks Unlimited completed the first year in its new 2017-2024 Strategic Plan by continuing to work toward the organization's conservation mission and sustained financial strength. Team DU believes that conserving, restoring and managing wetlands and associated habitats is critical for North America's waterfowl and contributes to the enhancement of water quality and availability.

"We are pleased with the conservation delivery, philanthropic program and financial growth accomplishments in this first year of our new plan," said Ducks Unlimited Treasurer Wendell Weakley. "The contributions and time investments that DU volunteers and supporters make toward delivering this mission and in ensuring the organization's growing financial strength for future conservation delivery are critical to our success."

In FY17, Ducks Unlimited's overall support and revenues approached \$224 million and were driven

by continued strong philanthropy from committee events, major gifts, direct response membership, royalties and planned gifts. Other factors included leveraging philanthropy with critical governmental, nongovernmental and foundation partners for greater conservation impact, and receiving in-kind donations of

In FY17, Ducks Unlimited's overall support and revenues approached \$224 million and were driven by continued strong philanthropy from committee events, major gifts, direct response membership, royalties and planned gifts.

conservation easements and public service announcements.

Ducks Unlimited delivered more than \$141 million toward its on-the-ground conservation mission and another \$40 million in other mission-related programs and education deliveries in FY17, exceeding its 80/20 program efficiency target with 83 percent of dollars spent on program services. The organization's net operations were again

positive with an operational surplus of approximately \$3 million and non-operational surplus of \$3 million, strengthening DU's financial position for the future.

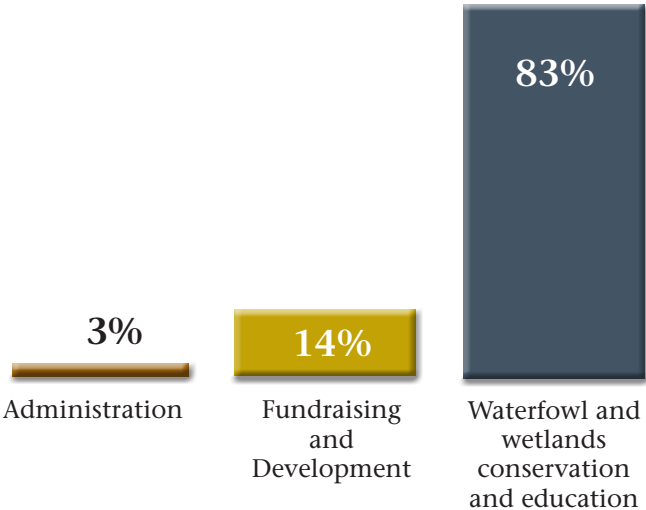
"We continue to enhance our conservation capabilities through the growth of our habitat revolving lands fund, investment in new and improved information technology systems, and with the attainment of the 20 standards of charity accountability by the Better Business Bureau and Wise Giving Alliance," said DU Chief Financial Officer Earl Grochau.

Ducks Unlimited is also pleased to report the organization's consolidated financial statements with accompanying notes, as of June 30, were again audited by an external accounting firm resulting in an unqualified audit opinion. An opinion is said to be unqualified when the auditor concludes the financial statements give a true and fair view of the organization's finances.

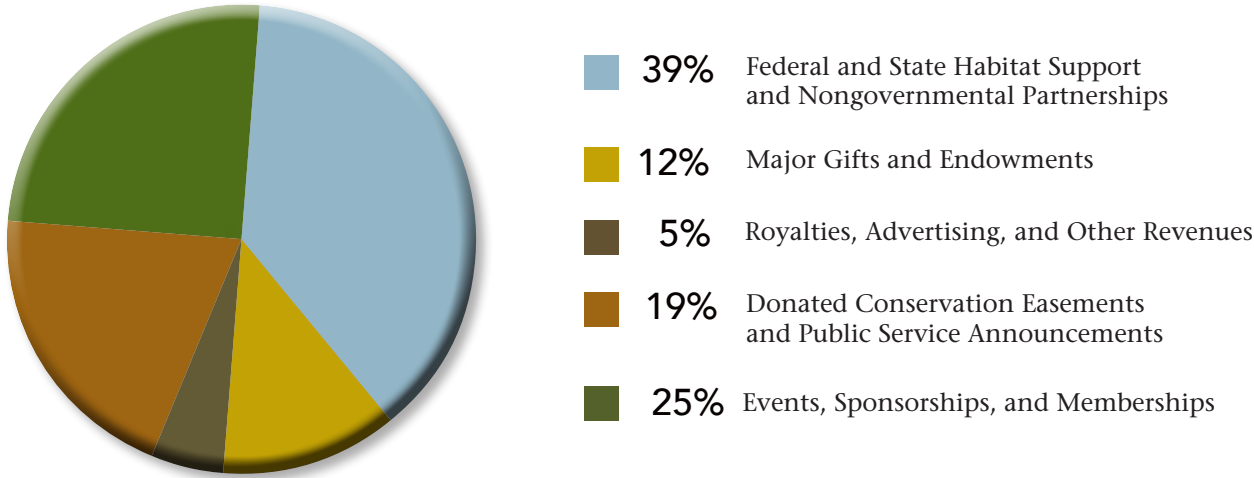


Where Your DU Dollar Goes

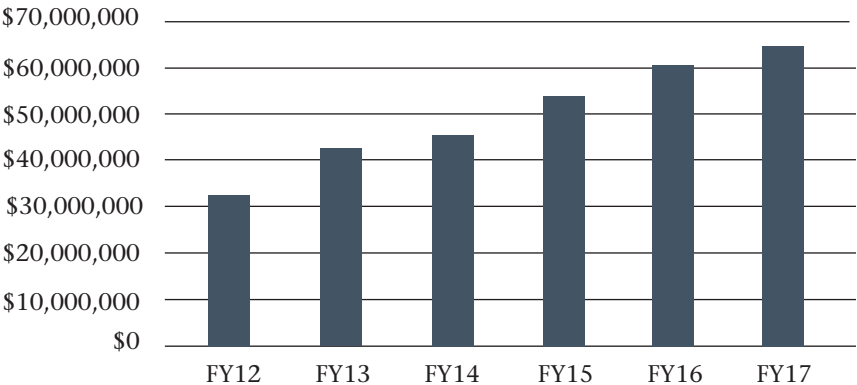
"We are pleased with the conservation delivery, philanthropic program and financial growth accomplishments in this first year of our new plan," said DU Treasurer Wendell Weakley.



Sources of Support and Revenue



Total Endowments



DUCKS UNLIMITED, INC AND AFFILIATE

Condensed Statement of Unrestricted Operations

Years Ended June 30, 2017 and 2016

	2017	2016
Support and revenue:		
Philanthropic sources:		
Net proceeds from committee events	\$ 44,464,535	43,482,102
Direct response membership	11,541,173	11,068,624
Use of major gifts	27,108,665	26,815,034
Planned gift maturities	807,787	412,607
Royalties	2,510,912	2,859,713
Total philanthropic revenue	86,433,072	84,638,080
Other support and revenue:		
Federal and state habitat reimbursements	60,016,072	64,527,313
Nongovernmental partnerships	22,840,368	24,116,945
State grants	3,405,307	2,863,142
Donated conservation easements	23,838,564	26,103,838
Advertising revenue	3,119,110	2,844,937
Donated educational programming	18,013,086	14,195,462
Non-operating revenues	3,074,226	32,878
Appropriated endowment and quasi-endowment earnings	2,611,495	2,114,422
Other revenues	295,577	240,048
Total support and revenue	223,646,877	221,677,065
Operational expense:		
Program service expenses	181,363,155	182,625,342
Fund-raising expenses	29,895,437	28,884,824
Administrative expenses	6,346,771	6,146,667
Total operational expense	217,605,363	217,656,833
Excess of unrestricted support and revenues over expenses	\$ 6,041,514	4,020,232



CALIFORNIA | 1,516 VOLUNTEERS | 30,171 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$3,946,038

DUCKS UNLIMITED, INC AND AFFILIATE

Combined Balance Sheet

June 30, 2017 and 2016

Assets	2017	2016
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 13,432,220	28,167,911
Restricted cash and investments	34,985,032	6,383,313
Events receivable, net	1,182,603	999,703
Pledges receivable, net	40,757,228	45,337,625
Habitat conservation and other receivables	26,704,206	22,249,858
Event merchandise inventory	3,477,598	3,660,859
Investments	70,161,284	59,516,820
Land held for conservation purposes	49,241,465	45,599,385
Land, buildings, and equipment, net	21,345,441	21,740,125
Other assets	13,106,388	5,474,264
Total assets	\$ 274,393,465	239,129,863
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 13,545,372	12,359,191
Compensation and related accruals	8,219,715	7,801,746
Pension and deferred compensation accruals	10,353,437	16,597,661
Accrued postretirement benefits	645,340	675,853
Revolving land line of credit	6,600,000	4,500,000
Other liabilities	1,390,821	1,271,475
Total liabilities	40,754,685	43,205,926
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	76,919,324	63,927,884
Temporarily restricted	127,464,798	103,245,318
Permanently restricted	29,254,658	28,750,735
Total net assets	233,638,780	195,923,937
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 274,393,465	239,129,863

EVENT FUNDRAISING SYSTEM CONTINUES HISTORIC GROWTH



Like the six years prior, FY17 brought with it many challenges for Ducks Unlimited's event fundraising system. In just the first half of the fiscal year, historic flooding, hurricanes, a struggling oil and gas market and one of the most divisive presidential campaigns in history challenged the volunteers and staff that comprise DU's fundraising team to continue the unprecedented growth experienced for six consecutive years.

In true DU fashion, the challenges were overcome. At the end of FY17, proceeds generated through events exceeded organizational budget goals for the seventh straight year. This was accomplished by raising \$62 million in net proceeds, including major gifts, through 4,050 local chapter gatherings across the country. These events engaged more than 577,000

attendees. Since 2010, annual proceeds generated by the organization's event program, including major gifts through events, have grown by \$26 million.

"Every year is a challenge," said David Schuessler, Ducks Unlimited's national director of event fundraising. "But FY17 brought exceptional hardship in some areas. I could not be more inspired by the volunteers and staff who met adversity head-on and overcame it in many parts of the country."

DU's event system is the starting point for more than 70 percent of the organization's membership and the genesis of most Ducks Unlimited Major Sponsors. The majority of the organization's board of directors ascend to their leadership positions through the event program.

Schuessler credited an expanding support base and narrowing focus as the primary drivers for the unparalleled success of the DU event fundraising system.

"The support in Ducks Unlimited events has always been centered around the positive impact the organization's conservation work has on waterfowl populations and waterfowl hunters," Schuessler said. "However, we know there is also a lifestyle component to our events that attracts supporters for a host of reasons. By focusing our operational efforts on the things we know are direct drivers of success – volunteers and attendance – we have grown each year and sustained new programs outside of our traditional dinner event fundraising model."



CONNECTICUT | 176 VOLUNTEERS | 2,834 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$374,234

OUT AND ABOUT

DU's National Convention and Field Experiences

Ducks Unlimited National Convention marks 80 years of conservation



Convention participants were treated to a special evening at Tejas Rodeo outside San Antonio.

More than 1,000 volunteers and conservationists from across the United States, Canada and Mexico attended Ducks Unlimited's annual national convention May 31 – June 4 in San Antonio, Texas, at the Marriott Rivercenter.

Nels Swenson of Oregon, Wisconsin; Rusty Legg of Galveston, Texas; Linda Daugherty of Lincoln, Montana; Larry Jensen of Memphis, Tennessee; Edward May of Banks, Oregon; Michael

Scuse of Smyrna, Delaware; Kathy Christian of Colstrip, Montana; Doug Frey of Austin, Texas; Tom Enos of Washoe City, Nevada, and Joe Stough of Lake Charles, Louisiana, were elected to Ducks Unlimited's national board of directors during the annual meeting.

In addition to new board member elections, this year's convention featured opportunities for conservation-related education, special tours, entertainment and presentations by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Executive Director Carter Smith, ConocoPhillips CEO Ryan Lance and Axalta Coating Systems Chairman and CEO Charlie Shaver, who delivered the keynote address.

In a videotaped message to the audience, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue expressed his gratitude to Ducks Unlimited for our longtime partnership with U.S. Department of Agriculture focused on conservation delivery on working agricultural lands.



DU volunteers elected Rogers Hoyt Jr. as their new president during the annual convention in San Antonio.

Special thanks to First National Bank of Omaha, provider of the official Ducks Unlimited Visa® card, Purina Pro Plan®, Argo, ConocoPhillips, SweetWater Brewing Company, Holland & Knight and United Country Real Estate for sponsoring this year's convention.

The 2018 Ducks Unlimited National Convention will be held May 30 – June 2 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Ducks Unlimited's Field Experiences: Education Through Participation

Ducks Unlimited continued its popular multi-day, hands-on Field Experiences in FY17, bringing DU donors, volunteers, staff and partners together from across the continent to experience projects and programs they support.

In FY17, more than 400 dedicated DU supporters paid their own way to take part in over 30 field experiences from the Canadian Maritimes to the prairies of Canada, and the lakes of Minnesota to the mangrove swamps of Mexico.

Guided by biologists, planners, engineers and program managers, Field Experience attendees get to



walk among nesting waterfowl and along the edges of incredibly fertile potholes, marshes, bogs and swamps. They also study the ecology that makes these habitats so unique and valuable. These interactions allow guests to handle and band birds, assist in research by catching and marking various species, and participate in field operations in a hands-on setting.

Banding waterfowl and understanding the critical science behind it is just one Field Experience objective.



CARVERS FOR CONSERVATION



From his shop in Havre de Grace, Maryland, Charles Jobes uses his talent as a decoy carver to help Ducks Unlimited achieve its mission.

Decoys play a unique role in the history of waterfowl-ing and conservation. The decoy's original purpose was strictly utilitarian: bringing birds into gun range. Long before modern manufacturing techniques and mass-produced plastic decoys, the best blocks were hand carved from wood or cork. Hunters began to realize that more realistic decoys were also more effective tools of deception and they sought out decoys from the best carvers and painters.

From these utilitarian roots, a new kind of folk art emerged. And it didn't take long for decoy enthusiasts to begin collecting these handmade decoys not just to add to their spreads, but to adorn their homes.

Today, decoys serve another purpose unique to the mission of Ducks Unlimited. They help raise important funds for conservation. Visitors to DU events across North America will find decoys up for auction or as raffle prizes. DU often uses award decoys as incentives for people who become members or upgrade their level of

giving. And major donors and partners are often recognized with a hand-carved and signed decoy, a distinctive acknowledgment of their contributions to conservation.

Jett Brunet

Jett Brunet, of Galliano, Louisiana, learned the art of decoy carving from his father, Tan Brunet, at an early age. Tan, Jett, and his younger brother, Jude, are some of the most decorated carvers in history. Tan won the world championship title five times. Jett and Jude each won it twice. Jett grew up loving ducks, duck hunting and decoys. He started carving when he was nine years old. "There's something about the beauty and simplistic style of a handmade wooden decoy. It's a true American art form," said Brunet. "I try to capture the essence of the duck and to glorify the species I'm working on."

Brunet is known for his highly decorative, realistic decoys carved from a single block of wood and for his unique oil painting technique, which has become



FLORIDA | 1,130 VOLUNTEERS | 15,521 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$1,773,822

"I really wanted to do my part to help wetlands and conservation, and there's no better way to do that than to combine my talents with DU."

- Jett Brunet



Jett Brunet carves extremely realistic decorative decoys from a single block of wood.



known as the Brunet Softness. Once he had achieved his goals related to carving competitions, Brunet started reproducing his originals for Ducks Unlimited in coordination with Doug Adams of Carvers for Conservation. "I really wanted to do my part to help wetlands and conservation,"



said Brunet. "And there's no better way to do that than to combine my talents with DU." Over the past two decades, Brunet has supplied more than 1.3 million reproduction decoys for use at DU events and as membership incentives. He has also carved the DU Decoy of the Year for the past seven years.

Charles Jobes

Ducks Unlimited acquires handmade decoys and reproductions from some of the best carvers in the world.

"People love the handmade wooden decoys," said Charles Jobes of Havre de Grace, Maryland. "Every decoy is an original. Each one has its own character. People appreciate that."

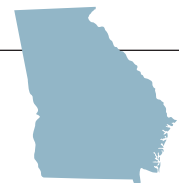
Jobes has been carving and painting decoys since he was seven years old. He learned the craft from his father, Captain Harry Jobes, who at age 81 is a Chesapeake Bay decoy carving legend. Today, Charles and his brothers, Bob and Joey, are some of the most respected carvers of working decoys in the country. Jobes' decoys are often presented as a token of appreciation to people who have made noteworthy contributions to DU's mission.

"I'm proud of my connection to Ducks Unlimited. I like the feeling that, with my art, I'm able to contribute to the organization. By blending our two worlds together, art and conservation, we can make sure my

great grandchildren will be able to hunt and enjoy the art of decoy carving," Jobes said.

Charles and his family practice a unique style of hunting called "body-booting" in which the hunters don survival suits and stand chest deep amid large spreads of their handmade decoys on the Susquehanna Flats area of the Chesapeake Bay. "A hand-carved wooden decoy rides in the water so much better than plastic or cork decoys. It just looks more like a duck," Jobes said. The Jobes family regularly donates these unique hunts to raise money for DU's conservation work.

"Since I was a kid hunting on the Chesapeake Bay, I always thought about where our ducks and geese came from," Jobes said. "Now, working with Ducks Unlimited, it's extremely gratifying to know that I am helping conserve habitat for those birds on the prairies and in other important places across North America."





Waterfowl use the remnants of the old Skaggs Island military base for habitat.

CALIFORNIA'S SKAGGS ISLAND

Bringing Back the Baylands

Skaggs Island is located just north of San Pablo Bay in the San Francisco Estuary. It is home to a former U.S. Navy base that Ducks Unlimited is helping convert back to wetland habitat that will ultimately benefit waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway.

The 4,400-acre Skaggs Island was historically part of a thriving tidal marsh surrounding San Pablo Bay known as the baylands, which originally comprised approximately 40,000 acres of tidally influenced marshes fringed with seasonal wetlands and riparian corridors fed by the Napa and Petaluma Rivers and several creeks. Today, the baylands provide wintering habitat for more than half of the diving duck population in the Pacific Flyway and a large number of high-priority shorebirds, waterbirds and waterfowl, including northern pintails, mallards and lesser and greater scaup.

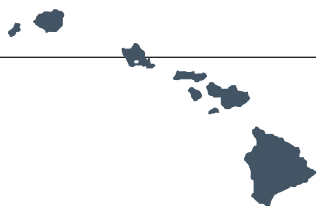
The San Francisco Estuary is the largest estuary system on the Pacific Coast of North and South America and is globally recognized for its importance to resident, migratory and wintering wetland-dependent birds, fish and other wildlife.

In the 1800s, federal legislation allowed California to fill wetlands for farming and other commercial use. The island was purchased and specifically cultivated for oat hay to feed horses in nearby San Francisco. It was later acquired by Safeway supermarket entrepreneur M.B.

Skaggs during the Depression and renamed in his honor. By the start of the United States' involvement in World War II, the Navy acquired the bulk of Skaggs Island and converted it into a communications and intelligence gathering base, complete with a

self-contained community of up to 400 people, including an elementary school, tennis courts, movie theater, gymnasium, convenience store, baseball diamond and single-family and barracks housing.

But the Navy's need for the base eventually waned, and by 1993 Skaggs Island was decommissioned and



HAWAII | 7 VOLUNTEERS | 302 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$5,717

abandoned, leaving the existing structures to the mercy of nature. Over the next several decades, Skaggs was targeted for conservation and restoration by conservation groups. It wasn't until the 2011 transfer of most of the island from the Navy to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to become a part of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, followed by the 2013 acquisition of the island's Haire Ranch, that restoration of Skaggs Island began to build real momentum.

The San Francisco Estuary is the largest estuary system on the Pacific Coast of North and South America and is globally recognized for its importance to resident, migratory and wintering wetland-dependent birds, fish and other wildlife. San Pablo Bay is one of four large bays that comprise the San Francisco Estuary and is in the uppermost part of the estuary, about 20 miles north of San Francisco, at the terminus of the Sacramento and San Joaquin River system.

Over the past 150 years, this region has experienced significant changes to its landscape and natural processes. More than 80 percent of the historic baylands have been lost to agriculture, urban development and salt production. Fortunately, during the past two decades Ducks Unlimited, along with state and federal agencies, private foundations and partnering organizations, has made significant progress restoring critical baylands. And while much has been accomplished, several key pieces of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge are still in need of restoration, with Skaggs Island at the top of the list.

In 2015 a key piece of Skaggs Island's past re-emerged to help move the island's future forward. The Joseph and Vera Long Foundation, which is based in the Bay Area and is committed to supporting organizations involved with conservation, education



Skaggs Island is part of the baylands, which originally comprised approximately 40,000 acres of tidally influenced marshes fringed with seasonal wetlands and riparian corridors fed by rivers and several creeks.

and healthcare in Northern California communities, awarded a grant of \$1.5 million over three years to Ducks Unlimited for work in the baylands. A portion of this grant will be instrumental in the conservation planning and restoration of Skaggs Island, some of which took place in FY17.

Vera Long is the daughter of the island's namesake, M.B. Skaggs, and thanks to the help of her foundation, Ducks Unlimited will be able to attract funding from other sources, including private donors and matching public programs. The foundation provides an ideal source of private funds that will be used to leverage state and federal grant funds.



The baylands provide wintering habitat for the numerous species of waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway.



CONOCOPhillips RECEIVES INAUGURAL DUCKS UNLIMITED CORPORATE CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

ConocoPhillips, the multinational energy corporation headquartered in Houston, Texas, received the first ever Ducks Unlimited Corporate Conservation Achievement Award at DU's 80th Annual National Convention in San Antonio, Texas. The award was created to recognize corporations from the United States, Canada or Mexico that have made exceptional contributions to conservation in North America.

ConocoPhillips has a long and storied history with the broader conservation community and specifically with Ducks Unlimited. For more than 25 years, we have worked together to improve and protect countless acres of habitat in many landscapes important to waterfowl.

ConocoPhillips CEO Ryan Lance accepted the award on behalf of ConocoPhillips.

collaborated on in the Gulf Coast region highlight ConocoPhillips' commitment to coastal restoration and DU's technical expertise at delivering on-the-ground work. Coastal wetland restoration projects provide waterfowl habitat, protect important energy industry infrastructure, enhance water quality and strengthen community resilience on a grand scale.

In addition to the Ducks Unlimited-ConocoPhillips Coastal Restoration Partnership headed by ConocoPhillips' Director of Coastal Wetlands Phil Precht, the company has provided significant philanthropic support to DU dating back to 1990 and supported conservation efforts in the Central Flyway through the Playa Lakes Joint Venture for many years. ConocoPhillips' Senior Vice President Andrew Lund-



Marsh terraces built by DU on ConocoPhillips property in coastal Louisiana slow coastal land loss and provide waterfowl habitat and infrastructure protection.

enhancement projects, and ConocoPhillips recognizes the important benefits of wetlands for the environment, the economy and people everywhere.

ConocoPhillips' longtime commitment to conservation across North America exemplifies the many ways corporations and Ducks Unlimited can work together to achieve common goals.

"We're committed to stewardship of the earth's environmental endowment for multiple reasons. We consider this a prerequisite to earning what we call our 'license to operate' – society's permission to conduct our business. Beyond that, we believe it's the right thing to do," Lance said.

ConocoPhillips and Ducks Unlimited have partnered together on numerous projects and those we've

quint volunteers his time to serve on the board for Wetlands America Trust, the land trust arm of Ducks Unlimited.

ConocoPhillips' longtime commitment to conservation across North America exemplifies the many ways corporations and Ducks Unlimited can work together to achieve common goals. Ducks Unlimited has 80 years of experience delivering wetland restoration and



The award was created to recognize corporations from the U.S., Canada or Mexico that have made exceptional contributions to conservation in North America.



ILLINOIS | 3,572 VOLUNTEERS | 36,635 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$31,152,971

USA RICE/DU PARTNERSHIP GROWING STRONGER



Rice Stewardship leaders have collaborated for and received six Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects to date, including two in 2017. These six RCPP projects are led by diverse partners including Ducks Unlimited, California Rice Commission, USA Rice and the Lower Colorado River Authority. Together they represent tremendous efforts in collaboration, innovation and expansion of our conservation mission. We applaud the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service for their vision of private lands conservation.

Remaining true to our original goals, DU focuses on water and nutrient management, energy efficiency and wildlife habitat. We will continue working together to see our overlapping priorities included in policies and programs across the country.

In 2017, the partnership impacted 174,948 acres through our Rice Stewardship efforts. One producer in Arkansas initially flooded fields this past winter and they were full of waterfowl. This is the first time he'd ever had ducks on his property, but with his engagement in our efforts, it certainly won't be the last.

The partnership continues to serve as a model of cooperation and communication between agricultural and conservation organizations. Policy makers and state and federal agency staff have all expressed appreciation for our collaboration. With the upcoming Farm Bill legislation and demands for significant



DU staff work closely with farmers and NRCS staff to boost economic and environmental benefits of rice agriculture.

federal spending cuts, it is vital that we stand united and vocal for a mutually beneficial conservation title.

Rice Stewardship funders include the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Walmart Foundation, the Mosaic Company Foundation, Chevron U.S.A., Freeport-McMoRan Foundation, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, RiceTec, BASF, American Rice, Inc. – Riviana Foods, Inc., Delta Plastics, Wells Fargo, Farmers Rice Milling Company, Horizon Ag, Turner's Creek & Bombay Hook Farms, MacDon Industries, Dow Agro-Sciences and Ducks Unlimited major donors.



Bryan Jordan

Investing in the Future – Bryan Jordan, Memphis, Tennessee

Chairman, President and CEO of First Horizon National Corporation Bryan Jordan understands finances better than most. As a Heritage Sponsor, he sees Ducks Unlimited's conservation and youth programs as a sound investment for the future of waterfowl and people.

"We need today's youth to understand the importance of our resources for the long term, and I think Ducks Unlimited plays a unique role in that," he said. "Sharing duck hunting with kids is a better way to get them engaged in the outdoors and in conservation than anything else. It's not just about the harvest. It's about the time you spend watching the world wake up and the opportunity you have to talk about why it's important that we each do what we can to make sure future generations have that ability."



CORPORATE PARTNERS

HELP DU HELP THE DUCKS

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

In FY17, Corporate Relations added Allegro Fine Foods, Carmex, Tucker-Blair and SureCan to our partner portfolio, guaranteeing more than \$320,000 in new revenue for the organization. With the addition of these new programs, the DU brand will be placed in grocery, pharmacy and hardware stores nationwide – new retail markets to promote the DU brand and conservation mission.

Aside from traditional royalties and sponsorship revenue, our corporate partners also provide an average of \$2.5 million in added value to Ducks Unlimited each year. This is achieved through product donations, event underwriting and sponsorships, philanthropy and advertising sales.

Our Corporate Partners

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Academy Sports + Outdoors | Lockton Affinity |
| AES Outdoors | Luxco |
| American Luxury Coach | Mack's Prairie Wings |
| Allegro Fine Foods | The McGee Group |
| America Remembers | MetLife |
| Artisans Apparel | Mossy Oak Brand Camo |
| Axalta Coating Systems | Mud River |
| Ball Watch Company | Nestlé Purina |
| Barton Cotton | Open Road Brands |
| Bass Pro Shops | Orvis |
| Browning | Outdoor Cap |
| Calendar Specialists of Minnesota | Pyramex |
| Carolina Hosiery Mills | RAM Trucks |
| The Check Gallery | Remington |
| CK Power | Signature Products Group |
| Constellation Brands | SportDOG Brand |
| Desperate Enterprises | Starfish Vision |
| Drake Waterfowl Systems | SureCan |
| Ducks Unlimited Store | SweetWater Brewing Company |
| First National Bank of Omaha | Tucker-Blair |
| Gander Mountain | United Country |
| Gator-Tail Outboards | Visa |
| Higdon Outdoors | VPI Pet Insurance |
| Itasca Footwear | W.R. Case and Sons Cutlery |
| Jack Daniels | War Eagle Boats |
| K2 Coolers | Winchester Ammunition |
| Kimlor Mills | Yamaha |
| Lifelock | |



Corporate Partners Support DU's Mission



WAR EAGLE
BOATS

From left, John, Mike and Kim Ward enjoy a day on the water.

The Ward family of Monticello, Arkansas, has been building quality aluminum boats since 1945. Mike Ward and his brother, John, founded War Eagle Boats in 1992. With their father, Kim, working alongside, War Eagle Boats has become one of the nation's premier manufacturers of waterfowling and fishing boats and has been the official aluminum boat of Ducks Unlimited for the past 20 years.

"At War Eagle, building boats is our business and top priority, but conservation is our passion," said Mike Ward. "It's very important for us to preserve our hunting heritage and natural resources so generations after us can enjoy the same opportunities we had growing up."

Through their DU partnership, War Eagle has contributed more than \$1 million to wetlands conservation through royalties on each boat sold and product donations to

countless DU fundraising events.

"Thank you, War Eagle Boats, for being such a valued partner in conservation for 20 years," said Jim Alexander, Ducks Unlimited's senior director of corporate relations. "Without great partners who care about our natural resources, Ducks Unlimited would not be celebrating 80 years of conservation success."

artisans.
APPAREL

Mike Roberts and the Art of Apparel



Mike Roberts of Artisans Apparel

Mike Roberts, former general manager for outdoor accounts at Artisans Apparel, a longtime DU supporter and product licensee, has always gone above and beyond his job description.

Roberts began his career in the apparel industry in 1974 after serving 10 years in the U.S. Navy. He focused on selling quality apparel and designing the artwork applied to each. His passion for Ducks Unlimited was showcased in the garments he created, first with Marathon Apparel, then with Artisans beginning 10 years ago.

Since 2007, Artisans has produced more than 2 million pieces sold through retail or used by DU as membership or fundraising premiums. It is estimated that the premiums have raised more than \$50 million and, combined with retail goods, generated as many as 200 million consumer impressions over the lifespan of these garments.

Ducks Unlimited congratulates Mike Roberts on his retirement and thanks the entire Artisans team for their continued dedication to the DU brand.



PUBLIC POLICY

NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL

NAWCA

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) is one of DU's highest policy priorities. The program promotes public and private partnerships to protect, restore and manage wetland habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife. NAWCA partnership grants play an important role in Ducks Unlimited's mission and provide opportunities for hunters and other outdoor recreationists. In FY17, DU continued to advocate for NAWCA reauthorization and program funding at the highest levels.

Since NAWCA funding levels are determined by Congress, getting congressional support is crucial. Each year, Ducks Unlimited helps circulate a "Dear Colleague" letter in both chambers of Congress in support of NAWCA funding. In March, an email campaign was launched to all DU members. More than 11,000 letters to Capitol Hill legislators were produced by DU members urging support of NAWCA funding. The campaign ended with 175 bipartisan signatures in the House and 45 signatures in the Senate. The letters were sent to each of the appropriations committees, as these committees determine funding levels each year for federal programs.

In May, President Trump signed an omnibus appropriations bill. The NAWCA program saw a \$3 million increase in funding from FY16. The program was appropriated \$38 million through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This funding level is guaranteed through the end of FY17.



NAWCA's authorization expired in 2012 and reauthorizing the program is a key goal for improving the appropriations process. In FY17, volunteers and staff worked with the House to include language in their Sportsmen's Package to reauthorize NAWCA for five years at \$50 million. At the end of June, two bills in the Senate, one from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and one from the Environment and Public Works Committee, also included NAWCA reauthorization at \$50 million for five years. Both bills need to pass out of their respective chambers before a reauthorization can move to the president's desk.

Water Resources Development Act

One of DU's largest policy wins in FY17 came from legislation known as the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. Signed into law by President Obama in December 2016, the WIIN Act helps restore and conserve some of the nation's most threatened habitat for waterfowl while providing jobs and economic stability for communities across the country.

The WIIN Act provides robust funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, both of which provide dedicated funding to the Great Lakes Navigation System that supports revitalization in waterfront communities and on-the-ground restoration projects critical to wild-



KENTUCKY | 1,170 VOLUNTEERS | 7,482 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$638,901



life populations and their habitats. The Delaware River Basin Restoration Program was reauthorized, which supports a coordinated approach to identify, prioritize and implement restoration across the basin and provide support for on-the-ground projects. The bill also includes language that safeguards water supplies for refuges in California that provide critical waterfowl habitat in the Pacific Flyway.

In the Port of New Orleans, more than 800,000 cubic yards of dredge materials were taken from the coastline and dumped into the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico, materials that could be used more efficiently for habitat restoration projects. The WIIN Act addresses the beneficial use of dredged materials, removing the regulatory barriers that restrict the use of this material for wildlife habitat restoration projects.

This success in large part results from the continued support of Ducks Unlimited volunteers. Volunteers and staff sent letters, emailed, called and met personally with Senate staffs about the importance of this legislation for conservation.

Farm Bill

The Farm Bill represents the largest and one of the most important conservation investments in private land in the country. More than \$25 billion will be invested over five years on federal conservation Farm Bill programs.

“Critical habitat for wildlife is conserved through conservation programs on private land provided in the Farm Bill,” said DU Senior Vice President of Public Policy Al Montna. “Whether it is wetlands or grasslands in the Prairie Pothole Region, Central Valley of California or the Gulf Coast, investment in these areas benefits everyone.”

Sights are now set on a 2018 Farm Bill, as the current bill is set to expire in September 2018. Ducks Unlimited policy staff made this a priority in FY17 and will continue efforts in the coming year.

New Capitol Hill office in Washington, D.C.

Ducks Unlimited made a historic office move in Washington, D.C., in 2016. Just across the street from the Senate and only blocks from the U.S. Capitol, DU's new office puts our organization right in the heart of Capitol Hill.

Ducks Unlimited renovated the office space. An open-concept design allows DU to host meetings, receptions and other gatherings with greater ease than before. The modern-rustic décor is unique in the district and inviting for all who visit.

A special feature of the office is DU's National Decoy Collection. Representing more than 40 states, this decoy collection is unlike anything that can be found in Washington and helps showcase our organization's appreciation for waterfowling traditions. Special thanks to the dedicated DU members, volunteers and staff who generously loaned or donated decoys from around the country for the collection.

If you find yourself in our nation's capital, drop by 444 North Capitol St. NW, Suite 745. We would love to show you around.



Ducks Unlimited's new office includes a decoy collection in the lobby.





From left, Rep. Ralph Abraham (LA), former Vice President Dick Cheney, Rep. Steve Scalise (LA) and Richard Zuschlag don their new Ducks Unlimited and Purina hats at DU's Capitol Hill event.



House Speaker Paul Ryan gave his welcome remarks to more than 650 guests.

Ducks Unlimited celebrates 80 years of conservation on Capitol Hill

Ducks Unlimited's Capitol Hill dinner and auction is held each spring in our nation's capital. Over 650 people gathered for the event in May. More than 70 members of Congress were in attendance, along with congressional staff, agriculture and conservation partners, administration officials and Ducks Unlimited volunteers and board members. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan keyed the event and former Vice President Dick Cheney and House Majority Whip Steve Scalise attended as honorary guests.

"I'm a big fan of the outdoors, whether it is hiking, hunting, or mountain biking, and I firmly believe we have an obligation to be good stewards of our nation's natural resources," Ryan said. "That's why I appreciate the work being done by Ducks Unlimited, because I share their commitment to conservation. It was an honor to attend the Ducks Unlimited gathering again this year and catch up with old friends who love the outdoors and all it has to offer."



Pictured first row, from left: Rep. David Joyce (OH), Rep. Susan Brooks (IN), Rep. Ron Kind (WI), Sen. Tom Carper (DE), Rep. Ken Calvert (CA), Sen. Rob Portman (OH), Sen. James Risch (ID), Rep. Bob Latta (OH), Sen. Deb Fischer (NE), Sen. Amy Klobuchar (MN), Rep. Debbie Dingell (MI), Sen. Chris Coons (DE), Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE), Rep. Clay Higgins (LA), Rep. Tim Walberg (MI), Sen. Mike Rounds (SD), Rep. Glenn Grothman (WI), Rep. A. Drew Ferguson (GA), Rep. Larry Bucshon (IN). Second row, from left: Rep. Tom McClintock (CA), Rep. John Garamendi (CA), Rep. Luke Messer (IN), Sen. Todd Young (IN), Rep. Tim Walz (MN), Rep. John Moolenaar (MI), Rep. Mike Thompson (CA), Rep. Jack Bergman (MI), Rep. Don Young (AK), Rep. Jeff Denham (CA). Third row, from left: Rep. Mike Johnson (LA), Rep. John Faso (NY), Rep. Erik Paulsen (MN), Sen. John Kennedy (LA), Rep. Ralph Abraham Jr. (LA), Sen. Jerry Moran (KS), Sen. John Thune (SD), Rep. Eric Swalwell (CA)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES CONTINUE

Ducks Unlimited's multi-year plan to upgrade and modernize its information technology systems took some big steps forward in FY17. DU staff, volunteers and the Information Technology Committee continued to invest in technologies to more effectively accomplish the DU mission and to better serve DU customers.

"This project is replacing our outdated infrastructure with systems that offer new capabilities to coordinate, track and analyze virtually all of our business operations," said DU's Chief Financial Officer Earl Grochau. "The new systems are much more robust and flexible, and we are realizing new efficiencies throughout the organization, including saving people time."

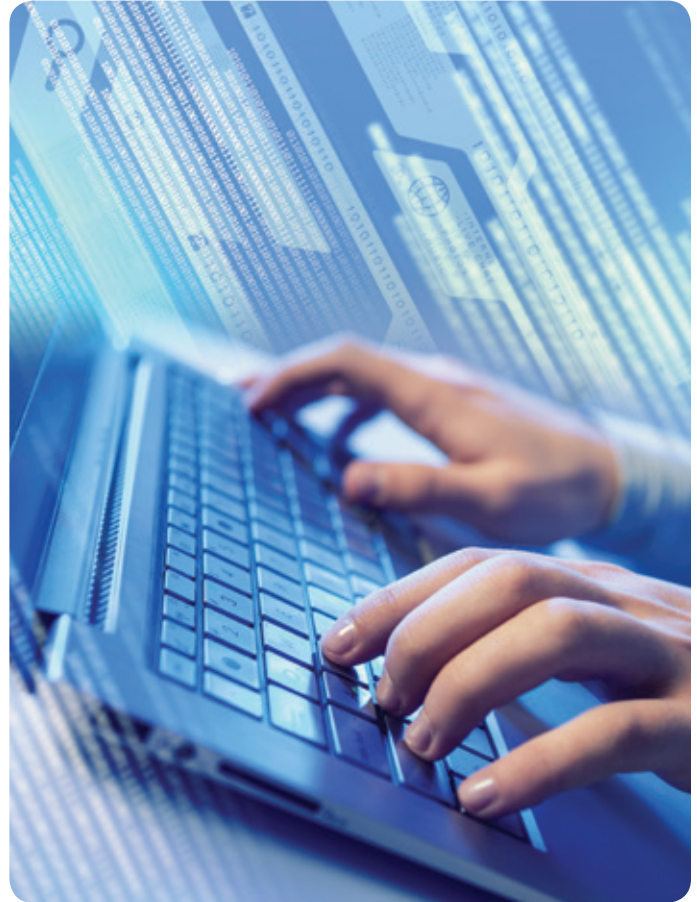
The project began with the deployment of an Enterprise Resource Planner (ERP) platform to begin replacing applicable outdated systems.

"The ERP provides the foundation for some of our key systems," said DU's Chief Information Officer Govan Hornor. "I am very pleased with the progress to date, and we have great momentum for upcoming focus areas. New system functions include basic financials, inventory, budget, warehouse, conservation delivery, grants, our lands portfolio and more."

The upgrade to systems that DU staff use to manage the organization's land portfolio will provide better capabilities and much more accuracy and flexibility for land protection programs, including land acquisitions, conservation easements and revolving lands programs.

"The results we are seeing from this new system are incremental in isolation, but collectively they are leading to real gains in productivity," said Darin Blunck, DU's director of conservation programs. "For example, process automation is allowing our team to increase its focus on data accuracy and timeliness, which leads to better insights into cash flow and timing of our land purchases and sales. It's helping us to be more efficient with our time and manpower, which is good for the ducks and good for DU's bottom line."

"Overall, this project is going extremely well," said Grochau. "With this kind of major change in business technology, we are also seeing a change in our business culture. The DU Team is embracing these changes that increase their productivity and lead to more effective fulfillment of the DU mission."



The upgrade to systems that DU staff use to manage the organization's land portfolio will provide better capabilities and much more accuracy and flexibility.



PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL: THE BACKBONE OF *RESCUE OUR WETLANDS*



President's Council members help protect wetlands across North America.

The President's Council was created to provide an opportunity for conservationists to participate in some of the most important initiatives, policies and projects that Ducks Unlimited undertakes. It is important to note that President's Council members contributed more than \$40 million to DU's programs in 2016. From the Youth and Education program to the permanent endowment, Boreal Forest Initiative and, most importantly, unrestricted gifts, the council continues to be the financial backbone of Ducks Unlimited's conservation priorities and initiatives that make up the *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign.

I sincerely appreciate the considered advice of the President's Council, and the amazing dedication, experience and authority from council members' years in business, finance, industry, government, entrepreneurship and philanthropy. Each President's Council member makes Ducks Unlimited more successful and our conservation programs more effective.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rogers Hoyt Jr.".

Rogers Hoyt Jr.
President, Ducks Unlimited Inc.

Meet President's Council Member Andrew Lundquist

Andrew Lundquist, of Fairbanks, Alaska, is senior vice president of government affairs for ConocoPhillips, the winner of the inaugural DU Corporate Conservation Achievement Award.

"Energy is my business and my love is natural resource and conservation issues," Lundquist said.

He is a member of the President's Council, a Benefactor Sponsor and also serves on the Wetlands America Trust board and DU's Public Policy Committee.

Lundquist is responsible for ConocoPhillips' state, federal and international policy and government affairs activities. His personal commitment to Ducks Unlimited reflects his pledge to conservation while striking a balance with our need for energy.



Andrew Lundquist



MARYLAND | 607 VOLUNTEERS | 16,951 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$1,028,473



PERCENT OF EXPENDITURES GO TOWARD OUR MISSION

For the past 80 years, Ducks Unlimited's goal has been to dedicate at least 80 cents of each dollar we spend to conservation and conservation education. In FY17, we met that goal again with 83 percent of expenditures going toward conserving, protecting, restoring and managing wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl, other wildlife and people.



CONSERVATION
BY THE NUMBERS

WETLANDS AMERICA TRUST

Established in 1955 by late Ducks Unlimited President Robert Winthrop, the Ducks Unlimited Foundation, which later became known as Wetlands America Trust, initially focused its efforts on securing and investing estate gifts from members. Grants were awarded annually for critical habitat conservation projects in Canada as well as for research focused on waterfowl and wetlands.

The DU Foundation made the name change to Wetlands America Trust in 1992 to better reflect its greatly expanded mission. To take an important leadership role in an ambitious plan to protect critical habitat under imminent threat of development in South Carolina's Lowcountry, WAT accepted the first of dozens of conservation easements in this region.

WAT has been recognized by the Land Trust Alliance as one of the largest accredited land trusts in the country. Today, WAT holds 533 conservation easements that permanently protect 423,773 acres of habitat consistent with DU's mission. In

FY17, WAT/DU closed on 13 easements and permanently conserved an additional 6,091 acres.

Public Policy

Led by John Tomke, WAT's Public Policy Committee takes a leading role in supporting DU's efforts to shape legislation that impacts our highest priority initiatives. WAT trustees have helped build relationships with members of Congress and partnerships with key federal agencies that work with Ducks Unlimited to deliver conservation work across North America. This past year, WAT's annual meeting on Capitol Hill served as the first opportunity for newly confirmed Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to speak publicly about the role of conservation in agriculture.

Boreal Forest Meeting

In FY17, WAT trustees traveled to the eastern boreal forest to highlight our partnership with Pew Charitable Trusts.



Wetlands America Trust

For the past 17 years, WAT, DU and DU Canada have partnered with Pew Charitable Trusts and local and provincial agencies to help secure nearly 200 million acres of fully protected refuges and nearly 240 million acres of sustainable development lands. This is part of an overall goal of conserving at least 1 billion acres in the boreal forest.

To date, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba have signed boreal framework pledges that result in a total of 867 million acres delivered or pledged. The goal for the next five years is to fully secure pledged landscapes and reach beyond 1 billion acres of conservation in the boreal. More than 90

From left, WAT trustee and DU then-President Paul Bonderson; Gail Montna; Speaker of the House Paul Ryan; DU Public Policy Committee Chairman Al Montna and Sandi Bonderson attended one of the inaugural balls in Washington, D.C.



From left, WAT president Steve Maritz; Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and WAT trustee and then-DU President Paul Bonderson pose for a photo during the WAT meeting in Washington, D.C.



MASSACHUSETTS | 329 VOLUNTEERS | 4,812 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS | EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$329,476

percent of the philanthropy dedicated to boreal conservation efforts has come from WAT trustees.

Looking to the future, we will focus our efforts on two principles to secure conservation: First Nations-led land use planning and wetland protection policy. The ability to deliver the \$60 million in boreal partnership funding and exceed 1 billion acres in conserved lands is also dependent on our ability to attract an additional \$10 million in direct major donor funding to the boreal and DU in the next five years.

Philanthropy

Wetlands America Trust trustees are among DU's most active philanthropists. Trustees have played leading roles in each of DU's major campaigns and *Rescue Our Wetlands* is the most ambitious. Philanthropy comes in many forms and trustees often leverage their business relationships to secure financial support. One example is Purina CEO Joe Sivewright, whose involvement as a member of WAT has expanded his knowledge and appreciation of DU's conservation impact. As a result, Purina has increased its commitment as one of DU's largest corporate partners.

Meet Robert Pace

An avid fisherman and longtime aquatic conservationist, Robert Pace is president and CEO of The Pace Group Ltd., and chairman of the Canadian National Railway Company (CN), one of North America's top transportation and logistics companies.

For more than 10 years, CN has supported Ducks Unlimited and our Boreal Forest Initiative. Guided by Pace's leadership, CN has further strengthened its commitment to the environment, reforestation, water, wetlands and sustainability.

In addition to his involvement as a trustee of the Wetlands America Trust, Pace serves on the board of the Atlantic Salmon Federation and is chairman of the board of the Walter Gordon Foundation, which improves public policy related to freshwater management in Canada.



Robert Pace and his dog, Jack.

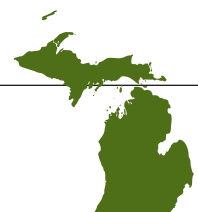
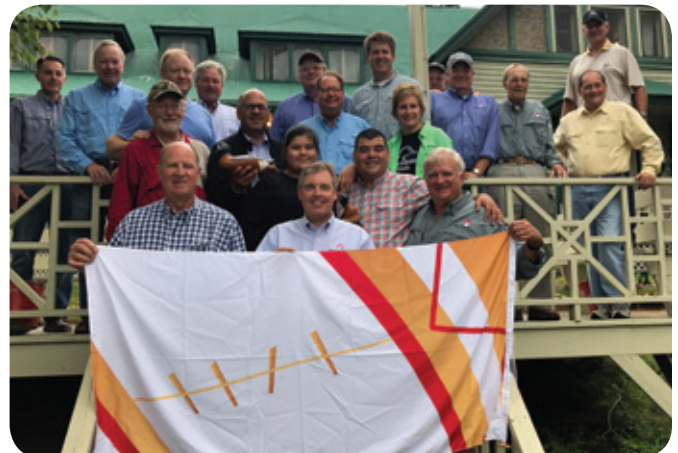
Great organizations are guided by well-developed strategic plans and well-implemented annual business plans. WAT trustees represent leadership roles in some of the continent's most respected companies including

Caterpillar, Microsoft, Canadian National Railway Company, Cox Enterprises, Nestlé Purina, Bass Pro Shops, Dow AgroSciences and Automatic Data Processing, to name a few.

WAT trustees were treated to an educational hike during their trip to the eastern boreal forest.



WAT trustees were presented with the flag of the Innu people by their Grand Chief during the WAT meeting in the eastern boreal forest.



GENEROUS SUPPORTERS TAKE PRAIRIE EASEMENT PROGRAM TO A NEW LEVEL



The efforts and contributions of Ducks Unlimited major sponsors help ensure a bright future for continental waterfowl populations. An auspicious group of DU major donors gathered this summer on a remote stretch of North Dakota prairie to celebrate the generosity of one special couple, and to thank many other prairie conservation supporters who have invested in one of Ducks Unlimited's highest priority landscapes, the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR).

The caliber of distinguished guests at the June 2017 ceremony held for Dave and Marg Grohne was a testament to the couple's exceptional and long-standing support of DU's prairie conservation work. Among the participants were Ducks Unlimited past presidents George Dunklin and John Tomke, Ducks Unlimited President Rogers Hoyt and First Vice-President Bill D'Alonzo. Also in the audience were Wetlands America Trust (WAT) past presidents John Childs and Jim Kennedy, and current WAT

President Steve Maritz. Attendees also included conservation leaders from Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Over the next seven years, the Grohne's gift will result in approximately 100,000 additional protected prairie acres.

"Every time I see a duck fly overhead, I thank Dave Grohne, because there is a good chance it would not be there without his generosity," Childs said. "The Grohnes are an inspiration."

Childs, Kennedy and Grohne matched each other's generous gifts to kick off the success-

"Dave Grohne has always pushed all of us involved in waterfowl conservation to dig deep and do more," Kennedy said.

ful Ducks Unlimited continental campaign *Rescue Our Wetlands*.

"Dave Grohne has always pushed all of us involved in waterfowl conservation to dig deep and do more," Kennedy said.

The Grohnes' latest gift, as well as those from other major sponsors, comes at a time when the future of wetlands



MINNESOTA | 3,285 VOLUNTEERS | 47,373 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$4,144,950

is greatly threatened. In the last decade, millions of acres of grass and tens of thousands of acres of wetlands were lost in the PPR.

“Without these generous supporters, it would be impossible to accomplish our mission,” said Johann Walker, DU director of conservation programs for the Dakotas and Montana. “We’ve just been through a period of massive habitat loss of an irreplaceable prairie wetland resource that’s under unrelenting threat.”

Further cementing the legacy of such generous donors, the USFWS named a 1,400-acre Missouri Coteau parcel the Dave and Marg Grohne Waterfowl Production Area.

“This site will forever honor Dave and Marg’s leadership, vision and generosity,” said Steve Adair, operations director for DU’s Great Plains Region. “Crown jewels like this regularly attract more than 100 pairs of breeding ducks per square mile during wet conditions that produce ducks in abundance to fill the fall skies.”

USFWS collaborates with DU, private landowners and others in the popular easement program to protect critical wetlands and grasslands. USFWS Regional Director Noreen Walsh says some estimate that on average 16 acres of prairie grassland are lost every hour.

“We have all seen firsthand the changes occurring in the prairies. We often see places that are here today and



The USFWS named a 1,400-acre waterfowl production area in North Dakota in honor of Dave and Marg Grohne for their longstanding generosity and leadership as waterfowl conservationists.

gone tomorrow,” Walsh said. “But today is different. The story we will tell today may start with concern but ends with celebration. That is due to the generous donations by the Grohnes and the work of Ducks Unlimited. Thanks to all of you here today, we are able to celebrate a story of optimism.”



From left, past DU president and WAT trustee John Tomke; past DU president and WAT trustee George Dunklin; past WAT president John Childs; WAT President Steve Maritz; WAT trustee Jim Konkel; DU’s First Vice President and WAT trustee Bill D’Alonzo; dedication honoree Marg Grohne; WAT trustee and dedication honoree Dave Grohne; DU board member and WAT trustee Bob Hester; DU Chairman, past president and WAT trustee Paul Bonderson; DU President and WAT trustee Rogers Hoyt; WAT trustee Deke Welles; past WAT president and WAT trustee Jim Kennedy.



PRAIRIE INITIATIVES CONSERVE WETLANDS AND NESTING COVER

New programs forge connections with landowners

In the Dakotas, Ducks Unlimited is helping farmers and ranchers with a variety of conservation program options that provide habitat in croplands and help protect the wetlands embedded in those fields.

“The new initiatives help farmers and ranchers improve their profitability and sustainability. In turn, we expect the programs to help keep important wetlands intact,” said Johann Walker, director of conservation programs for the Dakotas and Montana.

DU North Dakota Manager of Conservation Programs Jonas Davis says DU is offering what landowners want.

“The requests include shorter-term agreements, help converting Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to grazing land and ideas for improving soil health,” Davis said. “Our biologists sit down at the kitchen table to help producers conserve and diversify their operations, one producer at a time.”

Farmers are increasingly interested in cover crops for improving soil health. The Dakotas Soil and Water Health Initiative shares the cost of planting cover crops, which may also provide nesting cover in cropped land. DU major sponsors John and Cheryl Dale and Steve Raymond made substantial contributions to move this project forward.

When producers diversify their crop rotation, reduce tillage and add cover crops, they can improve soil struc-



Ducks Unlimited keeps grass on the ground by helping North Dakota landowners convert CRP to rotational grazing.

ture, organic matter and water infiltration and storage. These practices help make nutrients and water more available to crops and reduce fertilizer loss. They can also protect wetland health by reducing excessive nutrient runoff and sedimentation.

“We’re particularly interested in the use of over-wintering cover crops like cereal rye. Not only because of the benefits they provide to soil and water, but they also



South Dakota landowner Chris Lee (left) shows what cover crops can do to improve soil health to Steve Donovan, DU’s South Dakota manager of conservation programs (middle), and Steve Raymond, a DU major sponsor who supports DU’s cover crop work.



Ducks Unlimited is helping North Dakota producers install infrastructure to allow grazing on cover crops.



MISSOURI | 2,832 VOLUNTEERS | 22,376 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$2,493,795

potentially provide nesting cover to upland nesting birds,” said Steve Donovan, DU’s manager of conservation programs in South Dakota.

Ducks Unlimited is conducting a nest survival study in South Dakota cover crop plots where no-till farming practices are used. In cooperation with South Dakota State University and South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, the study will look at whether duck production in cover crops is beneficial to overall population growth.

Ducks Unlimited has developed new programs in North Dakota to encourage rotational grazing to keep grassland on the ground and protect wetlands. Some of them were funded with help from partners and North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund grants.

The Cover Crop and Livestock Integration Project provides cost-share for first-time cover crop producers and for adding grazing infrastructure to cropland.

In North Dakota, DU and its partners are also helping farmers and ranchers turn marginal cropland into grazing land. The working-lands approach offers cost-share for grazing plans, cross fencing and water development so that the new grasslands work for their operations while providing suitable nesting habitat.

“There are a lot of landowners interested in planting marginal cropland back to grass. Entities that typically



Major sponsor Steve Raymond inspects a duck nest in cropland. DU is helping farmers and ranchers improve their profitability while providing nesting habitat and protecting wetlands.

fund such projects have limited dollars,” said Tanner Gue, DU North Dakota regional biologist.

The program has been popular with landowners because agreements are only 10 years, and they can hay and graze the grass.

“Producers can still use the ground as a part of their operation, so we believe there is a good chance it will stay in grass,” Gue said. “With lower commodity prices, the demand for programs like this exceeds available funds.”

Another program helps convert CRP land into a grazing system. The Working Grasslands Partnership helps finance fencing, water wells, pipelines and rural water hookups.

“CRP acres are so limited, reenrolling in CRP is not an option for many,” said Dane Buysse, a DU conservation specialist who works with landowners.

An option for ranchers is the Grassland Enhancement Pilot Project, which shares the cost of rotational grazing systems on public lands in the Prairie Pothole Region of the Bakken oil field. By providing lessees with improved grazing infrastructure, DU hopes to improve grassland diversity, water quality and wildlife populations.

Meet Henry Safford “Saf” Peacock

Eighty years is a long time, but there are many Ducks Unlimited members with connections back to the founders and earliest days of the organization. Henry “Saf” Peacock comes from a family that has supported Ducks Unlimited generation after generation.

Born in 1928, Peacock grew up around the Crane Lake Club and the Illinois River.

“Ducks Unlimited had the Duk-A-Nikel can in 1940,” he said. “The can was put out around all the Illinois River duck clubs. I took the can to school and got classmates to pitch in.”

Peacock also has a connection to past DU presidents.

“I knew Louis Barkhausen,” Peacock said. “He was DU’s third president in 1939. I knew DU’s 24th president, Gaylord Donnelly, as well. He brought the Artist of the Year program to DU fundraising. Ducks Unlimited is as much a part of our family as any brother or sister!”

Peacock and his wife Betty are Diamond Legacy Sponsors, Platinum Feather Society members, and have been on DU’s President’s Council since its inception 13 years ago. Peacock is also a Wetlands America Trust trustee emeritus.



Henry “Saf” Peacock





Mangroves in Yucatan are prime habitat for waterfowl and provide important benefits to local communities.

DUCKS UNLIMITED DE MÉXICO

Partnerships benefit wildlife and people

Over the past 43 years, Ducks Unlimited de México (DUMAC) has conserved more than 1.95 million acres of wetland habitat, inventoried more than 29 million acres for Mexico's most important wetlands, and provided advanced natural resource conservation training to more than 560 professional managers working in Mexico and other Latin American countries.

From seagrass habitat in Tamaulipas to mangrove restorations in the Yucatan Peninsula to reestablishing rice habitat in Sonora, DUMAC continues to build its reputation and achievements by working with national and local governments, farmers, ranchers and other professionals to meet wintering habitat needs. That's a big impact for bird conservation from a small, but mighty, organization.

DUMAC's staff bring a familiarity with their society and culture that helps them understand how best to tackle their waterfowl and wetland conservation needs. Because the waterfowl hunting community in Mexico has always been small, DUMAC reaches beyond them, working with people in local communities to show them

how wetland conservation benefits their quality of life.

Partnering with Axalta Coating Systems and numerous agencies and local representatives, DUMAC has provided strategic planning for the conservation of the Cuitzeo Lake watershed, which encompasses approximately 1 million acres. This comprehensive project installed eco-technologies to decrease water pollution and has directly helped more than 700 people in four communities while improving habitat quality for waterfowl and other wildlife in the watershed.

Funding from Bisbee Foundation, Ed and Sally Futch Charitable Foundation, Owl Foundation, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Gonzalo Rio Arronte Foundation and private U.S. donors was leveraged with North American Wetland Conservation Act and other grants to deliver more than \$2 million of conservation science, education and restoration of waterfowl habitat in the past year.

Although considerably smaller than Ducks Unlimited Inc., DUMAC is on pace to meet a goal of \$10 million through the *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign, with more than 95 percent of the total raised.



Nick and Marla Moss

Nick and Marla Moss Whitehouse, Texas

Texas state chairman-elect Nick Moss has passionately supported DU since 2010. Nick and Marla are Diamond Sponsors in Perpetuity, DUMAC Heritage Sponsors, Silver Feather Society members and Grand Slam Sponsors.

Although Nick didn't grow up hunting, today he is eager to share the tradition

with his three children, Jordan, Avery and Korbin.

"To know we are helping make an impact for wetland conservation and waterfowl habitat so our kids and grandkids can enjoy the outdoors is the most rewarding thing about being a DU volunteer and sponsor," Nick said.

NEBRASKA | 1,663 VOLUNTEERS | 14,875 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$1,926,529

STATE CONTRIBUTIONS DRIVE CANADIAN HABITAT PROJECTS

Partnerships drive waterfowl conservation across the continent. That's how Ducks Unlimited turns contributions raised through DU events, major gifts and other fundraising sources into something much bigger. Without partnerships, Ducks Unlimited's impact on the landscape would be significantly diminished. A prime example of an effective partnership is the State Contributions Program to conserve habitat on the Canadian breeding grounds.

Two events helped drive continental support for the breeding grounds—the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), adopted in 1986, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), signed in 1989.

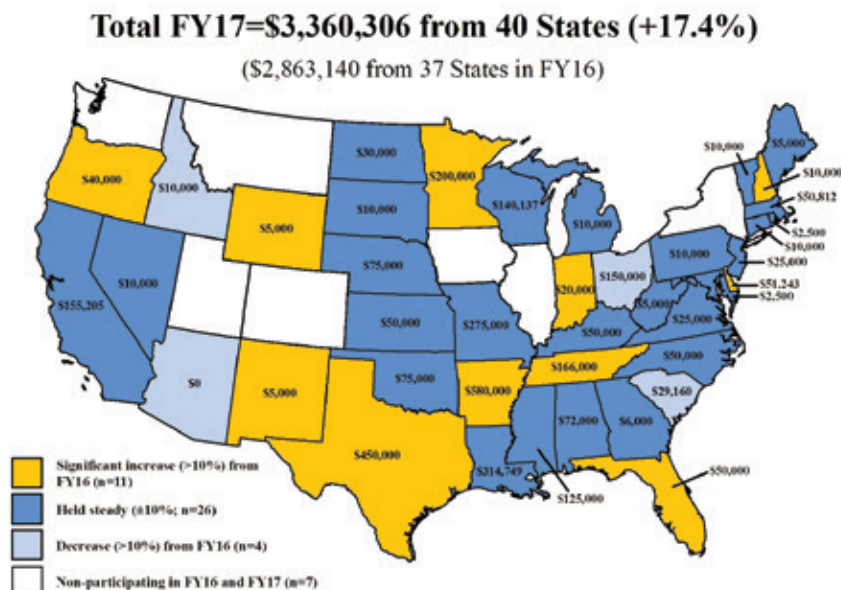
In support of the NAWMP and in recognition of the need for non-federal match funding with NAWCA, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies established the State Contributions Program for state agencies to support projects in Canada. In response, DU committed to match every dollar contributed by the state agencies with one dollar contributed by DU from events, major gifts and other fundraising efforts.

In FY17, a record 40 states contributed more than \$3.3 million to Canadian projects. That amount gets matched by Ducks Unlimited as well as NAWCA, resulting in more than \$13 million. Factor in the exchange rate (currently around 1.3) and that adds up to \$17 million in conservation funding on the ground in Canada.

The results of this 51-year international partnership are nothing short of remarkable. State agencies have contributed more than \$91 million to help conserve over 6.5 million acres of habitat across Canada.

During remarks at Ducks Unlimited's 80th National Convention, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Executive Director Carter Smith announced the department's decision to award Ducks Unlimited \$600,000 for conservation projects on waterfowl breeding grounds in Prairie Canada. This commitment brings Texas' cumulative contribution for habitat conservation on Canadian breeding grounds important to Texas' waterfowl to more than \$4 million.

State agencies have contributed more than \$91 million to help conserve over 6.5 million acres of habitat across Canada.



PASS-A-LOUTRE WMA

Creating marsh at the mouth of the Mississippi River



Dredge material from creation of marsh-building crevasses in Louisiana was used to create a nesting island for colonial waterbirds.

Ducks Unlimited works with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and others to offset the dramatic land loss occurring along Louisiana's coast. This loss is especially prominent in the southeastern portion of the state where levees and other hydrologic changes prevent the sediment-laden water of the mighty Mississippi River from sustaining the marshes it built.

Coastal erosion has turned verdant marsh into open water at

Pass-a-Loutre Wildlife Management Area, which lies at the mouth of the river approximately 80 miles southeast of New Orleans. The 115,000-acre WMA is the oldest in Louisiana. Often wintering up to 250,000 waterfowl, it is also one of the state's most popular public lands for waterfowling.

For millions of migratory birds, Pass-a-Loutre WMA provides the last chance to feed and rest before crossing the Gulf of Mexico headed

south and the first opportunity for recovering on their return journey. The area is also important for fisheries, including commercially and recreationally important species like redfish, shrimp and crab.

Beyond habitat, the marshes and deltaic wetlands of Pass-a-Loutre provide storm protection for critical shipping and energy industry infrastructure. Barrier islands, marshes and forested wetlands provide a significant and potentially sustainable buffer against surge generated by tropical storms. Research indicates each mile of coastal marsh reduces storm surge by 2.5-9.5 inches. Coastal wetlands also protect people and property. The average annual storm protection value of coastal wetlands in Louisiana is nearly \$5,700 per acre.

Recognizing the area's importance, the peril it faced, and the tremendous opportunity for restoration, the state reconnected parts of Pass-a-Loutre WMA with the river in 1986. By cutting three crevasses – breaches in the bank of a river or canal used to improve flow of water and sediment – in natural levees on the WMA, they restored river flows and rebuilt marsh.

Despite expectations they would produce land for 10 to 20 years, these cuts are still delivering positive gains today and are expected



NEW HAMPSHIRE | 94 VOLUNTEERS | 1,553 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$89,134



Waterfowl now thrive where open water offered no forage just a few years ago.

to be land-builders for many years. To date, they have built 760 acres of marsh. In comparison, marsh creation using dredged material costs an average \$50,000 per acre and requires maintenance investments as created land subsides over time.

In 2005, Ducks Unlimited partnered with LDWF, the Freeport-McMoran Foundation and Shell on the Delta Splays Project, adding another land-building crevasse to the WMA. Despite initial marsh loss to Hurricane Katrina, the project restored damaged marsh and created an additional 275 acres of land in the first 10 years. Like all crevasse projects, this one continues to provide sediment to the marsh it has created, meaning it is self-sustaining, will continue to grow land, and the cost per acre will decrease over time.

In FY17, DU completed a project to clean two existing crevasses to increase water flow, restore 1,500 acres of deltaic marsh, and create more land. The 141,500 cubic yards of dredge material from the crevasses was used to create a remote bird nesting island. Increased river flow will improve habitat for a wide variety of waterfowl, wading and shore birds, marine fish and other aquatic organisms. The nesting island provides breeding habitat for colonial waterbirds such as terns and gulls. Birds were nesting there just weeks after construction finished. Partners included the LDWF, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council and the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

Overall, our efforts at Pass-a-Loutre will enhance habitat and food resources for waterfowl, other migratory birds, and fisheries. They also provide more public access for hunting and fishing and more protection for local communities and nationally significant shipping and energy industries. Reconnecting the river with the marshes it created is one of the most efficient and long-term sustainable solutions to coastal land loss in Louisiana, and DU is proud to be a part of that effort.



In FY17, DU completed projects to increase water flow at Pass-a-Loutre.

Ed Whitacre Jr. believes in Gulf Coast Conservation

Texas native Ed Whitacre Jr. committed \$500,000 to DU's Gulf Coast Initiative in FY17, the largest personal gift to the initiative. Having been CEO of AT&T and General Motors and involved with the Boy Scouts of America, Texas Tech University and United Way, Ed understands the importance of planning for and investing in the future.

"I believe in what DU is doing," Ed said. "I want people in the future to enjoy what I've enjoyed, and I think the way to do that is conservation."



Ed Whitacre Jr. and his dog, Stella



DUCKS UNLIMITED CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Conservation for Generations

Conservation easements can meet the needs of interested owners of working farms, ranches, timberlands, sporting properties and recreational lands who wish to protect valuable natural resources while retaining ownership of the property. A perpetual conservation easement allows a landowner to protect key natural habitats on a property while continuing to use the area for economic gain or recreation.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement that a landowner makes to restrict the type and amount of development that may take place on his or her property. The easement document is tailored to meet the needs and interests of the landowner. DU believes that

most lands can benefit wildlife and still produce an economic return to their owners.

Charitable gifts of conservation easements continue to provide meaningful impact on the landscape. Since the early 1990s, more than 530 landowners have donated conservation easements to Ducks Unlimited that have pro-

DU believes that most lands can benefit wildlife and still produce an economic return to their owners.

tected more than 420,000 acres of wetlands and waterfowl habitat. Easement donors charitably and voluntarily give up certain uses of their land that are incompatible with habitat conservation and agree to

partner with DU to perpetually protect wetlands and waterfowl habitat on their land.

In FY17, 13 new easements were donated to DU, including the 1,278-acre Elbow Slough easement in Arkansas, conserving bottomland hardwood wetlands and oxbow sloughs along the St. Francis River, donated by President's Council member Gary Stavrum of Memphis. The conservation easement ensures wintering and migrating birds will have habitat waiting after their annual return from the breeding grounds.



The Elbow Slough easement in Arkansas protects habitat along the St. Francis River.



Bob and Kim Spoerl give support where it's needed most

Wisconsin residents Bob Spoerl and his wife Kim have devoted nearly 30 years to Ducks Unlimited.

Today, Bob is an at-large board member for Ducks Unlimited. The Spoerls are Feather Society members and Legacy donors who travel across the country to support conservation.

"Wildlife habitat, especially for waterfowl, is not just local," Bob said. "It encompasses areas that cover thousands of miles. It's easy to get caught up in protecting your backyard, but it doesn't do any good if that bird can't breed or feed before or after it comes to your backyard."



DU Major Donors Bob and Kim Spoerl

NEW MEXICO | 50 VOLUNTEERS | 1,092 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$51,890

DUCKS UNLIMITED DIGITAL

New online magazine and website



Digital Ducks Unlimited Magazine

The world leader in wetlands conservation is now offering a free digital edition of its flagship magazine to all active DU members. Beginning with the May/June 2017 issue, readers can access a digital version of the current issue of Ducks Unlimited magazine via their personal online membership accounts. The digital edition is not a replacement for the printed publication, and all DU members who currently receive the magazine in the mail will continue to do so without interruption.

“Our reader surveys indicate that interest in a digital magazine option is growing among our membership,” says DU Editorial Director Matt Young. “Through this new member benefit, our readers will be able to receive Ducks Unlimited magazine in the format of their choice, whether it’s in print, on a digital device, or both.”

Presented in a responsive HTML5 platform, the digital edition of DU magazine can be viewed on a tablet, mobile phone or personal computer. User-friendly features include a text reader, a search bar, clickable links for e-mail and web addresses, an advertising index and an archive of past issues.

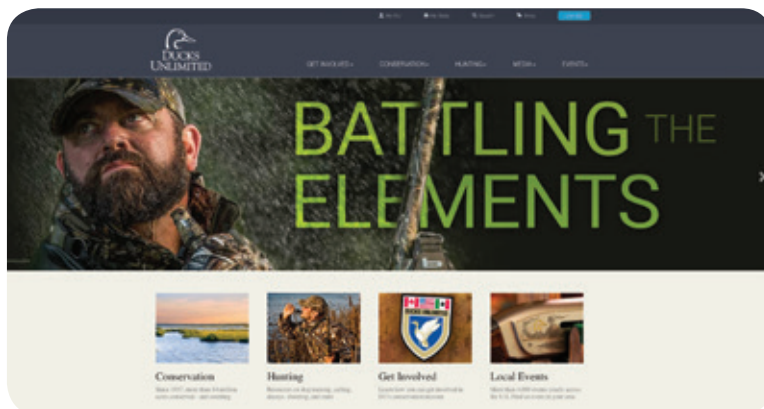
www.ducks.org

The Ducks Unlimited website is a critical communications and fundraising tool for the organization. Every year, 4-5 million unique visitors log on to www.ducks.org for the latest in DU news, events and other content. Ducks Unlimited leverages the website to generate millions of dollars each year through advertising, direct response and other fundraising campaigns.

In FY17, DU launched a new and improved version of the website, focused on improving the overall user experience, adding a wealth of editorial content, and strengthening our position as the online authority for waterfowl hunting and wetland conservation resources.

The new site features a modern, responsive design that automatically optimizes content for any device including mobile phone, tablet, laptop and desktop. Scores of new features were added to some of the most popular sections of the site, such as the waterfowl migration map, member photo gallery and more.

Member feedback on the new site has been extremely positive. New content and features will continue to be added regularly, so be sure to visit www.ducks.org for the latest improvements.



DUC CELEBRATES AN IMPORTANT YEAR IN CONSERVATION HISTORY

Throughout its history, Canada has been renowned for its wildlife and wild places. FY17 spotlighted the critical role Ducks Unlimited plays in the country's natural history.

"2017 marks Canada's 150th anniversary, which fittingly coincides with DU's 80th," said Karla Guyn, CEO of Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC). "Together, these celebrations represent the strong commitment that exists in our country for conservation."

Habitat Conservation

In FY17, DUC conserved 120,109 acres across the country. This brings DUC's cumulative total to 6.4 million acres. In addition, 152.4 million acres have been influenced through other conservation actions.

Since day one, agricultural producers have been DUC's most important conservation ally. An innovative pilot project called FlexFarm is showing significant potential in the Prairie Pothole Region. Launched in Saskatchewan, FlexFarm is DUC's incentive program that pays landowners to restore grasslands and wetlands on their property. What sets it apart from other programs is farmers also receive payments for the environmental benefits these newly restored areas produce. FlexFarm is an opportunity to redefine how conservation and agriculture work together.

Science

The vast boreal forest is an iconic geographic and cultural feature in Canada. Today, it's experiencing tremendous change as industrial activities in the region grow. DUC is examining the impact roads, pipelines and seismic lines have on waterfowl populations as part of its linear feature research. Results will help determine the best conservation actions in this important area.

Policy

History was made in Quebec in June as groundbreaking wetland conservation legislation was enacted.



In an act of political leadership, Quebec became the first province to enact a law that protects these important ecosystems. Bill 132 includes the important "no net loss" principle and was passed unanimously. This sends an important message to other provinces where establishing wetland policies continues to be a challenge.

Rescue Our Wetlands

As of June 30, DUC had raised \$434 million on its \$500 million goal. *Rescue Our Wetlands* is a natural fit with Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations. It's the most significant conservation campaign in history and its results are gifts for all Canadians who value the country's abundant but threatened natural resources.

Duane and Annamaria Arnister Open Home and Hearts

Ducks Unlimited New York State Chairman Duane Arnister and his wife, Annamaria, have opened the doors to their home for conservation support for many years. The couple hosts DU gatherings at their Water Mill home. Duane owns a waterfowl guide service and takes supporters and donors on hunts each season. The Arnisters have given of their time and resources for nearly 40 years.

"My father told me to leave this place better than you started," Duane said. "What better organization to do that with than Ducks Unlimited."



Duane and Annamaria Arnister

Waterfowling is a deep tradition in the Arnister family, who are members of DU's Eastern Suffolk Chapter.



NORTH CAROLINA | 2,327 VOLUNTEERS | 31,140 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS | EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$2,651,153



DOLLARS RAISED BY *RESCUE OUR WETLANDS* CAMPAIGN

Rescue Our Wetlands is DU's comprehensive, continental campaign. Launched in 2012, this seven-year, \$2 billion campaign is critical to preserving the future of our wetlands and waterfowl.

At the end of FY17, Ducks Unlimited Inc., Ducks Unlimited de Mexico and Ducks Unlimited Canada had already raised \$1.82 billion towards our goal.



CONSERVATION
BY THE NUMBERS

NEW TOOLS PROTECT THE KING OF EASTERN WATERFOWL



The American black duck of eastern North America has monumental social, economic and cultural value to the people of the United States and Canada.

Historically, the black duck was the most abundant dabbling duck in eastern North America. However, the iconic species saw a population decline of more than 50 percent between the 1950s and 1990s.

While the decline in breeding population has stabilized since 1990, the black duck remains below the North American Waterfowl Management Plan population goal. Ducks Unlimited is dedicated to boosting the population of the black duck for

Black duck research, like this effort with partner State University of New York, helps Ducks Unlimited determine where to best conserve habitat.

waterfowlers and waterfowl enthusiasts in eastern North America.

The black duck's core breeding, migration and wintering areas fall within DU's Completing the Cycle Initiative region. This vital area has suffered staggering wetland losses affecting black ducks. Nearly 7 million acres of habitat have been lost from Maryland to Maine, and significant wetlands were lost further north in southern Ontario, Quebec and the Canadian Maritimes.

Since the 1940s, Ducks Unlimited has worked in partnership with the

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state wildlife agencies and other conservation groups to develop black duck research and management programs. Those efforts have resulted in conservation projects, policy initiatives and extensive research.

Research topics include black duck habitat use and behavior, food and habitat availability, energy content of foods and daily energy requirements.

Ducks Unlimited was a partner in creating the Black Duck Decision Support Tool, a new and critical

NORTH DAKOTA | 484 VOLUNTEERS | 5,080 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$350,777

method launched in 2016 for determining how to best conserve black duck habitat. The decision support tool was created over the past decade by the Black Duck Joint Venture, Ducks Unlimited and the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture. The tool will be used to guide many East Coast conservation efforts by identifying priority habitat for protection and restoration incorporating food energy, predicted urban growth and sea level rise.

The tool is already influencing where and how Ducks Unlimited and the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture conserve wetland habitats.

Thanks in part to the tool, Ducks Unlimited received a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund to lead land protection efforts in American black duck priority areas of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. Ducks Unlimited and partners will protect up to 1,000 acres, with the potential to exceed that goal.



©David Stimac

Ducks Unlimited is committed to boosting the population of black ducks in eastern North America.

Ducks Unlimited also received a \$100,000 grant from Waterfowl Research Foundation to support two regional research projects. Part of the grant will allow us to determine baseline data regarding how much

energy a black duck needs to survive for one day. The remainder of the grant will allow us to study our ability to accurately count ducks using unmanned aerial systems, commonly known as drones.

Cargill Inc. helps drive New York conservation

For years Cargill Inc. has grown its position as a wetlands champion through its involvement in Ducks Unlimited's conservation programs in New York. Cargill has donated or pledged more than \$540,000 to conservation efforts in New York.

The support enables Ducks Unlimited to provide critical restoration of wetland ecosystems and community outreach activities in and around the Lake Ontario watershed.

"Cargill is proud to partner with organizations such as Ducks Unlimited that can collaboratively work together to improve and maintain the environment," said Eric Hallman, environmental manager for Cargill Salt Business.

DU has used donations from Cargill to fund and support ongoing restoration of the Montezuma and Tonawanda-Iroquois-Oak Orchard wetland complexes, Catherine Creek Wildlife Management Area and other key wetland locations in New York.

Restored wetlands provide opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, reduced soil erosion, surface and groundwa-



ter quality enhancement and improved downstream flood control.

Most recently, Cargill Corp. continued its support through a three-year, \$243,000 grant to benefit projects across upstate New York. The donations are the result of collaboration between four Cargill business units in New York, with matching support from Cargill leadership.



DU VARSITY AND DUCKS UNIVERSITY CHAPTERS

Raising Money and Awareness On Campus

Each spring, Ducks Unlimited announces its Sweet 16 list of top-producing university chapters and Varsity All-Star high school chapters for the preceding year. The winners for 2016 were announced in June 2017. The Sweet 16 chapters are considered the best of the best in fundraising and chapter strength.



The Tiger Chapter of LSU reclaimed the title of top collegiate chapter in the country in 2016. Led by Area Chairman Clint Pace and Student Adviser Dr. Luke Laborde, the Tiger Chapter continues to build energy and momentum from strong volunteer recruiting each year, which has carried over to their event success. In total, DU's university chapters worked hard to raise more than \$2 million in event income for the first time in program history.

The Tiger Chapter of Louisiana State University reclaimed the title of top collegiate chapter in 2016.

A new national high school champion emerged in the DU Varsity ranks as the Memphis University School Chapter claimed the top spot in only their second active year of fundraising. Committee Co-chairs John Kakales and Wyatt Berry led this young group of volunteers to an impressive year by raising \$44,000 for DU's conservation mission.



The Memphis University School Chapter was named the top DU Varsity Chapter, raising \$44,000 for Ducks Unlimited's conservation mission.

OKLAHOMA | 703 VOLUNTEERS | 8,569 MEMBERS, SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS |
EVENT AND MAJOR GIFT INCOME \$571,289

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT

A letter from Ducks Unlimited's Senior Vice President of Development Doug Frey, Senior Vice President of Event and Volunteer Management Shawn de Cento and Senior Vice President of Membership Kathleen Christian

As we continue our ambitious \$2 billion *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign, the execution of that plan continues to enjoy incredible support. It would not be surprising if we beat this tough goal significantly. Surpassing goals is common with Ducks Unlimited and is a testament to the passion and commitment found in you, our members.

Every mission needs leaders. On the following pages, it is our sincere pleasure to recognize event committee success and personal philanthropic commitments. Events and donations form the foundation that has made Ducks Unlimited a leader in conservation for 80 years. This honor roll of great volunteers, committees and major donors helped drive DU to a record breaking year in fundraising and on-the-ground conservation.

You are making the world a better, healthier place and that is a noble cause. Because of you, we are a world leader in conservation, not just wetlands and waterfowl conservation. We are proud of the contribution of every one of you as we strive toward record goals of habitat restoration and preservation.

With this report our predecessors, Mike Woodward, Peter MacGaffin and Rex Schulz step down from their enormously successful chairmanships and turn the final push toward the finish line over to us. We thank them for their outstanding commitment and congratulate them on their success. They have prepared us well for a strong campaign finish and we look forward to celebrating a big win for wetlands at the end of 2018.

You are indeed the best of the best in conservation. Thank you for the magnificent work you do.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doug Frey'.

Doug Frey
Senior Vice President
of Development



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shawn de Cento'.

Shawn de Cento
Senior Vice President of
Event and Volunteer
Management



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen Christian'.

Kathleen Christian
Senior Vice President of
Membership



MISSION

DUCKS UNLIMITED CONSERVES, RESTORES, AND
MANAGES WETLANDS AND ASSOCIATED HABITATS
FOR NORTH AMERICA'S WATERFOWL.
THESE HABITATS ALSO BENEFIT OTHER WILDLIFE
AND PEOPLE.



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