



KANSAS

great plains region • state conservation report

2016



Construction on Pool 5 at Neosho WA

two years, so keep an eye out for many new projects to be delivered benefiting waterfowl in the Central Flyway.

The recent NAWCA grants and partnership projects will enhance, restore and protect more than 19,000 acres of habitat. This includes over 12,000 acres of wetlands and 6,000 acres of associated uplands in Kansas (more on these grants on page 4).

In 2015, DU conducted a major tree removal project at the Cheyenne Bottoms wetland complex, with continued dirt work in the upcoming year. DU also closed on a 320-acre property that is part of the greater wetland complex at Cheyenne Bottoms. However, the property is currently drained and in crop production. DU will restore this property through ditch plugs, low berms and establishment of desirable vegetation. This acquisition is one more piece of the puzzle in the overall restoration of the

41,000 acre wetland basin, a wetland internationally known for its importance to migratory birds.

The large restoration project at the Neosho Wildlife Area in southeast Kansas continues to move forward. Construction crews completed the Pool 5 water control structure. The large pump unit and pipeline to be installed in the Neosho River is nearly ready for construction and will go out to bid soon. Summer construction is planned to complete the dirt work, which will conclude this large project.

DU's successes and programs in Kansas continue to grow, but this would not be possible without support from partners, DU staff and enthusiastic volunteers. On this foundation, DU will continue to put habitat on the ground and ensure the success of waterfowl species for generations to come.

PROGRESS ON PUBLIC LAND PROJECTS

DU continues to improve habitat on public lands with the help of partnerships with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These properties are often open for public use and occur throughout the state.

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This summer DU will move forward with restorations at Talmo Marsh Wildlife Area (WA). Efforts include the construction of several new marsh units through partnerships with KDWP, NRCS and other partners. These individual restorations will help to restore the overall hydrology of the 1,000-acre historic salt marsh.

DU will soon begin work at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. Restoration includes installation of a new water control structure that services more than 3,000 acres of wetlands. As conditions allow, construction crews will begin as soon as possible this spring.

DU will install a pump and pipeline on Perry WA in Jefferson County, which will improve management capabilities and improve wetland conditions on two of the large public marsh units. Construction will begin this summer as soon as water levels in the river allow.



PROJECT DEDICATION SITE SELECTED FOR RESCUE OUR WETLANDS

McPherson Valley Wetlands Wildlife Area (WA) in McPherson County was chosen as the *Rescue Our Wetlands* project dedication site for Kansas. In each of the seven states in the Great Plains Region, DU is choosing a special project site that represents DU's work and the habitats that support North American waterfowl in the state.

McPherson WA is owned by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, lies in the heart of the Central Flyway and provides thousands of acres of wetland and upland habitat. Waterfowl is the primary management objective for the complex. This summer at McPherson WA, DU will restore two former agricultural fields that are completely drained through ditching. Restoring these fields to wetlands will provide excellent public hunting opportunities and wildlife habitat.

Rescue Our Wetlands is the first DU campaign that includes DU Canada and DU Mexico. The campaign focuses on the Prairie Pothole Region of the U.S. and Canada, and important waterfowl migration and wintering grounds in other parts of the U.S. and Mexico. It is the most ambitious campaign in DU history with a goal of raising \$2 billion by the end of 2018.

"The *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign will help DU deal with the rapidly growing threat to wetlands and grasslands that are necessary for ducks, and for keeping our water resources clean," said Jeff Heidelbauer, DU regional vice president.

EXPANDING EFFORTS IN THE PLAYA WETLANDS

DU has made great strides in establishing a private lands program in western Kansas in the playa wetland region. Though not always wet, the small wetlands that dot the landscape in this region are critically important to many migratory bird species and are a focus of DU's conservation efforts. DU Kansas staff members are expecting funding from a Playa Lakes Joint Venture grant funded by Conoco Phillips that will help build capacity in the playa region.

DU is also investigating opportunities, holding partnership meetings and hosting landowner workshops to help gain traction in this region. Expected projects include filling water reuse pits, installing grazing infrastructure, plugging ditches, and establishing conservation easements. Expect some major movement in the upcoming years.



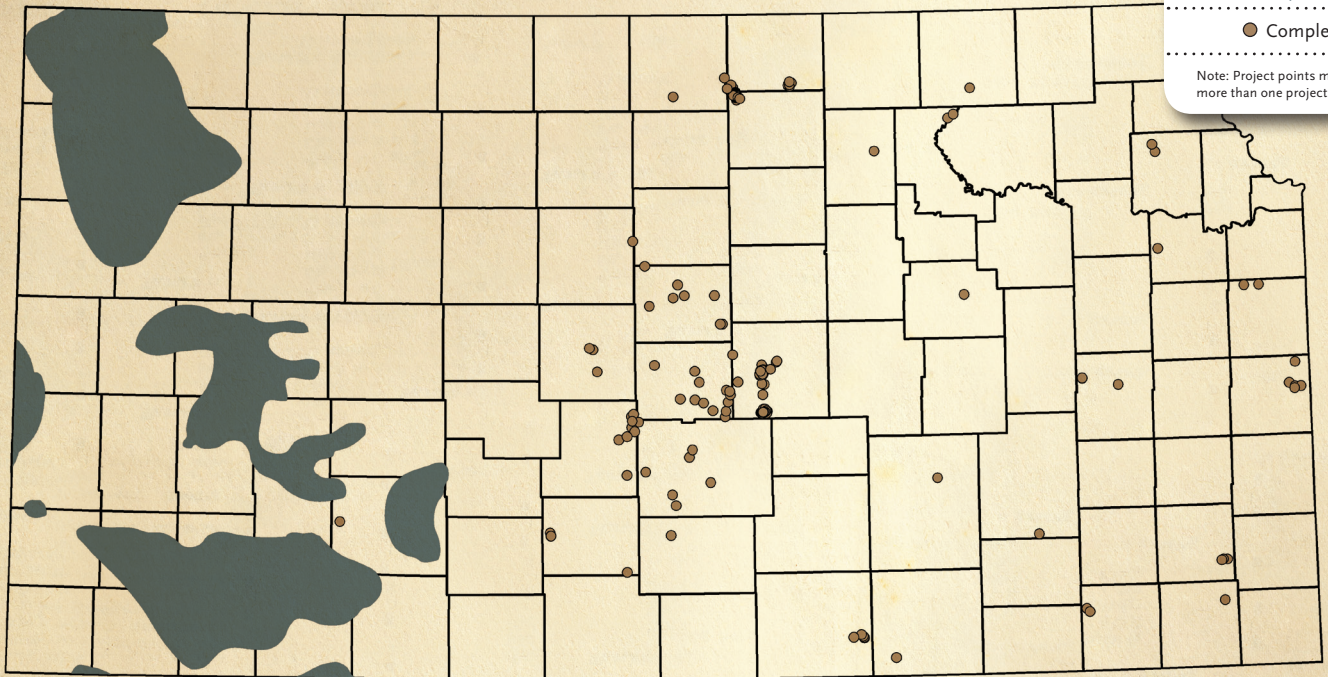
Whooping Cranes at Quivira NWR

PROJECT MAP • 1990-2015

ducks unlimited
PROJECTS

● Completed

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.



2015 accomplishments

10 Projects
907 Acres conserved
\$293,786 Invested

■ Playa wetlands

SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER, KANSAS

Joe Kramer is a part-time special projects manager in Kansas working to assist the DU staff with wetland projects in the state. His emphasis is on playa lake wetland management and assisting DU with Kansas legislative policy. Joe is part of DU's efforts to expand capacity in Kansas.

Joe is a graduate of Kansas State University with a degree in Wildlife Biology and recently retired from Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism after 37 years of service. He served 26 years as the Fish, Wildlife and Public Lands Division Director for the agency.

Joe's experience also includes supervising and managing operations at Melvern Reservoir and Cheyenne Bottoms and serving as a representative on the Central Flyway Council and Playa Lake Joint Venture. He also served on the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee for four years.

"I have been a DU member since 1980 and am looking forward to the opportunity to work with some of the best waterfowl and wetland professionals in the world," Kramer said.



KANSAS PRAIRIE WETLANDS II NAWCA GRANT APPROVED

Ducks Unlimited and partners will complete several large conservation projects in Kansas thanks to the approval of a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant. The Kansas Prairie Wetlands II proposal includes restorations on Byron Walker Wildlife Area, Cheyenne Bottoms, Kanopolis Reservoir, Perry Reservoir, Gurley Marsh Wildlife Area, Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, two acquisition projects in southeast Kansas and several private landowner projects.

“Past wetland loss and the constant threat of wetland conversion make every acre conserved using NAWCA grants and partner funds that much more important,” said John Denton, manager of conservation programs for Nebraska and Kansas.

DU and its conservation partners match NAWCA funds at least dollar-for-dollar and frequently at two to three times the amount. Overall this proposal generated \$3,000,000 in project funds by leveraging partner match. This will be utilized to deliver more than 5,000 acres of habitat conservation work in Kansas. The projects included in this grant will provide high quality foraging habitat for thousands of waterfowl and waterbirds during fall and spring migration, and year-round habitat for other wetland-dependent wildlife.



Gamekeeper Dam
at Jamestown WA

MORE FUNDING FOR CENTRAL FLYWAY

Ducks Unlimited and partners were approved for a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant that includes projects in both Kansas and Nebraska. The Central Flyway Migration Corridor II proposal will conserve 5,443 acres of habitat through restoration, enhancement, and protection. More than \$1.2 million in matching contributions were leveraged to request over \$816,000 in NAWCA funds.

In Kansas, grant projects include restoration work on Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge and Jamestown Wildlife Area (WA). The project on Jamestown WA will focus on raising Gamekeeper Dam. This includes raising

the dam 18 inches to further restore and enhance 730 wetland acres north of the large structure. This will also allow better management of the entire Gamekeeper unit.

On Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge, NAWCA grant and matching funds will be used to restore an 80-acre drained wetland. DU will install a water control structure and a low levee to repair the drain. These repairs will allow U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff to manage water levels to provide ideal habitat conditions and manipulate water levels for vegetation management to further supplement migratory bird habitat at the refuge.

▶ STATE CONTACTS

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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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REGION**

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