

CONSERVATION UPDATE

Louisiana provides continentally significant wintering habitat for waterfowl each year. DU's mission in Louisiana is to ensure sufficient habitat is available to meet the life-cycle needs of migrating and wintering waterfowl as well as resident populations of mottled ducks, whistling ducks and wood ducks. These habitats also provide significant benefits to other wildlife, fisheries and people.



DU's conservation staff implemented a remarkable amount of conservation work and delivered quality results during fiscal year 2016. DU conserved more than 20,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats in Louisiana and increased total conservation accomplishments in the state to approximately 431,100 acres. Our private land restoration work continued through the Louisiana Waterfowl Project and the Rice Stewardship Program. Coastal wetland restoration work on private lands included multiple terrace projects south of Houma, a freshwater introduction project in southwest Terrebonne Parish, embankment repairs along Freshwater Bayou, a hydrologic restoration project near Hackberry and a salinity control project near Creole. On public lands, DU has on-going projects at Pass a Loutre and Salvador wildlife management areas and Rockefeller and State wildlife refuges.

DU will continue to make significant habitat improvements on the wintering grounds and appreciates the investments of time and money from the many volunteers, supporters, landowners, foundations, corporations and agencies that make these great conservation accomplishments possible.



MAJOR SPONSOR REPORT

Congratulations to the Louisiana State Campaign Committee! They achieved Top 10 results (5th place) in 2016 and had the most upgrades in the nation. Their accomplishments were impressive, including 29 new Life Sponsors, 63 upgrades and 9 new Feather Society commitments. Clearly, major sponsors in Louisiana are making a difference for the future of wetlands, waterfowl and waterfowl hunting.

Alfred Stevens, a veterinarian from Baton Rouge, and his wife, Susan, are two of Louisiana's dedicated supporters. Al and Susan began attending the DU events together a few years ago, and they have both developed a strong appreciation for DU's mission. They really enjoy attending local events, including the LSU Tiger Chapter and Baton Rouge Sponsor events, and they have taken several trips purchased at DU auctions. Al tried pheasant hunting for the first time last year and is completely addicted. Their nine-year-old grandson killed his first deer on a DU auction trip last year, and the couple is headed to Belize for a week this summer.

"I grew up hunting and fishing, but after I started my veterinarian career, I didn't get to do a lot of that," Al said. "As the years went by, and I had grandkids, I realized how much I missed hunting and sharing time outdoors with my family. That's when Susan and I went to one of the local DU banquets, and we were both immediately hooked!"

Over the last few years, Susan and Al have learned a lot about DU's impact. "We absolutely marvel at the scope of DU's conservation work. There's a lot I still don't know, but the more I find out about DU, the more impressed I am at how they utilize funds to further the future for everyone to enjoy."

It's their concern about the future that drives their investments in DU. The Stevens are Life Sponsors and President's Council members. "We never got into DU thinking any of that would occur. We're super excited to have something that we enjoy so much leave an impact for our grandkids and all future generations," Al said.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT - PASS-A-LOUTRE WMA

Ducks Unlimited is working with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to create prime waterfowl habitat where coastal erosion has turned historic fresh marsh into open water. We're doing so with old and new delta splay projects on Pass-A-Loutre Wildlife Management Area.

Located in southern Plaquemines Parish approximately 80 miles southeast of New Orleans, Pass-A-Loutre WMA encompasses 115,000 acres and is one of the most popular public lands for waterfowl hunting in the state.

In 1986, the state implemented the Louisiana Crevasse Project by cutting three crevasses – artificial distributary channels used to improve flow of water and sediments – in natural levees on Pass a Loutre WMA. The crevasses were expected to produce land for 10 to 20 years, but are still delivering positive gains today. To date, the cuts have built 760 acres of marsh at a cost of only \$115 per acre, compared to an average cost of \$50,000 an acre for marsh creation using dredged material.

Working with LDWF, DU is modifying two existing crevasses which will significantly increase water flow, resulting in the creation of even more land. Dredged material from the crevasses will be used to create two remote bird nesting islands. Partners include the LDWF, North American Wetlands Conservation Council, Building Conservation Trust and LA Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.



VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISING REPORT

Volunteer fundraisers are the heartbeat of Ducks Unlimited, and Louisiana boasts more than 21,000 members, including almost 2,700 volunteers. These volunteers hosted 90 events in 2016, raising almost \$4.2 million to support DU's conservation mission.



Dr. George Vincent, chairman of the Sulphur DU chapter in southwest Louisiana, is one of LADU's dedicated volunteers. As a volunteer for more than 45 years, a sponsor for more than 30 years and a DU major sponsor, Dr. Vincent has led this team to become one of the top fundraising chapters in the state. Sulphur DU has been on top of their game for quite a few years, and this committee has the horsepower of the whole Vincent family, which works out great – especially when Nina donates her homemade pralines for the live auction.

Dr. George Vincent's passion for Ducks Unlimited shines around his event. He and his committee strive to sell every business and individual in the community a ticket to the upcoming event. No doubt 2017 will see him strive for even more lofty goals for Sulphur Ducks Unlimited.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT - VERMILION CORPORATION

Vermilion Corporation, a small corporation founded in 1958, manages over 125,000 acres in south Louisiana, has been a long time steward of waterfowl habitat and a supporting partner of Ducks Unlimited. The majority of their land is leased or utilized by permittees for waterfowl hunting as it lies within one of the most productive wintering waterfowl areas on the entire Gulf Coast. Vermilion Corporation has partnered with DU on North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants and participated in several Louisiana Waterfowl Projects. They have also assisted DU staff in hosting educational tours to highlight the partnership and demonstrate our conservation work. DU understands the importance of working with private landowners along our coast and enhancing and increasing waterfowl habitat in the area as a whole. This multifaceted partnership benefits Vermilion Corporation, DU and the ducks!



Vermilion's P.R. Burke on a marsh tour with DU and other partners.

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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