

MICHIGAN

great lakes/atlantic region • 2016 state conservation report

940 ACRES OF SAGINAW BAY WATERSHED FLOODED FOR FIRST TIME IN 100 YEARS

*M*igrating waterfowl have 940 additional acres of managed wetlands near Saginaw Bay thanks to a major Ducks Unlimited project at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge.

The Maankiki Marsh project was completed in summer 2016. The project just south of Saginaw converted agricultural land back into wetlands for the first time in a century.

“Opportunities to restore areas of this size in the Great Lakes region are few,” said Dane Cramer, DU regional biologist for Michigan. “Waterfowl used to pass right over this area during migration. Now, they’ll look down and see a healthy and productive habitat.”

The effort was funded in part by a \$1.5 million National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes grant via the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a federal program designed to target the most significant problems in the Great Lakes ecosystem. Ducks Unlimited contributed about \$350,000. Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network and Dow Chemical Company provided additional financial support.

The project reconnected nearly 1.5 square miles of land to the Shiawassee River and Saginaw Bay. DU designed and oversaw construction of three miles of berms and installation of four water-control structures giving refuge managers the ability to control water levels to benefit birds and fish. The project will impact thousands of waterfowl that migrate through Saginaw Bay and the Shiawassee Flats area every spring and autumn.

Shiawassee Flats is a 40,000-acre floodplain wetland complex formed by the confluence of the Bad, Cass, Flint, Shiawassee and Tittabawassee Rivers. The flats provide many ecological and social benefits, including habitat for other wetland-dependent fish and wildlife, flood control and abatement, water quality improvement and areas for outdoor-based recreation and education.

The new region will be accessible for public recreation.

Visit www.ducks.org/Michigan to see project construction and wildlife photos.



YESTERDAY,
TODAY AND
TOMORROW

Ducks Unlimited is a proud supporter of the Michigan Waterfowl Legacy.
To learn more visit: <http://www.michigan.gov/mwl>



RESCUE OUR
WETLANDS
Bandling Together for Waterfowl

DUCKS UNLIMITED PROJECT IN ANN ARBOR BENEFITS FARMER AND WILDLIFE



Grasslands bloom at the restored Washtenaw Food Hub outside Ann Arbor.

Ducks Unlimited is helping an Ann Arbor farmer promote healthy wildlife habitat and healthy eating.

The nearly 100-acre grassland and wetland restoration project is at the Washtenaw Food Hub. The hub is a unique farming cooperative that blends sustainable development with smart food growing practices.

“It’s getting back to the idea of a more biodiverse landscape and low-input way of growing food over a long period,” said Kim Bayer, a partner with the food hub.

DU is helping restore 96 acres of what was once a heavily-farmed section of land back to a natural state.

In 2015, DU and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources planted 82 acres of native grasslands at the farm property. In 2016 DU and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will restore 14 acres of wetlands. When finished, the site will provide nesting habitat for mallards.

“It’s fantastic that there is this kind of support for restoration like this,” Bayer said. “We are extremely grateful to be able to participate and to try to make it something that adds to the biodiversity in Michigan.”

The project cost is \$50,000. It’s part of a \$560,000 regional grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act received and administered by Ducks Unlimited. The grant is funding work to restore fish and wildlife habitat and improve water quality on more than 400 acres of wetlands and grasslands in the western Lake Erie basin of Michigan and Ohio. Partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Partners for Fish and Wildlife program; Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Ohio Division of Wildlife; and Ottawa Soil and Water Conservation District.

This project is part of DU’s Great Lakes Initiative, which protects the waters of the Great Lakes and conserve critical habitat for many species of waterfowl that utilize this vast watershed throughout their life cycle.

ALLEGAN STATE GAME AREA GETS BOOST FOR WATERFOWL, HUNTERS

Ducks Unlimited and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources partnered to restore 64 acres of wetlands at the 55,000-acre Allegan State Game Area. The project was funded by grants from the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Joint Venture through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and the Michigan DNR.

The project removed drainage tiles, constructed berms and installed pumps and water control structures. DNR wetland managers now have the tools to manage wetlands for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, marshbirds, landbirds and other wetland-dependent wildlife. The project began in 2014, and by September 2015 was shallowly flooded for the first time since being drained for logging and farming 75 years ago.

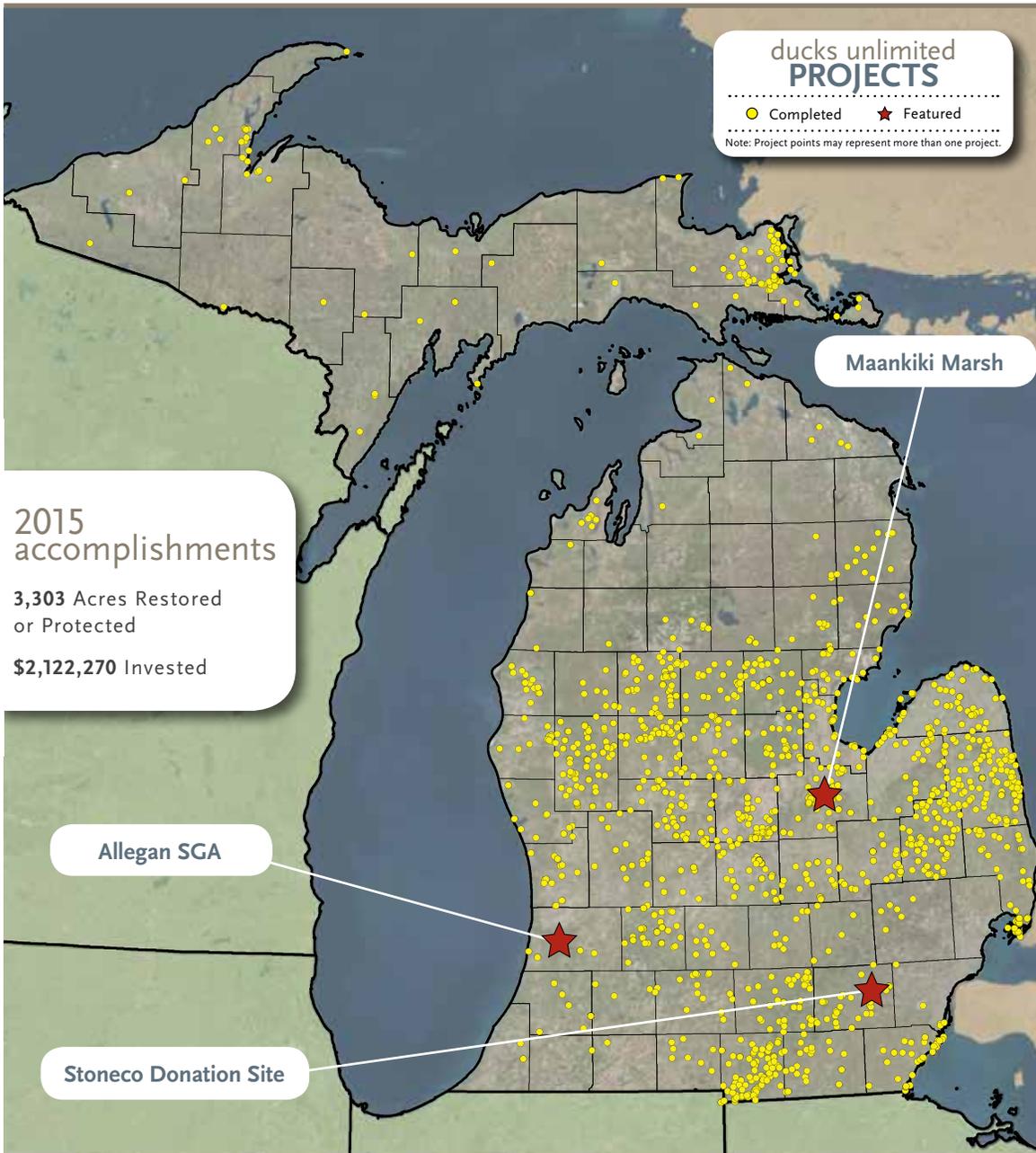
This restoration gave waterfowl and other birds energy-rich food to fuel their fall migration. It also provides outdoor recreational opportunities for hikers and wildlife watchers, and new public access for enthusiastic waterfowl hunters at the well-known Fennville Farm Unit of Allegan State Game Area.



The completed wetland project is shown after being flooded for fall 2015 migration.



Visit www.ducks.org/michigan to see video of floodwater entering the field for the first time in 75 years.



ducks unlimited
PROJECTS

● Completed ★ Featured

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.

**2015
accomplishments**

**3,303 Acres Restored
or Protected**

\$2,122,270 Invested

Maankiki Marsh

Allegan SGA

Stoneco Donation Site



David Brakhage

David Brakhage
GLARO Director of Operations

**A MESSAGE FROM
THE DIRECTOR**

Michigan is part of Ducks Unlimited's 21-state Great Lakes/Atlantic Region, a diverse landscape of habitats ranging from Prairie Potholes in the Midwest to coastal estuaries in the Atlantic Flyway.

Waterfowl know no boundaries. Because of that, conservation work done in Michigan in 2015 was a pivotal part of the overall wetland management strategy DU has established based on conservation science.

Ducks Unlimited had a record year of support and acres conserved. Here in the Great Lakes/Atlantic Region, DU in 2015 used private donations and public funds to invest \$27,193,473 in conservation projects. That strong support enabled our biologists and engineers to deliver focused, effective habitat conservation on 12,686 acres of wetlands.

The work contained in this report reflects Ducks Unlimited's commitment to Michigan. We appreciate your support and are eager to build on this success in 2016.

MEET YOUR MICHIGAN CONSERVATION STAFF



Jason Hill is DU's manager of conservation programs for the Great Lakes Initiative. Jason has worked for DU since 2000 and has served as regional biologist for Indiana, southwest Michigan and Wisconsin. He is a graduate of Michigan State University, with bachelor's and master's degrees in fisheries & wildlife management with a focus on wetlands and waterfowl.

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Dane Cramer joined Ducks Unlimited in 2010, assuming the role of regional biologist for Michigan in 2011. Dane earned a bachelor of science from Pennsylvania State University and a master of science from the University of Delaware. His past work experience involved waterfowl use of Atlantic coastal marshes.

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\$25 from every DU license plate stays in Michigan to support DU's work in the state!

For more information visit www.ducks.org/michigan

DUCKS UNLIMITED RECEIVES \$2.1-MILLION LAND DONATION NEAR ANN ARBOR

Stoneco, an Oldcastle Materials company, in December 2015 donated a 262-acre former sand and gravel quarry near Ann Arbor to Ducks Unlimited to support wildlife conservation efforts. The donated land, appraised at \$2.1 million, is on Zeeb Road in Lodi Township.

The former quarry site was active until 2014 and has since been undergoing a reclamation process. The area has tremendous potential for wildlife habitat development through wetland restoration, grassland plantings, reforestation and management of the reclaimed mine pit.

Ducks Unlimited is exploring using the property to build a permanent headquarters for its Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional office staff, which consists of biologists, engineers, GIS technicians, administrative staff and fundraisers dedicated to wetlands conservation. The Great Lakes/Atlantic Region covers 21 states from Minnesota to Maine and south to Kentucky. Ducks Unlimited currently leases office space in Ann Arbor.

The land donation will support Ducks Unlimited's Rescue Our Wetlands Campaign, a seven-year, \$2 billion effort aimed at changing the face of conservation in North America.

 Go to www.ducks.org/michigan to get an aerial tour of the donated property!



Stoneco and Ducks Unlimited leaders gather at the Zeeb Road land donation site. From left: Todd Bishop, Ducks Unlimited managing director of development for DU's Great Lakes/Atlantic Region; Rick Becker, Stoneco vice president and general manager; Tracy Oberleiter, senior vice president and senior business development manager at Monroe Bank and Trust and DU member; and David Brakhage, director of operations for DU's Great Lakes/Atlantic Region.

DU RECOGNIZES CONSERVATION PARTNER JIM HUDGINS FOR DEDICATION, PASSION

Ducks Unlimited Michigan Regional Biologist Dane Cramer recently recognized Jim Hudgins for his insightfulness, leadership and dedication to preserving Michigan's natural habitat.



Jim is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife state coordinator for Michigan. DU and the USFWS have a successful history of restoring wetlands on private lands in Michigan, and Jim is a driving force in those achievements. Since 1998, the partnership has collaborated on 11, \$1 million NAWCA grants. "Jim is an outstanding member of the conservation community, and has set the standard as a conservation partner," Cramer said.

DU and the USFWS recently passed a significant milestone when grant and Ducks Unlimited contributions funneled into the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, surpassed \$1 million in Michigan. Collectively, these endeavors have restored nearly 2,500 acres of wetlands and more than 1,400 acres of grasslands across the state.

Ducks Unlimited thanks Jim for his many invaluable contributions to help DU accomplish its mission in Michigan.

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



GREAT LAKES / ATLANTIC REGION

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