

NEW JERSEY & PENNSYLVANIA

great lakes/atlantic region • 2016 state conservation report

PENNSYLVANIA'S PRESQUE ISLE WETLANDS BEING RESTORED

*D*ucks Unlimited is returning to the Lake Erie watershed in 2016 to restore and enhance more than 400 acres of coastal marsh at Presque Isle State Park, an important stopover for waterfowl and waterbirds in Erie, PA.

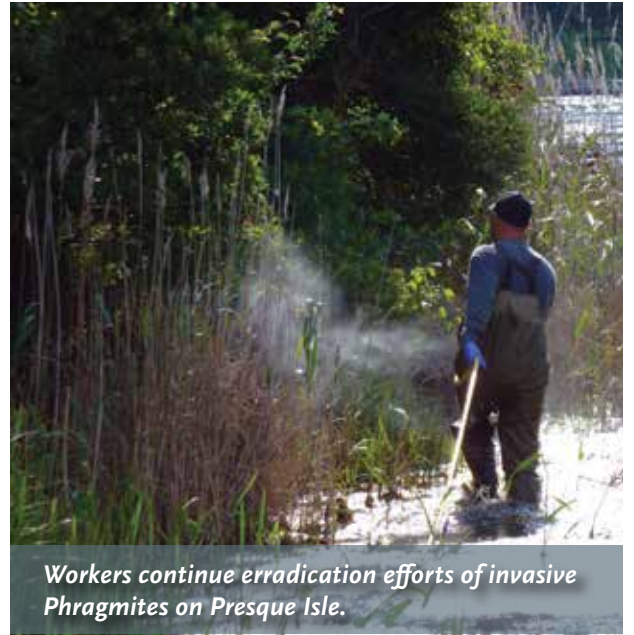
In summer 2015, Ducks Unlimited and several partners were awarded a \$565,626 National Fish and Wildlife Federation Sustain Our Great Lakes grant. The grant will enable partners to remove invasive phragmites, replant the area with locally propagated native wetland plants and conduct research at the site before and after restoration.

This is the project's second phase, which was previously known as the Southern Lake Erie Wetland Restoration. The first phase was completed in April 2015. The project will run through winter 2019.

Ducks Unlimited Regional Biologist Jim Feaga said the phragmites removal will help the state better manage the area, and the seed propagation program is an exciting new step on Presque Isle.

"We are going in and pulling desirable native seeds from the banks of the wetlands, germinating them, re-acclimating them and then replanting on the marsh," he said.

The grant included an additional \$571,788 in matching dollars from DU and project partners Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Regional Science Consortium, Audubon Pennsylvania, California University of Pennsylvania and Environment Erie.



Workers continue eradication efforts of invasive Phragmites on Presque Isle.

NEW JERSEY MARSH SEES PHRAGMITES REDUCTION SUCCESS

*D*ucks Unlimited and the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (formerly New Jersey Meadowlands Commission) pushed invasive phragmites away from a portion of the ecologically important Meadowlands wetland complex in the Hudson-Raritan Estuary. The Meadowlands has regional and international importance to migrating and wintering birds, including waterfowl. By 2009, phragmites became an issue in the 75-acre Western Brackish Marsh. Ducks Unlimited and the Meadowlands commission began an annual aerial herbicide application and since 2009, have had several good seasons of treatment.



Few phragmites remain following several years of treatment by DU and the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority.

They originally planned to finish the project in 2015, but had some remaining funds so they will likely treat as needed in 2016.

"You can see New York City right from the marsh," said Ducks Unlimited Regional Biologist Jim Feaga. "Protecting these valuable wetlands next to developed areas is important. It serves as a sanctuary for a lot of folks to get away from the city."

NEW JERSEY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA GETS FEDERAL FUNDING

Ducks Unlimited and its partners were awarded a \$67,000 North American Wetland Conservation Act grant to restore 76 acres of wetland habitat at Paulinskill River Wildlife Management Area, outside of Newton, New Jersey.



Paulinskill's wildlife habitat and water quality will soon be improved.

The project includes \$160,000 in matching funds provided by Ducks Unlimited's *Completing the Cycle Initiative* and partner contributions.

Enhancement efforts will provide critical resources for migrating waterfowl and other wetland dependent wildlife through the restoration of historic levees, installation of water control structures and control of invasive narrow-leaf cattail.

The project will allow the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife to manage habitat for the benefit of waterfowl, other wetland dependent wildlife and people. Water quality will improve in the watershed.

Partners include the division of fish and wildlife, New Jersey Natural Lands Trust, The Nature Conservancy and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA GAME LANDS GETTING HABITAT BOOST

Celery Swamp in State Game Lands 151 is located northwest of New Castle, Pennsylvania. The wetlands there have degraded in the past 50 years because the Pennsylvania Game Commission was unable to control water levels and mimic natural water cycles.

The result is an influx of invasive and aggressive plant species which choke out native plants attractive to waterfowl and other wildlife.

Ducks Unlimited is enhancing 240 acres of wetland habitat by installing new water-control structures. The enhancements will benefit many species of waterfowl, as the area serves as important habitat for breeding, migrating and wintering ducks. State Game Lands 151 also serves numerous other wildlife and waterbirds, including several species of concern.

The primary goal of this project is to establish beneficial vegetation. It also will support a primary management goal outlined in the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan to provide quality waterfowl and water bird breeding habitat while secondarily providing migration and wintering habitat for waterfowl.



A half-century of failing wetlands will be restored in northwest Pennsylvania.

WORK TO BEGIN ON PENNSYLVANIA'S PYMATUNING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Ducks Unlimited and the Pennsylvania Game Commission are starting the second phase of a wetland restoration and enhancement project at Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area in Crawford County.

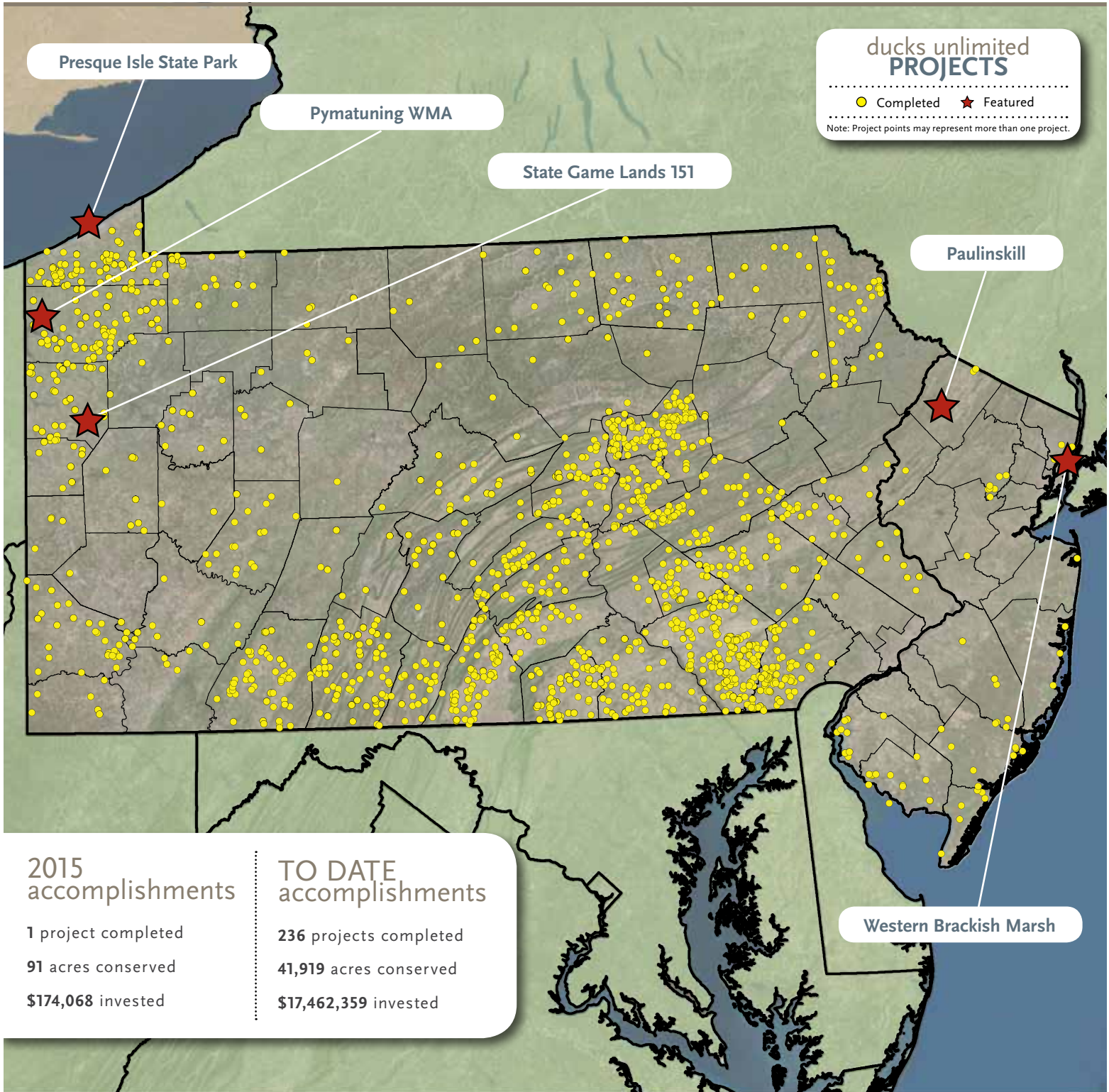


The next phase of enhancement at Pymatuning will improve more than 433 acres.

The Pymatuning restoration is part of a long-term effort to conserve critical habitat for breeding, migrating and wintering waterfowl in Pennsylvania and the Atlantic Flyway. Completed in 2010, Phase I restored and enhanced 639 acres of important wetland habitat. Phase II looks to continue the success of wetland habitat conservation in northwest Pennsylvania.

During Phase II, Ducks Unlimited will enhance two shallow-water impoundments totaling 405 acres by adding two new water-control structures. DU will also restore a 28-acre agricultural field into an emergent marsh to increase the available habitat for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species.

Restoration and enhancement will allow the game commission to establish additional premium habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife and improve management capabilities.



2015 accomplishments

1 project completed
 91 acres conserved
 \$174,068 invested

TO DATE accomplishments

236 projects completed
 41,919 acres conserved
 \$17,462,359 invested

MEET YOUR NORTH ATLANTIC CONSERVATION STAFF



*J*im Feaga has worked for Ducks Unlimited since 2014. Jim is a Pennsylvania native who received a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences in 2011 from Pennsylvania State University. While at Penn State, Jim performed undergraduate research as a Ronald E. McNair Scholar. In 2013, Jim received a Master of Science degree in wildlife fisheries and aquaculture from Mississippi State University. His expertise includes waterfowl and wetland ecology; monitoring and sampling wetland habitat; passerine, waterbird, and waterfowl surveys; delivery of management strategies for wetlands restoration and management; and passerine and waterfowl banding.

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SOUTHEAST NEW JERSEY COAST PROJECT UPDATES

The Southeast New Jersey Coastal Initiative was established in 2013 to protect, restore and enhance critical wetland habitat with southeastern New Jersey's coastal region. The region faces the pressures of development and continued risk of severe storm destruction. Ducks Unlimited is working with multiple partners and has received federal funding through two North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants.

Several efforts are included in the initiative, including:

- Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area Wetland Enhancement project, a 941-acre project between New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited and Cape May County Department of Mosquito Control. Project will install nine water-control structures to manage water levels and reshape the water bottoms to increase plant growth. Permits will be submitted by this summer, with work starting next fall.
- In addition to enhancement activities, this grant will also allow for the protection of 5,000 acres of habitat dominated by native vegetation that transitions the Pine Barrens into New Jersey's coastal estuary system.

PENNSYLVANIA LAKE TO RETURN TO BLACK DUCK HAVEN

Ducks Unlimited is working with the Pennsylvania Game Commission to enhance a 90-acre wetland in State Game Lands 66 in Sullivan County, Pennsylvania. This acre was historically known to support American black ducks throughout their lifecycle.

Shumans Lake was originally constructed and managed to support waterfowl habitat. Over time, the water-control structures deteriorated and beavers dammed the breached levee. With water levels not adequately controlled, favorable vegetation couldn't survive.

Ducks Unlimited will work with the game commission to rebuild the water-control structure. The primary goal of this wetland enhancement is to increase management capabilities and improve wetland quality.



Shumans Lake was once known to support the American black duck throughout its lifecycle.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

New Jersey and Pennsylvania are 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 these states 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 New Jersey and Pennsylvania. We appreciate your support and are eager to build on this success in 2016.



David Brakhage

David Brakhage
GLARO Director of Operations

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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