

# OHIO

great lakes/atlantic region • 2016 state conservation report

## OTTAWA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE PROJECTS BOOST HABITAT, WATER QUALITY

*D*ucks Unlimited has improved crucial wildlife habitat at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge on the banks of Lake Erie.

DU engineered and constructed four wetland projects at the refuge in 2014 and 2015, improving nearly 315 acres. These projects provide improved habitat for breeding and migrating waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife, and spawning/nursery areas for important fish species such as northern pike.

Water quality will improve as the wetlands receive agricultural run-off from adjacent ditches and filter out nutrients before reaching Lake Erie.

One of the projects, at the Boss Unit, is open to the public for birding and wildlife viewing and includes an observation platform. The other projects are along the Auto Tour route and are available to the public on a limited basis for viewing and birding.

Habitat was improved on nearly 315 acres:

- 17 acres of agricultural field was restored to emergent wetlands on the Boss Unit. The Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Alliance provided additional funding to support this project.
- 80 acres of coastal wetland at Pool 2c are now reconnected with Lake Erie. Refuge managers can now control water levels and fish populations.
- 90 acres of coastal wetland at Moist Soil Unit 8a are now reconnected with Lake Erie. Refuge managers can now control water levels.
- Management capability was vastly improved on 295 acres of coastal wetlands in three managed coastal wetlands thanks to new water control structures.

This work was made possible thanks to a \$505,000 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through The Nature Conservancy. TNC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff provided important technical support on this group of projects



*A glimpse at some of the 315 acres DU helped conserve at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge.*

## NAWCA GRANTS HELP DU, PARTNERS CONSERVE MORE THAN 2,100 ACRES IN NORTHEAST OHIO

*DU* and two North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants have improved the health of waterfowl habitat in northeast Ohio.

DU in 2011 was awarded a \$1 million NAWCA grant and partnered with Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others. During 2015, four properties totaling 108 acres were permanently protected with grant funding. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service used grant funds to restore 267 acres of wetlands on privately owned land through their Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

In 2015, Ducks Unlimited was awarded another \$1 million NAWCA grant to continue wetland habitat conservation efforts in northeast Ohio with many of the same partners. This new grant will result in the conservation of more than 1,000 acres of habitat and features the acquisition and permanent protection of 706 acres of the Bloomfield Swamp in Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties for Western Reserve Land Conservancy.



*Emergent wetland on private land restored through a NAWCA grant.*

## PRIVATE LAND PROJECTS COMPLETED IN WESTERN LAKE ERIE BASIN

*P*arts of the Lake Erie watershed have lost 90 percent of its historical wetlands, and much of what is left is highly degraded. Much of the property that used to contain historical wetlands are now developed or farmed and privately owned.

To regain some of these wetlands, and assist private landowners with conservation on their land, DU and a group of Ohio and Michigan partners secured \$560,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act in 2014.

In addition to providing quality breeding and migration habitat for ducks and lots of other wetland wildlife, these restoration projects improve water quality by filtering nutrients and sediment from the predominantly agricultural landscape.

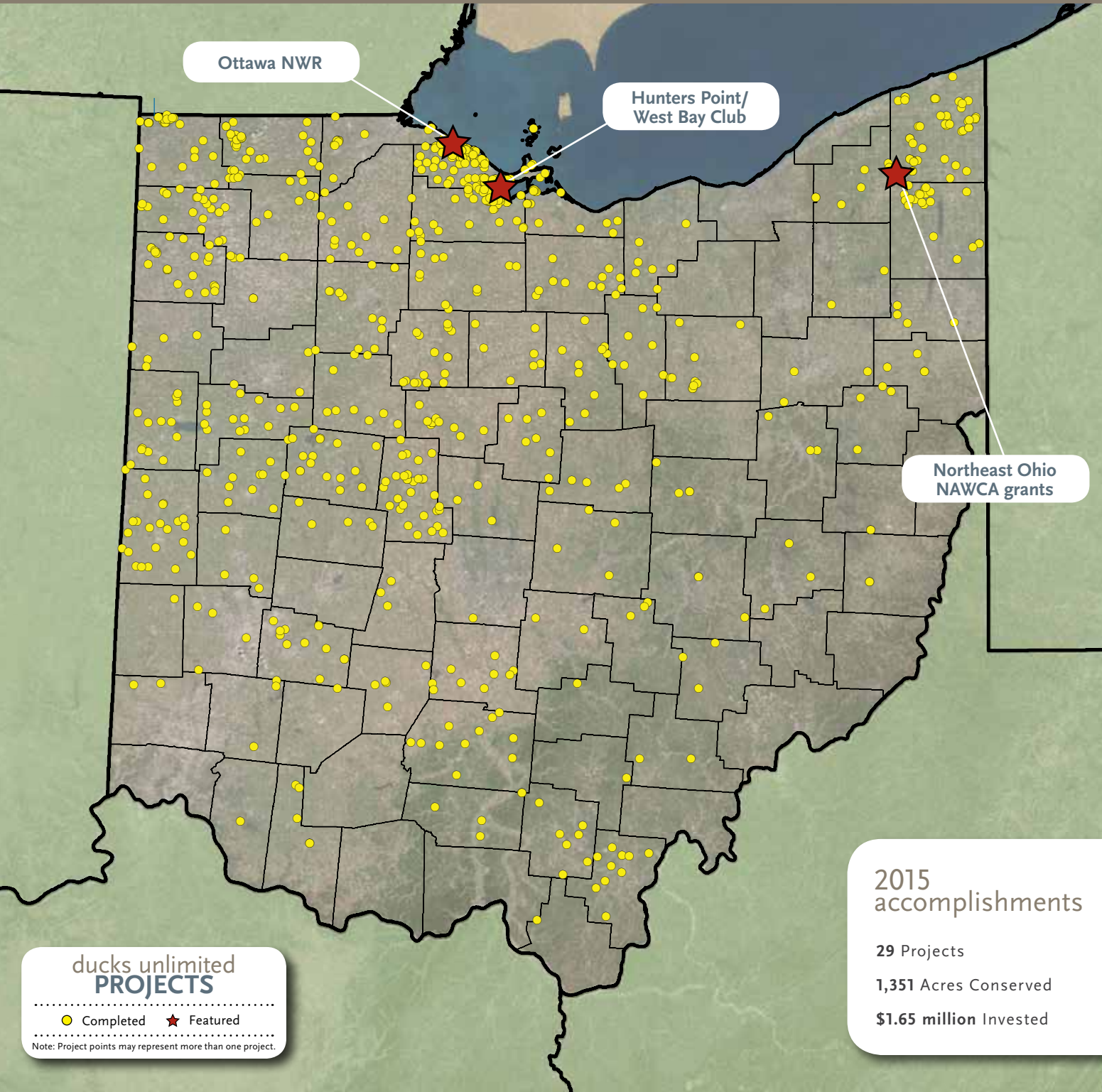


*A duck's-eye view of the restored Hunters Point @ West Bay Club in Ottawa County.*

In 2015, four wetland projects were completed in partnership with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and Ottawa County Soil & Water Conservation District. Collectively, these projects restored 130 acres of emergent wetlands, including:

- a five-acre wetland in Wood County.
- 95 acres of emergent wetlands on two projects in Ottawa County.
- two wetlands totaling 30 acres at Hunters Point & West Bay Club in Ottawa County.

Another eight projects are in progress and should be completed in 2016. Contact Ducks Unlimited for more information.



MEET YOUR OHIO CONSERVATION STAFF



*R*uss Terry has worked for Ducks Unlimited since 1998. He is responsible for the delivery of DU’s habitat conservation programs in Ohio and manages the land protection program for the 21-state Great Lakes/Atlantic Region. Russ has a Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management from Lake Superior State University and a Masters degree in Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Russ lives in Grass Lake, MI, with his wife, Jen, and daughters, Emma and Layne.

**Contact Information:**  
 Russ Terry, Manager of Conservation Programs, rterry@ducks.org 734.623.2000

## LAKE ERIE MARSH ASSOCIATION PARTNERS ON OHIO CONSERVATION



*From left: Russ Terry, DU Manager of Ohio Conservation Programs; Brian Lindhurst from Sweeney's Marsh; Russ Givens, assistant vice president, operations, Cargill Deicing Technology; and Mike Sweeney from Sweeney's Marsh celebrate a successful hunt in Ohio.*

Sportsmen and women across the country who step up to help conservation efforts are valuable partners to Ducks Unlimited.

In northwest Ohio, the Lake Erie Marsh Association continues to grow its support of Ducks Unlimited throughout the year. The association is composed of local hunt clubs near the southwest corner of Lake Erie.

That support peaks each October during the annual Ohio Partnership Hunt. A total of 20 private hunting clubs and landowners opened their facilities to event participants. Lake Erie Marsh Association clubs, such as historic Demars Point Hunting and Fishing Club, Sweeney's Marsh and Winous Point Shooting Club, participated.

The event is a unique, invitation-only national event designed to show DU supporters and stakeholders the incredible results that happen when like-minded organizations collaborate on conservation projects.

"The Ohio Hunt doesn't happen without Lake Erie Marsh Association clubs participating," said Russ Terry, DU's manager of conservation program for Ohio.

The event was centered in Port Clinton, with various hunts taking place on association hunting grounds across the Lake Erie marsh region. Participants were treated to three days of outdoors opportunities including hunting, conservation tours, dining and awards.

"We do it to educate our supporters on the conservation work DU and our partners are doing, locally, regionally and nationally, specific to the Great Lakes marsh regions," Terry said.

DU appreciates the efforts by association members to promote conservation and responsible sportsmanship.



*DU CEO Dale Hall thanks Fred Zink, owner of Zink Calls and a member of the Lake Erie Marsh Association, during the Ohio Hunt for his support for DU.*

### A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Ohio 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 Ohio 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 Ohio. We appreciate your support and are eager to build on this success in 2016.



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**

1220 Eisenhower Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48108  
734.623.2000 • 734.623.2035 (Fax)