

CONSERVATION UPDATE

Ducks Unlimited's conservation efforts in Virginia are focused on restoring and enhancing coastal marshes, moist-soil wetlands and forested floodplains and swamps, while simultaneously protecting key habitat from development. DU has conserved nearly 47,500 acres of habitat in Virginia, benefiting not only waterfowl, but also other wetland dependent wildlife and the people of Virginia. Recent projects included the acquisition of an easement for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and enhancements to the Richardson Tract, Princess Anne Wildlife Management Area – Beasley Tract and Great Dismal Swamp



National Wildlife Refuge. DU is focused on working through partnerships to enhance waterfowl and wetland habitats on federal and state lands that benefit public hunting opportunities. DU also works with private land owners that have made commitments to the future by perpetually protecting their properties with conservation easements, and we coordinate with other organizations to increase land protection efforts in key areas of the Commonwealth.

MAJOR SPONSOR REPORT

Virginia's Campaign Committee secured 6 new life sponsors and 20 upgrades in 2016. Clearly the people of Virginia understand that giving to Ducks Unlimited is the soundest investment they can make in the future of wetlands, waterfowl and waterfowl hunting.

Mark and Jessica Hamby are two of Virginia's dedicated sponsors. They have gone above and beyond in their support of DU and conservation. Mark has been a volunteer on the Richmond Committee for over 20 years and helped with the revitalization of the Richmond Chapter in 2003-04. Mark also played a leadership role in starting the Randolph-Macon University Chapter in 2016 and works with the Hanover DU Committee. He and Jessica are Sponsors in Perpetuity and Grand Slam Life Sponsors, and they in the process of putting a conservation easement on their 140-acre property on the Little River. Mark and Jessica have 3 three wonderful children. "I have always been a believer in the golden rule, treat others the way you would like to be treated. I believe this extends to the world around us as well," Mark said. "Many folks like to talk about how great things were in the good old days. We all need to do our part to make sure that there are good old days for our children and generations to come to look fondly back on."



Mike Baudhuin is another of VADU's dedicated sponsors. Mike has been attending DU events for over 30 years. His passion for conserving our natural resources comes from the days of his youth enjoying the woods and marshes of northern Wisconsin. He remembers clearly the annual migration of waterfowl through the Great Horicon Marsh. Although Mike is not a hunter, he is creating a legacy of conservation by giving generously to Ducks Unlimited as a Feather Society Member and a Major Sponsor.

His farm on the Rapidan River has been placed in a conservation easement to ensure that the land and its creatures will always be protected. "I view preserving our natural resources and ensuring clean water and natural wildlife for future generations as an obligation. After much examination, I found that Ducks Unlimited is extremely effective in conserving and reducing the pressure on these finite resources," Mike said.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT - RICHARDSON TRACT

Longtime DU members and volunteers, Tim and Susie Brown, recently completed an enhancement project on 92 acres of prime waterfowl habitat on their property in Accomack County. Known as the Richardson Tract, the property lies adjacent to Doe Creek and Saxis wildlife management areas and was protected under a perpetual conservation easement donated to the Eastern Shore Land Trust in 2015, cementing Tim and Susie's longtime commitment to conservation in Virginia.

This project was funded by the Virginia Tidal Rivers and Bays I North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant awarded to DU in 2016. Grant funds were matched with landowner funds to create new embankments, establish berms, and install water control structures with tide gates. This enhancement work has improved water circulation capability and diversity of water level management to provide optimal habitat to waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds that utilize the Eastern Shore of Virginia during their life cycles. This project complements adjacent public land work and will expand migrating, foraging and breeding habitat for fish and wildlife frequenting the Chesapeake Bay. The Delmarva Peninsula is particularly important for breeding American black ducks, and the site is used annually by VDGIF for winter banding. DU is very proud to have partnered with the Browns on this enhancement project.



CONSERVATION PARTNER - VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

DU and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR) recently partnered to protect 230 acres of hardwood bottomland on the Nottoway River. VDCR is a state conservation agency, protecting and managing soil and water resources across the Commonwealth and owning and managing the state's parks and natural area preserves. One of these is the Cypress Bridge Natural Area Preserve, part of a 5-mile corridor of mature and old-growth bald cypress-tupelo forests along the Nottoway River in Southampton County. Supported by a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant and in partnership with the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund and conservation-minded landowners, DU and VDCR permanently protected strategic wetland habitat downstream from Cypress Bridge NAP. This protection will help to ensure a forested corridor remains along the river. VDCR and DU look forward to building on this successful model and conserving additional forested wetlands in this region.

VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISING REPORT

Volunteers are the heartbeat of Ducks Unlimited, and Virginia has some of the best. Virginia boasts more than 16,000 members, including more than 1,270 volunteers who hosted 106 events in 2016, raising \$1.4 million to support DU's conservation mission. Those dollars ensure DU's continued work in Virginia and on the breeding grounds that produce Virginia's waterfowl.

As our biologists will tell you about old wetlands, the seeds are in the ground just waiting for water to come back and start the regeneration process. That is very similar to what happened in Pittsylvania County in 2015. Once home to two chapters (Robert L. Neal III and Danville), by 2004 there were no active chapters in the county.



Adding the "water" that is new volunteer leadership, a core group of waterfowl hunters had a recruitment event in the spring of 2015 and decided that 10 years without a chapter was way too long. They formed the Old Belt Chapter that combined the old chapter regions. With a committee of 15 volunteers, they planned their first banquet for the fall of 2015. This was not going to be a "kick off" event with 50 to 60 people, but an event to show everyone that DU was back in Pittsylvania County! They had more than 180 attendees and a net/net of just over \$29,000! Yes, DU was back!! They were the No. 1 new event in VADU that year, receiving awards at the state convention. But this group did not rest on their laurels. They set their sights higher for the 2016 banquet, and in November they had a net/net of over \$52,000 and with more than 340 in attendance! Using the DU National Chapter

Excellence Award criteria, this year they are the No.1 overall chapter in Virginia!! The awards did not stop there either. The chapter chairman was selected as the State Area Chairman of the Year!! Congratulations Cabell Barrow and the entire Old Belt Chapter!

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



**SOUTHERN
REGION**

193 BUSINESS PARK DRIVE, SUITE E
RIDGELAND, MS 39157