

CONSERVATION SUMMARY

Nebraska is fortunate to have two initiatives working to conserve the state's wetlands and waterfowl habitat. The *Rainwater Basin Initiative* is going strong with 28 conservation projects already planned for 2009. The *Platte River Initiative* is also on schedule for 17 projects. Currently, Ducks Unlimited has protected over 2,506 acres through conservation easements on the Platte River, with an additional 1,200 acres of conservation easements planned for 2009. Throughout the state in 2008, DU protected 1,878 acres, restored or enhanced 1,289 acres and provided technical assistance on 4,000 acres. Since 1992, DU has conserved 44,213 acres and spent \$14,212,458 on efforts in Nebraska.

In 2008, DU formed a unique partnership with the Platte River Habitat Foundation. The foundation purchased a property adjacent to Bassway Strip Wildlife Management Area in Buffalo County. In October, the foundation transferred ownership to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The property will now be part of the WMA and open to public hunting. DU will be working with the Commission in 2009 to restore the wetlands on the property and improve waterfowl habitat.

In 2009, DU will be working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to purchase a property they will incorporate into a complex of federal Waterfowl Production Areas in Hamilton County. This land deal in the Rainwater Basin will protect migration habitat critical to waterfowl and has the restoration potential to improve 200 acres of wetlands.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2008, Nebraska had 10,007 adult and 1,511 Greenwing members!

Grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and North American Wetlands Conservation Act along with partnerships with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in 2009 will continue to help DU advance its conservation mission in Nebraska.



MATT SHAPPELL

GREEN-WINGED TEAL

PUBLIC POLICY - Climate Changes and Waterfowl

Global climate change is an issue that has been heating up for years, and will be a major focus for the federal government over the next several years. Ducks Unlimited is working with Members of Congress to ensure that there are options made available for waterfowl and wildlife habitats in any climate change legislation.

Scientists fear that in the years ahead the following changes will occur if corrective actions aren't taken:

- The prairie pothole region could lose up to 90 percent of its wetlands, reducing the number of the region's breeding ducks by as much as 69 percent.
- The Chenier Plain marshes of Louisiana, supporting over 1.3 million waterfowl today, could eventually support as little as one percent of that number.

Ducks Unlimited recommends that wetlands and grasslands restoration be a part of any legislation to combat the effects of climate change. Wetlands and grasslands store millions of tons of carbon, and with a cap-and-trade program to encourage more restoration of these habitats there can be millions more tons contained as well as creating thousands of acres of habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Rescue the Duck Factory

A Ducks Unlimited conservation campaign to perpetuate excellent waterfowl and wildlife habitat in the midst of sustainable agriculture

A HOT INVESTMENT TIP I've decided to let my duck hunting friends in on a hot investment opportunity.

Here's the deal. It's this great factory that's been in production for decades, churning out annual dividends like clockwork. Right now its risk profile is elevated, but the cost of investment is still low relative to expected returns. Are you interested?

It's called the "Duck Factory."

You look skeptical, so let me give you more details. Those ducks you enjoy every year are produced from basic raw materials: wetlands and grasslands. Those materials – especially grasslands – are disappearing. If they do, the factory output tanks. Initially, you may not notice a change in the number of ducks over your decoys. More than likely, you'll notice it first in your duck season regulations.

We've had liberal seasons for so long that many hunters don't know anything different. But take this year. If there had been 19 percent (1.47 million) fewer mallards, our season length and bag limit would be halved.

If you would like to make a major donation to Rescue the Duck Factory, contact Dave Afton, Dir. of Development at dafion@ducks.org

Losing most of our Conservation Reserve Program grassland, which seems inevitable, means 2 million fewer ducks in the fall flight.



A quarter of those are mallards. That puts us over a third of the way to restrictive regulations, without even counting the loss of native prairie we've been experiencing.

So here's the investment strategy. Buy perpetual easements to secure the raw materials. Get them while they're cheap and available. *Rescue the Duck Factory* and enjoy the annual dividends.

It's the best deal going right now.

-Jim Ringelman, Director of Conservation Programs for Dakotas and Montana

NEBRASKA PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Word spread quickly when Ducks Unlimited purchased the Carey property in Clay County, Nebraska. The property is next to the Hansen Waterfowl Production Area that is owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Soon after the purchase, DU received a note from Jerry E. Bryan in Oklahoma expressing his appreciation to DU for conserving this property. Jerry remembers his late father, Daniel Edward Bryan Sr., hunting the Hansen area and saying it was "the best duck hunt of my life." His father often remarked that someone needed to buy the Carey property and restore its valuable wetlands.

DU has fulfilled the senior Bryan's far-sighted vision. DU purchased the 320-acre property in October 2008 with funds contributed by major sponsors of the *Rainwater Basin Initiative* and a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. DU will restore the wetland complex by removing a levee, plugging drainage ditches and replanting native grasses. Once restored, DU hopes to sell or transfer ownership of the Carey property to a conservation buyer. Public hunting will be allowed during the 2009-2010 hunting season. Jerry and his family are honoring their father's memory by becoming major sponsors of DU and contributing to the restoration efforts on the Carey property.



DU NEBRASKA GRASSROOTS & CONSERVATION



The minimum conservation goal for each state is to spend the equivalent of 7.5% of total grassroots income raised in that state. This is based on a five-year average.