A Word From Our Chairman

Happy New Year!

Save the date and Register for the 2017 Illinois State Convention! http://www.ducks.org/illinois/events/44149/state-convention-dinner

Join us at the State Chairman’s awards luncheon where I’m pleased to announce that Rogers Hoyt Jr. who was elected as DU’s 1st Vice President in June 2015., will be our Keynote speaker. He will be DU’s President come June 2017.

I would like to thank Bob Dunn and the State Convention Committee for all of their dedication and effort in putting the convention on this year. I look forward to seeing you join us Feb. 3rd & 4th, as we recognize the great volunteers of Illinois Ducks Unlimited.

Following the luncheon we will once again have our great round table conversation discussion with many of our DU leadership and conservation staff present to talk about DU Illinois conservation efforts. The day will be finished off with our usual great Saturday night banquet. Illinois DU had another great fundraising year for calendar 2016 all due to the dedication and effort put forth by our volunteers. This has been all possible by your hard work and dedication to the mission of Ducks Unlimited. Thank you!

I have enjoyed working with all our volunteers over this past year in keeping the DU mission strong with all your much-appreciated efforts.

I look forward to working with you this 80th year in DU history to this end and hope to share lasting friendships and success with all of you.

I look forward to seeing you all soon for the 2017 convention in Peoria.

Sincerely,

Dennis Wooten
State Chairman
**Help Save the Illinois Ducks Unlimited License Plates**

WE NEED 1,000 OF OUR ILLINOIS DU SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES ON THE ROAD NOW!

Keep spreading the word about our Specialty License plate! As of October 16th, we have 652 registered motor vehicles on the road with our Illinois Ducks Unlimited Specialty License Plates. If someone you know has an Illinois Sporting Series Specialty License on their vehicle, ask them to consider switching to an Illinois Ducks Unlimited Specialty License Plate! $25 from every one of our license plates comes back to us and is used for habitat projects right here in Illinois.

Go to http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/ and click on “Pick-A-Plate” to order your DU license plate today.

Do you already have an Illinois Ducks Unlimited Specialty License Plate?
Great! Thank you! Now, send me a copy of your vehicle registration along with your email address and phone number to the address below and I’ll enter you into a raffle for a chance at one of the guns on our Dream Gun Giveaway.

Do you have two or more Illinois Ducks Unlimited Specialty License Plates?
Outstanding — you are a DU Rock Star! Send copies of them all — each vehicle registration with one of our Specialty License Plates gets the owner entered into the raffle.

Don’t have our Illinois Ducks Unlimited Specialty License Plate and still want a chance to win a gun off our Dream Gun Giveaway?
Order your Illinois Ducks Unlimited Specialty License Plate through the Secretary of State’s Office. Send me a copy of the registration and you’re in the Dream Gun Giveaway. BUT DON’T WAIT TOO LONG TO ORDER YOUR PLATE! It takes the Illinois Secretary of States Office 60 -90 days to issue Personalized or Vanity license plates.

Drawing will be at the 2017 Illinois Ducks Unlimited State Convention on February 5th in Peoria, IL. You don’t have to be present to win.

Ducks Unlimited
c/o Bill Sarafin
P.O. Box 587
Oregon, IL 61061

Questions? Want to help get more of our Specialty License Plates on the road? Call Bill Sarafin @ 815-440-5494.

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**Become a sponsor & Save an Acre**

Each year, more than 80,000 acres of wetlands disappear in the United States. When a wetland is lost, we all lose. Wetlands are vital not only to waterfowl and other wildlife, but also to the very quality of life on earth.

By becoming a DU Sponsor, your $250.00 sponsorship will save one acre of wetlands! The newly established Illinois State Sponsor Committee is there to help chapters increase and maintain Illinois Sponsor numbers.

The Statewide goal is to increase Sponsor numbers to 2,500 a 10% increase. We can do it, but only with your help.

Please find the Illinois DU Sponsor Committee contact information below and give them a call to see what Ideas they have to help increase and maintain sponsor numbers for your chapter.

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**Illinois Ducks Unlimited Sponsor Committee.**

**Chairman:** Todd Johnson
217-494-7755
midlands@comcast.net

**NE Region:** Scott Hilpert
847-417-1735
Scott.Hilpert@ubs.com

**NW Region:** Mark Swegle
815-440-2410
mswegle@gmail.com

**NE Region:** Bill Beckmeyer
630-697-6533
fowltalker@aol.com

**Central Region:** Merlin & Michelle Horath
217-737-8708
mhorath@gmail.com

**South Region:** Denny Ward
618-498-9855
wardfinancial@gtec.com

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It’s a tragic fact: Every 6 minutes, the United States loses nearly one acre of wetlands.
Upcoming Events:

**State Convention Dinner:** Saturday Feb. 4th 2017
Tickets Available now: [http://www.ducks.org/illinois/events/44149/state-convention-dinner](http://www.ducks.org/illinois/events/44149/state-convention-dinner)

- Horseshoe Lake Dinner
  Saturday, January 21, 2017
- Salt Creek Hunt - Green Acres Sportsman Club
  Saturday, January 21, 2017
- Chatham Chili Dinner and Gun Bash
  Saturday, January 28, 2017
- State Convention Dinner
  Saturday, February 4, 2017
- McHenry Fox Flyway Dinner
  Thursday, February 9, 2017
- White County Dinner
  Saturday, February 11, 2017
- Springfield Firearm Frenzy- 60 Guns
  Saturday, February 11, 2017
- Quincy Waterfowler Party & Firearms Frenzy
  Friday, February 17, 2017
- Rock River Dinner
  Saturday, February 18, 2017
- Chain-O-Lakes Dinner - Maravelas Fox Lake
  Friday, February 24, 2017

**2017 National Convention to be held in San Antonio.**

Mark your calendars and make your plans now to attend the Ducks Unlimited's 80th National Convention!

**When:** May 31 - June 4, 2017
**Where:** San Antonio, Texas

Host Hotel: Marriott Rivercenter
101 Bowie Street
San Antonio, TX 78205

Hotel Registration Information
[Click here](http://www.ducks.org/illinois/events/44149/state-convention-dinner) to book your group rates now for the 2017 DU National Convention.

**IL. STATE CONVENTION: BEGINS Friday Feb. 3rd.**

**Friday February 3, 2017**
6:00pm Registration
7:30-9:30pm Welcome Party.
Wear your favorite sport jersey (football, baseball, basketball, hockey, etc...) come out for pre super bowl party. Wings and taco bar, raffles, games, and band. 11:00pm - Hospitality, raffles

**Saturday February 4, 2017**
9:00 -10:00am –Conservation & Calendar Committee Meetings
10:00 -11:00am –Youth & Education, Sponsor and State Campaign Committee Meetings
11:00 -2:00pm - Chairman’s Luncheon & Awards Ceremony
2:00 -3:30pm - Conservation Update
2:00 -3:30pm - Decoy Painting & Dog training seminar from Green Acres Sportsman Club.
5:00 -6:00pm - Major Donor Reception
6:00 –10:30pm - Convention Banquet
[http://www.ducks.org/illinois/events/44149/state-convention-dinner](http://www.ducks.org/illinois/events/44149/state-convention-dinner)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact.

Bob Dunn
217-827-5814
**Illinois Ducks Unlimited Contacts**

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<th>Central Illinois Chapter Startups Needed</th>
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<th>Northwestern Illinois Chapter Startups Needed</th>
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<td>Areas in Northeastern Illinois needing additional Volunteers</td>
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<td>Pike County</td>
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<td>CONTACT: <a href="mailto:Kstefanin@ducks.org">Kstefanin@ducks.org</a></td>
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<td>Jacksonville</td>
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<td>Pekin</td>
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<td>CONTACT: <a href="mailto:JKing@ducks.org">JKing@ducks.org</a></td>
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**Northern Illinois Chapter Startups Needed**

- Robinson
- O’Fallon
- Vandalia
- Mascoutah

**Southern Illinois Chapter Startups Needed**

- Robinson
- O’Fallon
- Vandalia
- Mascoutah

**Areas in Northeastern Illinois needing additional Volunteers**

- Naperville
- Aurora
- Bolingbrook
- Kankake

**CONTACT:** Kstefanin@ducks.org

**Illinois Ducks Unlimited Contacts**

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<th>State Youth &amp; Education Chairman</th>
<th>State Sponsor Chair</th>
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<td>Mark Schore@<a href="mailto:schore_mark@cat.com">schore_mark@cat.com</a></td>
<td>Vicki Mandurano@<a href="mailto:vmandurano@hotmail.com">vmandurano@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Todd Johnson@<a href="mailto:midlandsg@comcast.net">midlandsg@comcast.net</a></td>
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<td><strong>Regional Biologist-Illinois</strong></td>
<td><strong>State Webmaster</strong></td>
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<td>Senior Vice President</td>
<td>Regional Biologist-Indiana</td>
<td>Jonathan Fields@<a href="mailto:jfields@jfields.com">jfields@jfields.com</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>Rex Schulz</td>
<td>(Leading Projects in Southern Illinois)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Vice President</td>
<td>Mike <a href="mailto:Sertle@ducks.org">Sertle@ducks.org</a></td>
<td>Bill Harter@<a href="mailto:archmasonryinc@comcast.net">archmasonryinc@comcast.net</a></td>
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<td>Relations</td>
<td>Rob Dunn@<a href="mailto:capt-emp@hotmail.com">capt-emp@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-Large Member</td>
<td>Troy LaRue@<a href="mailto:tiarue@ducks.org">tiarue@ducks.org</a></td>
<td><strong>State Shooting Chairman</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diane Oberhelman</td>
<td>Director of Development</td>
<td>Rob <a href="mailto:Bockstruck@rob.bockstruck">Bockstruck@rob.bockstruck</a>@yahoo.com</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ducks Unlimited Staff</strong></td>
<td>James Roberts@<a href="mailto:jroberts@ducks.org">jroberts@ducks.org</a></td>
<td><strong>State eNewsletter Editor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Regional Director-NW Illinois</td>
<td>Regional Biologist-Indiana</td>
<td>Ryan <a href="mailto:Nikolich@R.Nikolich">Nikolich@R.Nikolich</a>@gmail.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brett Brown@<a href="mailto:bbrrown2@ducks.org">bbrrown2@ducks.org</a></td>
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**Are you ready to get involved?**

Just as ducks need us to help provide adequate habitat for their migration, IL DU needs chapters in the following areas. If you know of anyone or have friends in these areas, please contact the state chairman or your local Regional Director.

**Banding Together for Waterfowl**

**www.ILDU.org**
State Convention Keynote Speaker: Rogers Hoyt

You may have read on page one of this newsletter that the key note speaker next month at the Illinois State convention dinner is Rogers Hoyt.

Rogers Hoyt and his wife Camille are ranchers in Texas. Their operation is centered around beef cattle, rice, and wildlife. Rogers is an avid waterfowler and has been a Ducks Unlimited volunteer since 1982. He is Past President of DU Mexico and continues to serve on the DUMAC board. He is a member of the DU Canada board of directors. He serves Ducks Unlimited as First Vice President. He will become president this June.

Here is a story about Rogers that was published in the DU 2013 Annual Report.

When Rogers Hoyt, Jr., looks back on his life, three powerful things lie at the heart of his story: family, faith, and friendship. Interwoven with each is a passion for the outdoors. "I was raised on a rice farm on the Texas Gulf Coast and my whole family hunted - grandfathers, father, and cousins. These great people were part of Ducks Unlimited and led me to the organization during my time in the field," he said. "What really drove me to be involved with conservation was my appreciation of God's beautiful creations. Making sure these birds are available forever is at the heart of my stewardship."

These values have underpinned Rogers' efforts as he has risen through DU's ranks to become president of Ducks Unlimited de Mexico (DUMAC) and the advisory senior vice president of membership on DU's board of directors. He and his wife, Camille, are also DU Heritage Sponsors.

Rogers' career as a DU volunteer began in the mid-1980s when he served on a local committee. From there, he would become a zone chairman, district chairman, and finally Texas state chairman in 1992. After serving as state chair, Rogers tells of how friend and past DU President Johnny Walker first asked him to serve on DU's board of directors, and then recruited him for the DUMAC board. "We were hunting partners and we grew to be close friends - how could I tell him no?" Rogers said.

"It was natural with my concern for what happens across the border that I be involved with DUMAC," Rogers continued. "If you live in South Texas, you are connected to Mexico, its culture, and its special people. Many of the wetlands in Mexico are pristine, and as a DUMAC volunteer, I want to see those habitats protected in perpetuity."

Beginning their journey in Canada and migrating down the flyways, many of the birds we see in the United States each year spend the winter in the mangrove swamps and other diverse habitats of Mexico. During these cold months, Mexico hosts most of North America's teal population and large numbers of pintails, as well as other many species of waterfowl and shorebirds.

After serving as vice president for five years and helping the organization reach nearly 2 million acres of protected habitat, Rogers was named DUMAC's new president at the 2013 DU National Convention in Portland, Oregon. Under his steadfast leadership, DUMAC will celebrate its landmark 40th anniversary in 2014.

Of all the aspects of DU's work that have inspired Rogers' leadership over the years, he says one of the most impressive has been its impact on society. "Restored wetlands prevent storm damage and help purify our drinking water," he explained. "The work DU does throughout North America benefits all of us."

Over the years, Rogers has also passed on his lifelong respect for conservation to his son, Rogers Hoyt III. "He was 8 years old when I was Texas state chair, so he grew up in the DU culture," the elder Rogers said. "I know he will continue to be environmentally responsible; he has the same love of waterfowl and wildlife I have."

Join us Feb 3rd & 4th to Celebrate the Ducks 80th Year.

FILL THE SKIES

BECOME A DU VOLUNTEER
MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

ILLINOIS
Dinner Incentive Coupons:

WINDY CITY
DUCKS UNLIMITED

Good for one FREE upgrade to an Early Bird Raffle pack when a Dinner / Membership ticket is purchased.

This offer is good for the March 23rd, 2017 Windy City Annual Banquet at the Elmcrest Banquet Facility.
Must redeem this certificate at purchase.

William (Bill) Fester Area Chairman
Windy City Ducks Unlimited
Photograph by: Jim Matthiessen

Congratulations to Bob Reiss and Bruce Hartel and the Steelville Ducks Unlimited Committee for all their hard work and success over the past 40 years. They again filled the American Legion hall for their 40th Annual Banquet and raised more money again to rescue our wetlands.

Where is my Chapter’s Event?

Want to see your event in the Bi-Monthly Newsletter? Have a great new idea to share? Celebrating a decade or more of an annual event? Running a new event? Have a raffle that succeeded it’s expectations?

Great! Send me and email with a short story & a photo & we will include it in the next newsletter.

Illinois Ducks Unlimited Newsletter Editor: Ryan Nikolich
R.Nikolich@Gmail.com
Conservation Corner: Projects conserving 4,435 Acres

Recently completed: 1695 Acres

Turkey Bayou Enhancement (22 acres – Jackson Co.): DU used 3 grants to help complete this project: NAWCA, IL State Habitat, and Wildlife Cons. Soc. Climate Adaptation, in addition to partner funding provided by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS)– Shawnee National Forest – DU engineers redesigned the management infrastructure for remnant oxbow habitat of the Big Muddy River.

Brushy Bayou Enhancement (150 acres – Jackson Co.): DU used 3 grants to help complete this project: NAWCA, IL State Habitat, and WCS Climate Adaptation, in addition to partner funding provided by the USFS – DU engineers redesigned the management infrastructure for remnant oxbow habitat of the Big Muddy River.

GreenTree Unit 26 & Otter Slough Enhancement (560 acres – Jackson Co.): DU used a NAWCA grant and USFS contributed other federal funds – DU engineers redesigned the water distribution infrastructure and re-constructed sub-impoundment berms for this managed “GreenTree reservoir”, a flooded oak and hickory bottomland hard-wood forest.

Cemetery Road Enhancement (63 acres – Jackson Co.): DU used IL Lic. Plate funds to work with USFS to enhance seasonal emergent wetlands – this project also was a cooperative agreement with the local road commissioner and a neighboring ag. landowner, and will provide benefits for not only waterfowl and wetlands, but nutrient filtration, erosion reduction, and groundwater re-charge.

Hamm-West Stewart Lake Donation (754 acres – Mason Co.): DU completed the donation of this property to the IL DNR at the end of September. The property will be added to the existing ownership of Sangamon FWA, and managed by the IL DNR for waterfowl and public benefit.

Hagemann Acquisition (347 acres – Woodford Co.): DU used a small NAWCA and IL Clean Energy funds to purchase this property on Upper Peoria Lake this past fall. DU is currently finalizing the donation of the property to IL DNR for addition onto the southern end of Woodford Co. FWA. The IL DNR will manage it for public use.

10 Projects planned that will conserve 2,470 acres:

- GreenTree Units 19-21 Enhancement (700 acres – Jackson Co.): DU will combine NAWCA funds with USFS funds to enhance flooded oak and hickory bottomland hardwood forest. DU engineers have completed the design for the infrastructure upgrades, and construction is slated for next Summer/Fall.

- Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Reforestation (610 acres – Alexander, Pulaski, and Union Cos.): DU is combining NAWCA and WCS Climate funds with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – Cypress Creek NWR funds to reforest flood-prone ag. lands along the Cache River back to mast-producing bottomland hardwood forest and cypress-tupelo swamp. The FWS has completed half of the reforestations to-date, and will complete the remaining half over the next 2-3 years.

- Oakwood Bottoms GreenTree Reservoir Timber Stand Improvements (415 acres – Jackson Co.): DU is combining WCS Climate funds and National Forest Foundation funds to enhance individual GreenTree units remove invasive “soft mass” timber, thin hardwood stands to healthy densities, open up holes in the canopy to encourage sunlight, and supplemental planting of hardwood seedlings. The USFS began these activities this past Fall and will complete them by next Fall.

- Jenkins Marsh Restoration (67 acres – Woodford Co.): DU is currently working with FWS and IDNR to restore 35 acres of tall-grass prairie, 15 acres of wet prairie, and 17 acres of emergent wetlands, in addition to removing and controlling invasive Phragmites, trees, and other noxious weeds. DU and partners started the prairie restoration in early December, and will implement additional wetland enhancements and planting in the Spring. The final restoration of the Main Marsh will be planned for completion within the next 2-3 years, followed by transfer of ownership to the IL DNR for inclusion into Woodford Co. FWA.

- Webb Tract Reforestation (80 acres – Alexander Co.): DU secured a reforestation grant from the Arbor Day Foundation to complete the reforestation of the Webb Tract, located in northern Alexander Co. The entire 160-acre property is currently owned by Heartlands Conservancy, and is being restored and reforested in a partnership with the FWS-Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and DU. The FWS will provide wetland restoration assistance with funding secured by DU’s Heart of the Big Rivers NAWCA grant, and DU will provide the bottomland hardwood tree seedlings for the reforestation. This project will then be purchased by the USFS for inclusion into the Shawnee National Forest, and will be open to public recreation.

- Oakwood Bottoms GreenTree Reservoir Oak Openings (35 acres – Jackson Co.): DU and the USFS are creating 35 acres in-total of Oak Openings at Oakwood Bottoms Greentree Reservoir in southern Jackson Co. As another component of improving forest health and increasing waterfowl habitat and use within the “4,500-acre Oakwood Bottoms, small openings are being created through the management area to create “timber holes” for waterfowl to utilize. The areas are being mechanically thinned to create areas that will provide moist soil pockets throughout the bottomland hard-wood timber, and also provide improved hunter access and success. This project will begin in the Summer.

- Brooks Tract Acquisition (57 acres – Jackson Co.): DU will be utilizing grant funds from its Heart of the Big Rivers NAWCA grant to purchase this 57-acre wetland from Heartlands Conservancy. Heartlands purchased it from a private landowner in order to “secure it” until DU and the USFS were able to obtain the necessary acquisition funds. Located in the center of the USFS’ Big Muddy Wetlands Complex just south of Oakwood Bottoms, DU will donate this property to the USFS for inclusion into the Shawnee NF. The USFS will manage it as a seasonal wetland and it will be open for public recreation.

- HayGlade Moist Soil/Greentree Unit 28 Restoration (321 acres – Jackson Co.) Utilizing funds from its Heart of the Big Rivers NAWCA grant, and in partnership with the USFS, NWTF, and the Sand Ridge Road Commission, DU will be creating both a new moist soil unit and a flooded hardwoods unit at Oakwood Bottoms. This project will allow the USFS to flood these acres for the first time since the establishment of the Big Muddy River levee, which has stopped the natural flooding of these wetlands.

- Big Muddy Units 2, 17, & 18 (107 acres – Jackson Co.) Again utilizing funds from its Heart of the Big Rivers NAWCA grant, DU and USFS are going to restore remnant oxbow wetlands within the floodplain of the Big Muddy River. Located within the bends of the Big Muddy River, these oxbows have become degraded due to head cutting during flood events which has led to premature de-watering of the wetlands. These restoration efforts will begin in the Fall.

- Owens Tract Restoration (80 acres – Johnson Co.) Located adjacent to the Cache River, the IL DNR will utilize funds from DU’s Heart of the Big Rivers NAWCA grant to restore this former agricultural field back to bottomland hardwood forest. This property will be managed by IL DNR, and opened to public recreation.

We look forward to sharing more details about our work. You can always visit www.ducks.org/illinois for project updates, photos and other information.