MESSAGE FROM THE STATE CHAIRMAN
Mark Low

Hello DU Members and Volunteers,

I just returned from an amazing Ducks Unlimited National Convention held at the Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Tennessee. It was my first national convention, and it was an outstanding week celebrating 75 years of successful wetlands conservation! The week was filled with tours, entertainment, special guest speakers, executive meetings, camaraderie, and fun activities for the whole family.

Several dignitaries addressed the record crowd of more than 1,400 attendees. Among the convention highlights were a special meeting with Interior Secretary Ken Salazar as he signed a revision to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The Pew Charitable Trusts and DU extended their partnership for another 10 years and redoubled efforts to safeguard Canada's boreal forest, the largest intact forest on earth.

Dozens of influential speakers graced the convention stage, including Tennessee Senator Lamar Alexander and Governor Bill Haslam; friends from throughout the outdoor and conservation industries, such as The Outdoor Channel and "Field & Stream" magazine; and top executives from the DU trifecta (Ducks Unlimited Inc., DU Canada, and DU de Mexico).

The convention ended on a high note with a surprise $75 million estate gift commitment from three members of the Wetlands America Trust (WAT) board.

More than 40 California DU supporters were in attendance and, from what I could tell, all had a great time. More information about the convention is covered in this newsletter.

If you missed Nashville and want to experience a DU National Convention, mark your calendar now and plan on attending next year in Portland, Oregon. DU's 76th National Convention will be held May 22 – 26, 2013.

Please feel free to contact me any time at (530) 249-3286 or lowdownm@msn.com. I welcome your input and feedback.

Take a kid hunting,

Mark Low
NEW 2012-2013 STATE SPONSOR PRINT

Artist Rich Radigonda, a San Francisco native, grew up spending a lot of time on the shores of the San Francisco Bay. He was fascinated with waterfowl, and unbeknownst to his parents, he built rafts to try (unsuccessfully) to get closer to the ducks loafing near Hunter's Point.

"The Old Days" by Rich Radigonda

At a very early age, Rich was introduced to duck hunting, auto racing and air shows by his father. These three activities would shape his life. Discovering his ability to draw by age five, Rich drew ducks, race cars and World War II airplanes.

By the late ’60s, Rich began collecting antique duck decoys and developed an interest in the contemporary decoy-carving contests being held on the East Coast. He tried his hand at carving, and his fourth creation won a blue ribbon, launching his part-time art career.

Spending so much time photographing ducks inspired Rich to start painting on canvas. Many paintings followed, and the dream of winning a duck stamp art contest burned deep. After placing many times in the top five in the duck stamp competitions, winning the 2005 California Duck Stamp was a dream come true.

Rich’s achievements in art include being named Ducks Unlimited California Artist of the Year in 1987 and winning the Decoy Carver of the Year Award in 1989. He is the only artist in the nation to accomplish this task.
KEEP ‘EM COMING BACK  
By Paul R. Bonderson Jr., DU Senior Vice President of Conservation Programs

The first 75 days are critical to the mallard hen and her brood. After laying her clutch of 9 to 10 eggs, she waits. 28 days and no predators later, her ducklings hatch. But she still has to get them to flight stage. This is the time when life is most fragile for her brood – and her.

She needs cover, because even after the ducklings hatch, she must keep them warm and safe from all the perils facing small, downy ducks. She needs water – for shortly after hatching and drying their downy feathers, the ducklings must feed on small crustaceans, insects and tiny plants found in nearby wetlands. She leads her brood through grass and brush, stopping frequently to scurry along a slow mover or chase off an ominous presence. Once she reaches the water’s edge, the mallard hen also can feed while keeping a close eye on her ducklings.

If momma mallard and her ducklings can endure these first critical days and weeks, their chances of survival are high. About three months after she arrives on the breeding grounds, her first ducklings take flight. While the journey for the mallard hen and her brood is not over, at least the foundation is laid for the next stage of life.

For 75 years, DU supporters have been helping DU lay a foundation too. Their gifts have helped DU conserve more than 12.5 million acres of habitat. This habitat is what brings the ducks back year after year to the breeding grounds, to the wintering grounds and to the sky over your blind.

The next 75 days, ducklings will hatch, fledge and learn to fly. In the same 75 days, DU will conserve thousands of acres of habitat across the continent. The ducks count on this habitat, and DU counts on you to help provide it. Your gifts – year after year – ensure that the hen and her ducklings have what they need.

Can DU count on you this year? Please consider a gift of $1,000, $500 or $250 to keep the ducks coming back. If you do your part, DU will do theirs to ensure healthy and abundant habitat that produces healthy and abundant waterfowl.

Last year, gifts from people like you helped conserve more than 100,000 acres across the continent. Each acre provides a refuge for waterfowl – whether it’s the wintering grounds of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley or the migration corridor through the Rainwater Basin and playa wetlands or the breeding grounds in the Prairie Pothole Region and Boreal Forest.

Your gift not only has an impact measured in acres on the ground, it also has an impact on the science behind conservation and the policies and programs that provide funding and protection for priority landscapes. At least 80 cents of every dollar you give is invested in DU’s conservation mission. Additionally, DU matches your gift several times over with other public and private resources so your dollar does more.

Over the next 75 days, as the ducks are growing and maturing, DU will be focusing on the landscapes that mean, the most to them – and to you as a hunter, bird watcher, nature lover or just plain outdoors enthusiast. Your gift today will make a difference tomorrow. DU will use it to keep the ducks flying.
DUCKLING SURVIVAL
A variety of factors influence how many young ducks fly south each fall
By John M. Coluccy, Ph.D., and Kurt A. Anderson

Nest success has long been touted as the most important factor in maintaining healthy duck populations. But recent research indicates that duckling survival also plays a crucial role in population dynamics. The premise is simple: while eggs must hatch to produce young, young must also survive to be recruited into the breeding population. Greater duckling survival often means larger fall duck populations.

Despite its importance in population dynamics, duckling survival is one of the most poorly understood components of the waterfowl life cycle. It takes 50-70 days for ducklings to attain flight status, and survival during this period is highly variable, ranging from less than 10 percent to as high as 70 percent. The most common causes of duckling mortality include predation, adverse weather conditions, starvation, disease, and parasites. Ducklings are excellent fare for nearly every type of predator, including fish (largemouth bass and northern pike), amphibians (bullfrogs), reptiles (snakes and snapping turtles), and mammals (foxes, raccoons, mink, and feral cats). Likewise, other birds such as hawks, owls, gulls, herons, and crows will make a meal of ducklings.

Ducklings are sensitive to weather extremes. While their fuzzy down feathers are an excellent source of natural insulation in dry weather, they are of little value when wet. Ducklings also lack the additional thermal support of adult contour feathers. Cold, rainy, and windy conditions can lead to death from exposure (hypothermia) and may either reduce food availability or prevent ducklings from exploiting food resources. Additionally, ducklings can be killed by hail or above average temperatures. In the summer of 1953, an estimated 148,000 adult and young waterfowl perished because of severe hail storms in Alberta.

Research has identified several additional factors influencing duckling survival, including age of ducklings and hens, brood size and movement, hatch date, and habitat conditions. During the first week following hatch, ducklings are extremely vulnerable to hypothermia and predation. A recent study in Ontario found that daily survival of mallard ducklings was nearly nine times greater for older ducklings (those more than seven days old) than for younger ducklings. Similarly, older hens benefit from past experience raising broods, social dominance, better body condition, and the ability to devote greater resources to reproduction.

Older hens should therefore have a clear advantage when it comes to raising young. Nevertheless, a positive relationship between hen age and duckling survival has been demonstrated only in gadwall and a few other waterfowl species.
The date of hatch may influence duckling survival as well. An increase in survival of earlier-hatched ducklings has been observed in several species. Mallards and northern pintails, which are among the first ducks to nest in spring, are known to benefit from an advanced hatch date, as do many other species. This pattern is thought to be related to a decreased risk of predation, greater wetland quality and food availability, and increased maternal care earlier in the breeding season. Because early nesting females typically enjoy higher nest success and duckling survival, they may make a disproportionately large contribution to duck recruitment. Interestingly, lesser scaup may benefit from a delayed hatch, which could explain their tendency to initiate nesting after most ducklings of other species have already hatched.

Traits such as size, body condition, and gender may also be important determinants of duckling survival. Larger offspring have larger yolk reserves and may benefit from greater mobility, higher feeding efficiency, and the ability to withstand colder temperatures. Therefore, larger ducklings, which are presumably in better condition, enjoy higher survival than smaller ducklings. Few studies have evaluated differences in survival between male and female ducklings, and existing results are conflicting.

Perhaps the most important factor influencing duckling survival is habitat. Research has shown that duckling survival is greater in landscapes that contain abundant seasonal wetlands with a mix of emergent vegetation and open water. A greater density of this wetland type on the landscape provides hens and broods with options, as they are able to move in response to disturbance, foraging conditions, and pressure from predation. When seasonal wetlands are lost because of wetland drainage or drought, options for hens and ducklings are limited. Broods that travel overland in search of suitable habitat must cover greater distances between wetlands, increasing their exposure to predators. Moreover, when broods reach their destination, they are more likely to encounter mink, which also may be concentrated in remaining wetland habitats.

The number of ducklings that survive each year plays a big role in determining the size of the fall flight. The continued loss and degradation of wetlands and associated upland habitat on the breeding grounds adversely affect both nesting success and duckling survival, ultimately influencing fall duck populations. Ducks Unlimited, through its direct conservation programs, research, and public policy efforts, is working harder than ever to conserve North America’s wetlands to ensure that ducklings hatch and survive to wing their way south each autumn.
SAVE THE DATES FOR “WetlandsLIVE” DURING THE 2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR

Wetlands provide a vital link between water and land, as well as important benefits to people and the environment. Wetlands help regulate water levels within watersheds, improve water quality, reduce flood and storm damage, provide important fish and wildlife habitat, support fishing and other recreational activities and provide inspiration. Wetlands are natural wonderlands of great value.

During the 2012-13 school year, “WetlandsLIVE: A Distance Learning Adventure” will provide a year-long emphasis on wetlands featuring a series of FREE live webcasts. Wetlands around the world will be showcased to illustrate the functions and ecology of wetlands and their importance to people and wildlife, especially to migrating birds and fish. WetlandsLIVE gives teachers and students a fun, informative and interactive way to learn about wetlands.

Save these dates for free electronic field trips for students in grades 4 - 8:

**October 10, 2012 - Wading into Wetlands**
What exactly is a wetland? How does it function to benefit wildlife and people? We'll visit some special wetlands on the east and west coasts to learn about wetland ecology, watersheds, their importance to migrating fish and birds and much more.

**March 8, 2013 - Wetland Connections**
Birds, fish and other migratory species don't recognize state or international borders -- they need wetlands and habitats located in many states and countries to survive. Learn how wetlands are connected.

**May 9, 2013 - Discover Wetlands**
May is American Wetlands Month. Learn what students are doing to learn about, help and engage in their local wetlands. Visit the Chugach National Forest in Alaska, which contain the largest contiguous wetlands on the Pacific Coast of North America.

Questions? Contact Kristy Liercke at lierckkx@pwcs.edu or by calling (800) 609-2680. WetlandsLIVE is brought to you by the USDA Forest Service, Prince William Network and many other sponsors and partners.
CONSERVATION OUTLOOK FOR 2012
By Jeff McCreary, DU Director of Conservation Programs

We all have our favorite time of the year. For the waterfowler, the beginning of fall heralds what most DU members look forward to the most: duck hunting season. For DU’s conservation staff, the beginning of summer marks construction season and the culmination of years of effort. DU builds conservation projects during the most accessible and driest times of the year; we’re working in wetlands, so the drier the better!

Typically, by the time a conservation project enters the construction phase, it has already had a long life. From a great idea, an early grant proposal or an initial conceptual design, it has likely been around for more than a year, and for some of our more complicated tidal restoration projects, over 15 years! Nevertheless, summertime is construction season, and our professional engineers and biologists are hard at work ensuring our conservation investment has the highest returns.

The 2012 construction season is an exciting time, with some amazing projects getting underway or wrapping up. This summer, we will again focus our attention on conserving some of the most important public areas throughout the state. From Cibola National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to Los Banos Wildlife Area, from San Pablo NWR to Ash Creek Wildlife Area and from Sutter NWR to Tule Lake NWR, DU’s conservation projects are making a place for our birds to land this winter. But private lands are critical to conserve as well. In fact, in California there are more wetlands under private ownership than public management. Our private lands projects work in conjunction with duck clubs, rice farmers, and ranchers. This year, DU will enter into multiple conservation easement agreements with farmers and ranchers in the Sacramento Valley and Northern California to protect their properties’ innate waterfowl values.

Annually, our conservation projects vary from simple water control structure replacement to full tidal restoration. Not only does the complexity vary, but the finances do too. While replacing a structure may cost only $10,000, our tidal restoration project at the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve costs millions. To make any of these projects happen, DU’s conservation staff uses our grassroots funding to leverage other state, federal, and local grant dollars. All of the partners chip in to make a project happen that no one entity could have done by themselves. That’s the power of DU. Our grassroots dollars are the seed money that brings other partners to the table for a mutually funded conservation investment. DU is the steward of that investment, and the summer construction season is where the rubber meets the road and DU shines.
Bay Delta Conservation Plan and the Yolo Bypass
By Jeff McCreary, DU Director of Conservation Programs

As many native Californians may remember, in the 1980s, the “peripheral canal” was deemed to be one answer to our state’s water issues. While not exactly the same as its predecessor, the current Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) proposal for water conveyance is enticingly similar. This time, however, the approach includes not only some type of water conveyance infrastructure, but also provisions for extensive habitat improvements throughout the Delta and Suisun Marsh. The details are extremely complex, but in short, BDCP is an effort funded by multiple south-of-the-Delta water agencies and irrigation districts with the intention of increasing the reliability of water deliveries from the Delta and decreasing environmental impacts of such deliveries, ultimately improving the Delta ecosystem.

The Delta-ecosystem focus of BDCP has largely been on restoration of endangered fish habitat and related aquatic resources, to the tune of 60,000+ acres. While one can usually argue that more habitat is a good thing, not much of that proposed restoration would be beneficial for waterfowl, and some could even be detrimental. But through persistent pressure by DU and other conservation groups, BDCP is now incorporating waterfowl and seasonal wetlands as habitat conservation targets. With such a large amount of aquatic habitat restoration proposed for the Delta and Suisun Marsh, DU and the waterfowl community wanted to know how the long-standing and recent investments in waterfowl habitats, particularly in the Yolo Bypass, would be affected by BDCP activities. The DU conservation team is in position to answer that very question.

With funding provided by two improbable partners, the Westlands Irrigation District and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, DU conservation staff has recently constructed a method/tool to analyze and potentially help determine the outcome of what is called, “Conservation Measure 2.” This BDCP activity proposes to increase flooding in the Yolo Bypass through a manually operated weir that will provide additional opportunities for out-migrating juvenile salmon to grow on the Yolo Bypass “floodplain” before heading to the ocean. The analysis tool that DU created is a computer program that combines existing information, such as wetland size and location, topographic elevation and flooding area and duration, then forecasts a graphical representation of what various combinations of these data would look like (see the figures on the next page) and the ultimate impacts on waterfowl and wetlands.

The question DU has of the BDCP Conservation Measure 2 is: What effect will increased bypass flooding have on wintering waterfowl foraging, spring habitat conditions, and waterfowling opportunities? To begin development of the analysis tool, DU compiled current bypass land-uses and wetland distribution, topographic composition, potential inundation areas due to manipulated floods, previous wildlife area closures and energetic needs of waterfowl. The tool has proven to be reliable and will help DU analyze and report on what the effects on wetlands and waterfowl will be from man-induced changes to flooding within the bypass due to Conservation Measure 2; more water isn’t always good for ducks.

This is only a first step. There are not yet any specific proposals of what Conservation Measure 2 might be beyond the general concept to increase flooding in the bypass. BDCP has not proposed how often, what time of year, how long or under what circumstances man-made floods in the bypass might occur. When the measure does start to take shape, through development of our analysis tool, DU will have a seat at the table to scientifically guide development of the measure. BDCP is indeed coming, and we must be prepared to see that any losses to waterfowl habitat and use are not only minimized, but more than adequately compensated for.
SOUTH PACIFIC FLYWAY CONSERVATION TEAM’S
FY2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS
By Jeff McCreary, DU Director of Conservation Programs

The South Pacific Flyway conservation team continues to have a diverse array of projects that help Ducks Unlimited fulfill our mission in the western U.S. The following is a small snapshot of the many innovative, powerful and worthy wetland conservation accomplishments from Fiscal Year 2012. DU’s conservation staff continues to excel in delivering effective conservation for our partners, our members and waterfowl. Our conservation project innovation and our ability to communicate results is maturing: advanced graphic arts and videography, as well as low-level, balloon-based aerial photography are being done by our own DU staff. Collectively, the team is truly amazing, with outstanding accomplishments and an exciting future.

Fiscal Year 2012 Accomplishments:

- Broke ground on the $11 million Cullinan Ranch project, which has been in the planning phase for 15 years. The project's 1,500-acre tidal restoration will be the largest project of its kind that Ducks Unlimited has designed in house. DU has led the restoration planning, design, fundraising, project management, and construction management.

- Completed the third and final phase of the Napa Plant Site, which totaled over $10 million in construction costs and restored 1,335 acres of old salt ponds to tidal marsh.
• Underway with Klamath Basin Wetlands Phase 2 NAWCA grant projects.

• Submitted first NAWCA grant application for Fall River Valley-Big Valley in northeast California.

• Secured $1.7 million to purchase first-ever California-based Southern Oregon North East California (SONEC) planning region’s conservation easement on a 1,781-acre working cattle ranch in Honey Lake Valley. This will be used as match in an upcoming Honey Lake Valley Wetlands Phase 2 NAWCA grant application.

• Secured private foundation funding for engineering assessment of Tule Lake NWR Sump 1A. The results will help develop engineering plans to assist with water level management and result in restoration of approximately 5,000 acres of wetlands in Sump 1A.

• Secured private foundation funding that purchased materials used by Lower Klamath NWR staff for improvement to Ady Canal Headworks, which have increased water delivery capacity from approximately 125cfs to 250cfs. With the chronic water shortage on Lower Klamath NWR, this critical infrastructure improvement provides the refuge with the opportunity to quickly take available water supplies onto Lower Klamath NWR during the short time periods when water may become available.

• Nearing approval of a fourth NAWCA proposal in San Joaquin Valley and southern California that were submitted last year. The four proposals include work in the San Joaquin Basin (including one specific to the Tulare Basin) and also southern California and projects in Arizona along the LCR. A total of more than 12,927 acres of wetlands and associated habitats will be protected, restored or enhanced following completion of this work over the next few years. All projects exemplify the partnership aspect and conserve a variety of waterfowl habitats. These areas and habitats therein represent some of the most degraded landscapes in the state, if not in the nation. This funding will aid NAWMP and the Central Valley Joint Venture in carrying out their missions of conserving such vital habitats.

• Completed delivery of the Butte and Colusa Basins Wetlands Phase 2 NAWCA Project. Secured funding for the Butte and Colusa Basins Wetlands III NAWCA Project, scoring #1 in nation. Submitted the Butte and Colusa Basins Wetlands IV NAWCA proposal, which was also ranked #1 in the nation. This project series includes 12,800+ acres of protected, restored or enhanced wetland, riparian and associated upland habitats in one of the most important and most threatened areas for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife on the continent.

• Completed eight Delta Working Landscape Projects on four project sites, (Delta Gun Club, Berryhill Duck Club, Vino Farms, and Winchester Vineyards).

• Finished baseline modeling efforts for Bay Delta Conservation Plan’s Conservation Measure 2 Waterfowl Impact Analysis (see article in this newsletter).

• Completed two duck stamp projects on Grizzly Island Wildlife Refuge.

• Completed construction for Phase 3 at Moss Landing Wildlife Area, which included public access improvement and habitat enhancements.

• The long-term study ($4.4 million) of the M&T/Llano Seco Pumping plant that started in 2003 is coming to a close this year. Possible alternatives have been identified to protect the pumping plant that supplies Sacramento River water to agricultural lands and 4,000 acres of state, federal and private wetlands.

• The engineering design and specifications at the Ash Creek Wildlife Area are nearly complete and ready for construction this year pending environmental permitting approval. Over 13,000 lineal feet of pipeline is planned to be constructed, which will allow the wildlife area the flexibility to deliver water to additional wetland areas. The project is anticipated to be constructed concurrently with the Ash Creek
Wildlife Area Restoration Project, which is proposing to grade approximately 830,000 cubic yards of material within the wildlife area.

- Honey Lake Wildlife Area - Tanner Weir:
  - Ground breaking is anticipated this summer for a reinforced concrete weir that will increase the wildlife area's flexibility in providing water during dry years. The weir has been designed to retain drainage runoff to allow the wildlife area to use the water for flooding wetland units currently unable to flood up during dry years.
  - Initiated tidal restoration of Middle Bair Island on the Don Edward NWR in San Francisco Bay.
  - Added video capabilities for conservation project awareness.
  - Created multiple media pieces showcasing DU recognition and achievements (see our YouTube page at [http://www.youtube.com/user/DucksUnlimitedIncWRO](http://www.youtube.com/user/DucksUnlimitedIncWRO)).
  - Preparing for implementation of the Riverside Ranch Restoration Project (400-plus-acre, approximately $7 million tidal restoration project) near Eureka. Completing engineering reviews for the final design plans and specifications. SWPPP to bid and construct project in FY13.
  - Water-use work on the Tule Lake Sump 1-A Wetland Enhancement Project (approximately 12,000 acres) in the Klamath Basin includes modeling different Tule Lake Sump 1-A drawdown scenarios to determine if the hydrology is possible and will satisfy the biological goals and the needs of the farmers (Tule Lake Irrigation District) that rely on Tule Lake Sump 1-A for irrigation. These scenarios will be presented to the Bureau of Reclamation for its approval in its revised Biological Opinion for the future operation of Tule Lake Sump 1-A.
  - The challenging Salton Sea SCH project design is on track and scheduled for a 100% design in late 2012. This is a team endeavor with Cardno-Entrex, where DU is the engineering design lead for the Salton Sea restoration project.
  - Massive coordination for implementing the complex Llano Seco Ranch project with the Ranch, DFG and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the water delivery system in the Llano Seco Region, including the two aging, 6-foot-diameter redwood siphons.
  - Construction completed on Hazard Unit of Sonny Bono NWR.
  - Construction completed on the North Bypass Ranch and Dam 2 Enhancement at Sacramento NWR as part of the American Sutter NAWCA grant.
  - Experimentation by Russ Lowgren, one of DU’s Bay Area engineers, with some low-level, balloon-based aerial photography producing some professional-quality, unique pictures of Bay Area marshes and DU project sites. Some examples are below:

![Photos taken by Russ Lowgren, Bay Area Ducks Unlimited Engineer](image-url)
For 75 years, Ducks Unlimited’s National Conventions have been a gathering place for friends, both old and new. Unlike any convention before, the 75th DU National Convention was a spectacular, fun-filled week at the Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Tennessee – home of country music, the Grand Ole Opry, Jack Daniels Whiskey and southern hospitality.

I had the pleasure of attending alongside more than 40 other California DU supporters. Many of us arrived early so we could enjoy the sights and sounds of Nashville. First and foremost on everyone’s mind was southern barbeque - where to go and what to eat. Barbequing in the south is not just grilling – it’s a cooking way of life and most everyone I rubbed elbows with wanted some down-home cooking! A great many downtown restaurants were visited by various people and everyone I spoke with commented on the outstanding food and friendly southern servers.

The sights and sounds of Nashville was another topic of discussion. Many wanted to explore the roots and history of country music. We all knew there would be a tour or two so, of course, my friends and I started with the downtown honky tonks. They don’t refer to Nashville as “Music City” for nothing. The Wildhorse Saloon was my favorite toe-tappin’, boot-scottin’ place. It had a nice, big dance floor and good barbeque.

The convention officially opened on Wednesday, May 30, with tours and a spectacular family reunion where attendees could visit with past and present DU leaders and hear stories of the legends and characters that formed the organization. Dinner and entertainment was provided in a comfortable and casual atmosphere. Truly a delightful evening with DU friends!

Tours and activities were plentiful. There was an DU exclusive all-day Jack Daniel’s Distillery tour with barbeque and entertainment, a sporting clays fun shoot, golf tournament, tours of the Music City Hall of Fame, downtown historic homes and the Hermitage -- one of my favorites. The Hermitage is one of the oldest and largest historic site museums in the U.S. It is also our nation’s most authentically preserved early presidential site. The plantation was owned by Andrew Jackson, the seventh President of the U.S. from 1804 until his death there in 1845.

There were also a number of Greenwing activities, including firearms safety and shooting instruction, decoy painting, conservation games, and a scavenger hunt. There was something to do for the entire family.

On Thursday evening, June 1, attendees were treated to an exclusive Grand Ole Opry performance featuring John Conlee, The Grascals, Edens Edge, Darryl Worley and Diamond Rio. What fun!

Friday and Saturday morning business meetings were packed full of DU history, accolades, stories, anniversary messages from past presidents and continental partners, awards and reports from DU Chairman of the Board John Pope, DU President John Newman, DU Canada President Tom Worden, DU Canada Interim CEO Jamie Fortune, DUMAC VP Rogers Hoyt Jr. and DUMAC Director of Operations Eduardo Carrera, just to name a few.
Hospitality Central was the place to be following tours, meetings, hosted activities and outings with friends. It offered everyone a meeting place to catch up with old friends, welcome newcomers and trade state pins. Did I forget to mention the hosted open bar?

As convention week wound down, Saturday festivities culminated with the 75th annual evening reception and gala, a spirited live auction and dancing to the wee hours of the morning with a live band.

There were a number of first-time national convention attendees present – newbies, as we fondly referred to them. Many shared that it was an experience of a lifetime, a great way to network with other DU supporters and they were very inspired by the whole experience.

**Pictured left to right, front row: Carol Ramos, Susan Davenport, Jane Low, Dee Faires. Back row: Ray Ramos, John Davenport, Mark Low and John Faires.**

As DU CEO Dale Hall so elegantly stated, “Our volunteers have been the heart and soul of DU for 75 years. They give their time. They give financially. But most important, they give their hearts. Without heart, there is no passion. Without passion, there is no volunteer. And without volunteers, there is no Ducks Unlimited.”

The 75th DU National Convention was loads of fun and I can’t wait to attend next year’s convention in Portland, Oregon!
Please join us as we celebrate DU’s 75th birthday and California’s successes. We will also recognize our many volunteers and their great accomplishments!

Saturday, July 28
Rolling Hills Casino in Corning
8:00 am – 2:30 pm

Please register online

**Agenda**

**Morning:**
- Hosted breakfast with Mark Low – our journey, State-of-the State Report and state awards
- Conservation report from Mark Biddlecomb and Jeff McCreary
- Western Region communications report from Wendy Hopkins
- Pacific Flyway report from Allan Hopp
- Grassroots report from David Schuessler

**Afternoon:**
- Hosted regional directors luncheon – region reports and volunteer recognition from Jim Giampaolo, Frank Leonardi, and Derek Swindall
- Moving forward focus and key announcements from Mark Low

**Optional activities:**
- Golf
- Trap shooting
- Slots and table games
- Tour and tasting at Luceros olive oil facility
- Tahema Trail self driving tour
- Wine tasting at local wineries
UPCOMING SPRING EVENTS

Attend a local event in your area and take part in the fun while supporting the mission of Ducks Unlimited. Traveling or vacationing? You can find an event on the California Ducks Unlimited website. Traveling out of state? Simply select the state you will be visiting in the dropdown menu (at the top of the California DU webpage) and that state’s upcoming events will be listed for you to browse on the state’s homepage. Don’t miss an opportunity to show your support and have fun at the same time!

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<tr>
<th>Chapter/Event</th>
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<tr>
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<td>July 11</td>
<td>Mark Low @ 530-249-3286</td>
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<td>Central Valley Leadership Workshop - Fresno</td>
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<td>John Faires, Jr. @ 925-373-3815</td>
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<td>Dan Daniluke @ 530-534-8126</td>
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<td>Central Valley Shoot at Kingsburg Gun Club</td>
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<td>State Wide Volunteer Appreciation Day - Corning</td>
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<td>Anderson Banquet</td>
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<td>Leonard Brumana @ 530-347-6459</td>
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<td>Central Valley Leadership Workshop - Suisun</td>
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<td>Southern Cal Leadership Workshop &amp; Recruitment</td>
<td>Aug 11</td>
<td>Dereck Swindall @ 949-916-4658</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Regional Leadership Conference - Reno</td>
<td>Aug 17-19</td>
<td>Eric Rudgers @ 530-259-3945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blythe Banquet</td>
<td>Sept 8</td>
<td>Dan Robinson @ 760-922-4331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beach Cities Banquet</td>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Howard Hull @ 714-546-6256</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego Banquet</td>
<td>Sept 14</td>
<td>Zach Reyes @ 818-402-3336</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Almanor Banquet</td>
<td>Sept 15</td>
<td>Tom Gaither @ 530-259-5025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oroville Waterfowl Hunter Party</td>
<td>Sept 15</td>
<td>Andy Murray @ 530-300-5383</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Redding Waterfowl Hunter Party</td>
<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>Paul Bunch @ 530-246-1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Bay Banquet</td>
<td>Sept 28</td>
<td>Dave Diekmann @ 310-804-8200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suisun Marsh Banquet</td>
<td>Sept 29</td>
<td>Jimmy Monteleone @ 707-718-2991</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modoc County Banquet</td>
<td>Sept tbd</td>
<td>Jim Irvin @ 530-233-2928</td>
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CENTRAL VALLEY SHOOT

Are you a trap shooter?

Do you enjoy shooting games?

If so, you will enjoy the Central Valley Shoot on Saturday, July 21, at the Kingsburg Gun Club in Kingsburg.

Your entry fee includes one round of trap, plus shooting games, gourmet burger bar, beer and soft drinks.

There will also be duck-call lessons and shooting instruction for Greenwings.

Games, guns, small live and silent auction!

8:00am check in

Entry Fees:

$35 per person

$25 Greenwing

$400 corporate table (8 people) puts you in a drawing to win a large Yeti cooler.

For registration and/or additional information, contact Jon Wills at 559-301-6445.
EDITOR’S NOTE

Whether you are a longtime DU supporter, or a first-time member, News from the Nest is YOUR California DU newsletter. For any aspiring writers and photographers, what makes News from the Nest truly ours are stories and photos by California DU members. Please take the time to send me a story or photos of your events, members, conservation projects, Greenwing activities, trips or whatever you feel is important to share.

It is my goal to provide articles relating to national and local conservation news, events, outdoor adventures, hunting, regulations and much more. With your help, we can make News from the Nest a publication that we all look forward to reading.

Rich Dengler, California Ducks Unlimited Newsletter Editor
rich.dengler@sbcglobal.net