

INDIANA

great lakes/atlantic region • 2016 state conservation report

RESTORED BEAVER DAM WETLAND CONSERVATION AREA WELCOMES PEOPLE, WATERFOWL

Residents and nature lovers in northwest Indiana can enjoy a refurbished natural playground thanks to a recently completed wetlands project at Beaver Dam Wetland Conservation Area and Deep River Headwaters.

The project on the 257-acre conservation area was completed in multiple phases over nearly a decade by Ducks Unlimited and the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The property, located two miles west of Crown Point, Ind., is a true urban refuge and is open to the public for recreational activities, hiking and bird watching. "That area of Indiana has so much development. It's great for people around there to have the opportunity to see these wonders of nature," said Mike Sertle, Ducks Unlimited Indiana regional biologist.



The refurbished area will be managed to attract waterfowl while providing recreational opportunities for local residents.

Ducks Unlimited oversaw the 82-acre wetland restoration component of the project, and Lake County Parks and Recreation oversaw the restoration of the adjacent upland prairie and oak savanna. Lake County Parks and Recreation Department funded the project and owns the property. It will manage the site to provide habitat attractive to breeding and migrating waterfowl, birds and other wildlife

Aside from waterfowl and recreational opportunities, the project benefits local water quality through reduction in wind and water soil erosion, sedimentation, non-point source pollution and nutrient loading.

NORTHEAST POTHOLES PROGRAM PARTNERS CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Ducks Unlimited commemorated its Northeast Potholes Program and honored program supporters during a dedication ceremony Aug. 29 at Eagle Marsh Nature Preserve in Fort Wayne.



Donors, partners and guests celebrate the Eagle Marsh Nature Preserve.

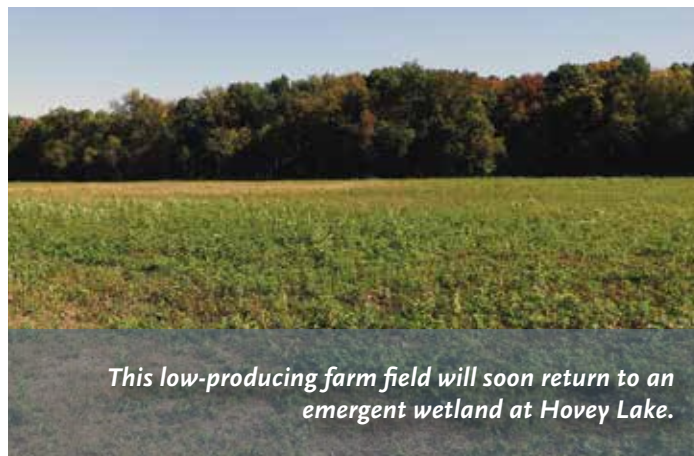
For more than a decade, the Northeast Potholes Program has been one of DU's most successful conservation programs in Indiana. The program has restored more than 1,500 acres of native prairie grasslands and 500 acres of wetlands through nearly 200 individual projects done in partnership with several other conservation organizations, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Pheasants Forever. See more details inside about the potholes program.

The event honored more than 40 donors and featured speakers from Ducks Unlimited and project partners Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Little River Wetlands Project and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

TWO NEW WETLAND PROJECTS PLANNED AT HOVEY LAKE

Located at Indiana's southern tip between the Wabash and Ohio Rivers, Hovey Lake Fish and Wildlife Area has been a historic waterfowl migration and wintering area for decades.

Waterfowl migration patterns have shifted, with the large flocks of Canada geese wintering further to the north and higher numbers of puddle ducks staying in the region longer duration during the winter. The need to provide moist-soil and shallow-water habitat for migrating and wintering ducks has become an important habitat resource throughout DU's southern reaches of the Big Rivers Initiative. Because of that, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and DU have partnered to create two new wetland management units at Hovey Lake.



This low-producing farm field will soon return to an emergent wetland at Hovey Lake.

With funding from Indiana's license plate program, DU engineers provided survey and engineering work to the IDNR for their future construction of the Big Cypress and Iron Gate wetland units. These sites will be transformed from low-production agricultural land into nearly 27 acres of wetlands managed for waterfowl habitat. DU is very proud to work on these great waterfowl projects, and looks forward to the development of future wetland projects at Hovey Lake.

NORTHEAST POTHoles CONTINUES RESTORATION SUCCESS

Northeast Indiana was historically dotted with numerous small wetlands surrounded by large expanses of native grasses, combining to offer high-quality nesting and brooding habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Much of this habitat was cleared and drained for farming and other developments but remains available for restoration. In cooperation with conservation-minded private landowners, DU and its partners have been able to return productive wildlife habitat to the landscape of northeastern Indiana through the Northeast Potholes Program.

In partnership with many other conservation entities, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, ACRES Land Trust and Pheasants Forever, DU has successfully restored more than 1,500 acres of native prairie grasslands and 500 acres of emergent, scrub-shrub and forested wetlands among 187 individual projects.

Funding for the Northeast Potholes Program has been provided by DU Major Sponsors, three North American Wetland Conservation Act grants, the NiSource Environmental Challenge Fund, the SportDOG Brand Conservation Fund and conservation partner funds.



Hardwood tree seedlings being planted at Patoka River to restore a farm field back to bottomland hardwood forest

MORE THAN 2,000 ACRES ACQUIRED AT PATOKA RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Over the last three years has acquired 16 properties totaling 2,140 acres at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Indiana. The new land was purchased with part of a \$1 million North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant in 2014. Adding these properties into the public trust as part of the refuge is a great conservation success for DU and its conservation partners. Permanently protecting this land helps ensure its availability and management for migrating and wintering waterfowl. As migration and weather patterns change, a slow trending of waterfowl wintering further north requires conservation not only migration but also important wintering habitat in southern Indiana. So far the Fish and Wildlife Service and DU have permanently protected more than 4,500 acres of wetland and upland habitat at Patoka River and have restored an additional 1,300 acres of wetland and upland habitat.

ducks unlimited
PROJECTS

● Completed ★ Featured

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.

Beaver Dam

Eagle Marsh

Patoka River NWR

Hovey Lake FWA

2015
accomplishments

32 Projects

703 Acres Conserved

\$1,174,547 Invested

accomplishments
to date

495 Projects

29,695 Acres Conserved

\$16,257,436 Invested

MEET YOUR INDIANA CONSERVATION STAFF



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GOOSE POND PARTNERSHIP MOVES FORWARD

DU and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in 2015 continued their long-standing and successful partnership at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area near Linton. Nearing completion is the Field E site, which is nearly restored with a mixture of shallow wetlands and a short-grass prairie buffer. DU previously helped the IDNR and Natural Resources Conservation Service acquire and restore the entire 8,000-acre property and moved on to restore the ecologically diverse Field B project in 2011.

DU LICENSE PLATE SUPPORTS INDIANA CONSERVATION

Unveiled in 2012, the Indiana Ducks Unlimited (DU) license plate is one of the easiest ways for DU members to make a personal contribution to Indiana habitat conservation. Available from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles for cars, trucks, motorcycles and RVs, this specialty plate features the DU logo. The State of Indiana contributes \$25 from the sale of each plate back to DU for conservation work within the state. To date, DU volunteers, members and supporters have purchased more than 4,000 Indiana DU license plates. That means in four years, DU supporters secured more than \$100,000 for Indiana conservation simply by purchasing a new license plate or renewing their old one. DU conservation staff uses these dollars for projects such as the Northeast Potholes Program, Wabash River Habitat Protection, Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area, Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge and Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge projects. With continued support from DU supporters, such as yourself, we can secure even more conservation funds for Indiana simply by the changing of your vehicle's license plate.

For details about buying an Indiana DU license plate for your vehicle, please visit the BMV website at <http://www.in.gov/bmv/3030.htm> or contact your DU Regional Directors: Dave Neal, dneal@ducks.org • 260-223-6044 Josh Hall, jhall@ducks.org • 641-530-2905



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Indiana 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 Indiana 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 Indiana. 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**

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