Restoration Under Way on Vital Western New York Migration Stopover

Ducks Unlimited is restoring a large portion of the Seneca Pool at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, one of the most important migratory stopovers for waterfowl in western New York.

Iroquois and the adjacent New York State Department of Environmental Conservation land serve as a staging area for more than 250,000 migrating waterfowl annually.

The $137,000 project calls for dike removal, replacement of two culverts and planting 10 acres of forested wetlands with native trees. The project in Orleans County will increase natural water flow by removing barriers to water and wildlife movement. This will enhance the habitat for a diversity of wildlife species, including American black duck, American woodcock, Cerulean Warbler and several reptile and amphibian species.

“We have a rare opportunity to restore natural hydrology to 1,000 acres of forested wetlands by solely removing an artificial barrier,” said Brandy Neveldine, DU’s regional biologist for New York. “We are looking forward to seeing the response of the local mallards and wood ducks among the many other species that will benefit from this restoration.”

Restoration of wetlands are imperative to meet the goals of current conservation plans, such as the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

The project was funded by a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, Ducks Unlimited, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cargill and Friends of Iroquois. The project is expected to be complete by spring.
Two North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants led by the Thousand Islands Land Trust and Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust are supporting multiple wetland restoration and protection projects across the state.

**Clayton, New York**—178 acres of private land in the town of Clayton in the St. Lawrence River watershed will be enrolled into a new conservation easement with 15 acres of wetland restoration on the property slated for this fall. A conservation easement is a way to preserve property with conservation or historic wildlife value while keeping the property in its natural and undeveloped state while still maintaining private ownership of the property. **Completion: Fall 2016**  **Total cost:** $122,000.

**Batavia, New York**
- **Property 1:** 87 acres of existing degraded wetland will be enhanced through reconstruction of an old berm, installation of two new water control structures and channeling and potholing to open up areas of invasive plants.  **Completion:** Fall 2017  **Total cost:** $100,000
- **Property 2:** 45 acres of old agriculture field will be restored to wetland habitat through berm construction and placement of a water control structure to enhance management for the benefit of wildlife through improved wetland function.  **Completion:** Fall 2016  **Total cost:** $100,000

**PROGRESS MADE ON INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL AND WETLAND RESTORATION AT BRADDOCK BAY**

Ducks Unlimited is partnered with State University of Brockport to continue to control invasive species at Braddock Bay Fish and Wildlife Management Area along the Ontario shoreline.

Since 2014, DU has been working on the 2,576-acre marsh complex to control invasive species infestations, restore marsh meadow, enhance natural water flows, improve fish and wildlife habitat and restore wetland structure. In April 2015, Ducks Unlimited completed Phase II, a 205-acre enhancement project.

Phase III will begin in fall on a nearly 11-acre plot of Buttonwood Creek, a tributary of Braddock Bay on Lake Ontario’s south shore. The creek contains a rare fen community concealed by cattails that was discovered during the previous restoration activities. Invasive species dominate coastal marshes at Braddock Bay and limit the growth of native plants. Restoring and expanding this rare plant community will add to the species and habitat diversity of the Rochester Embayment wetlands and Lake Ontario.

Funding was awarded in fall 2015, with work slated to begin in summer 2016. Partnering on the project is State University of New York Brockport, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Town of Greece and private landowners.

**CARGILL CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP ESTABLISHES TWO FINGER LAKES PROJECTS**

Cargill is a partner of DU in New York, including four business units: Salt, Deicing Technologies, Animal Nutrition and Grain and Oilseed Supply Chain. Cargill most recently pledged a three-year, $243,000 grant to benefit projects across upstate New York. Here are some of the projects DU has started with Cargill support.

**Catharine Creek Marsh Wetland Enhancement**—145 acres in Schuyler County will be enhanced this year by replacing a water control structure and reconstructing a berm to manage water levels; and channeling and potholing through dense invasive cattail to improve water flow and increase plant diversity. The project is led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners program on land owned by Finger Lakes Land Trust, with Ducks Unlimited as a cost-share partner.

**Teeter Pond**—DU is working with the U.S. Forest Service to replace a water control structure on a 30-acre pond and wetland in Finger Lakes National Forest in Schuyler County.
MEET YOUR NEW YORK CONSERVATION STAFF

Brandy Neveldine
Regional Biologist – New York
159 Dwight Park Circle
Suite 205
Syracuse NY 13209
315 - 453 - 8026
bneveldine@ducks.org

Jim Feaga
Regional Biologist – Long Island, NJ, PA
1383 Arcadia Road
Room 8
Lancaster PA 17601
717 - 945 - 5068
jfeaga@ducks.org

Sarah Fleming
Manager Conservation Programs, N. Atlantic
159 Dwight Park Circle
Suite 205
Syracuse NY 13209
315 - 453 - 8024
sfleming@ducks.org

2015 accomplishments
15 Projects
2,282 Acres Conserved
$3 million Invested
Coastal wetland habitat restoration at Floodwood Pond, Lakeview Marsh Wildlife Management Area

Ducks Unlimited, in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, will reduce invasive cattail and restore natural wetland hydrology. About 400 acres will be conserved and will provide access to spawning for northern pike and nesting for black tern. Lakeview Marsh includes nearly is a 3,400 acre coastal marsh that is part of a 16,000 acre barrier beach ecosystem along 17 miles of Lake Ontario shoreline in Oswego and Jefferson Counties. **Projected timeline:** Summer 2016 to summer 2018.

Blind Bay Marsh Enhancement - Chippewa Bay - St. Lawrence River

About 22 acres will be conserved by improving water flow and opening dense vegetation to reduce invasive cattails. This project will be evaluated and become part of a bigger ongoing research effort at SUNY ESF, where biologists at the Thousand Islands Biological Station have been studying the response of wetland vegetation and the fish community following a variety of enhancement techniques. **Projected timeline:** Summer 2016 to fall 2017.

Perch River Wildlife Management Area Enhancement

About 94 acres will be enhanced at Perch River by improving water flow and reducing invasive cattails. This project will benefit high priority waterfowl species including mallard, American black duck, northern pintail and wood ducks. Perch River, located in Jefferson County, also supports an active breeding colony of approximately 50 to 60 pairs of state threatened black tern. **Projected timeline:** Summer 2016 to fall 2017.

DU EXPLORES LONG ISLAND SOUND OPPORTUNITIES

Ducks Unlimited continues to adapt our conservation delivery programs across the Great Lakes/Atlantic Region to best meet the needs of waterfowl while staying true to our business plan. With the promotion of Sarah Fleming to manager of our Completing the Cycle area, the hiring of Brandy Neveldine as New York biologist and the relocation of our Maryland office, DU redefine work areas. Current Pennsylvania and New Jersey Biologist Jim Feaga, has expanded his efforts into Long Island Sound to explore coastal habitat conservation opportunities for DU with our partners. Jim recently established a DU office in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the Upper Chesapeake Bay and Lower Susquehanna River Watershed, a short drive north of the Susquehanna Flats.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

New York 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 New York 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 New York. 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.