



A Continental Success

U. S. A.

C A N A D A

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ATLANTIC OCEAN

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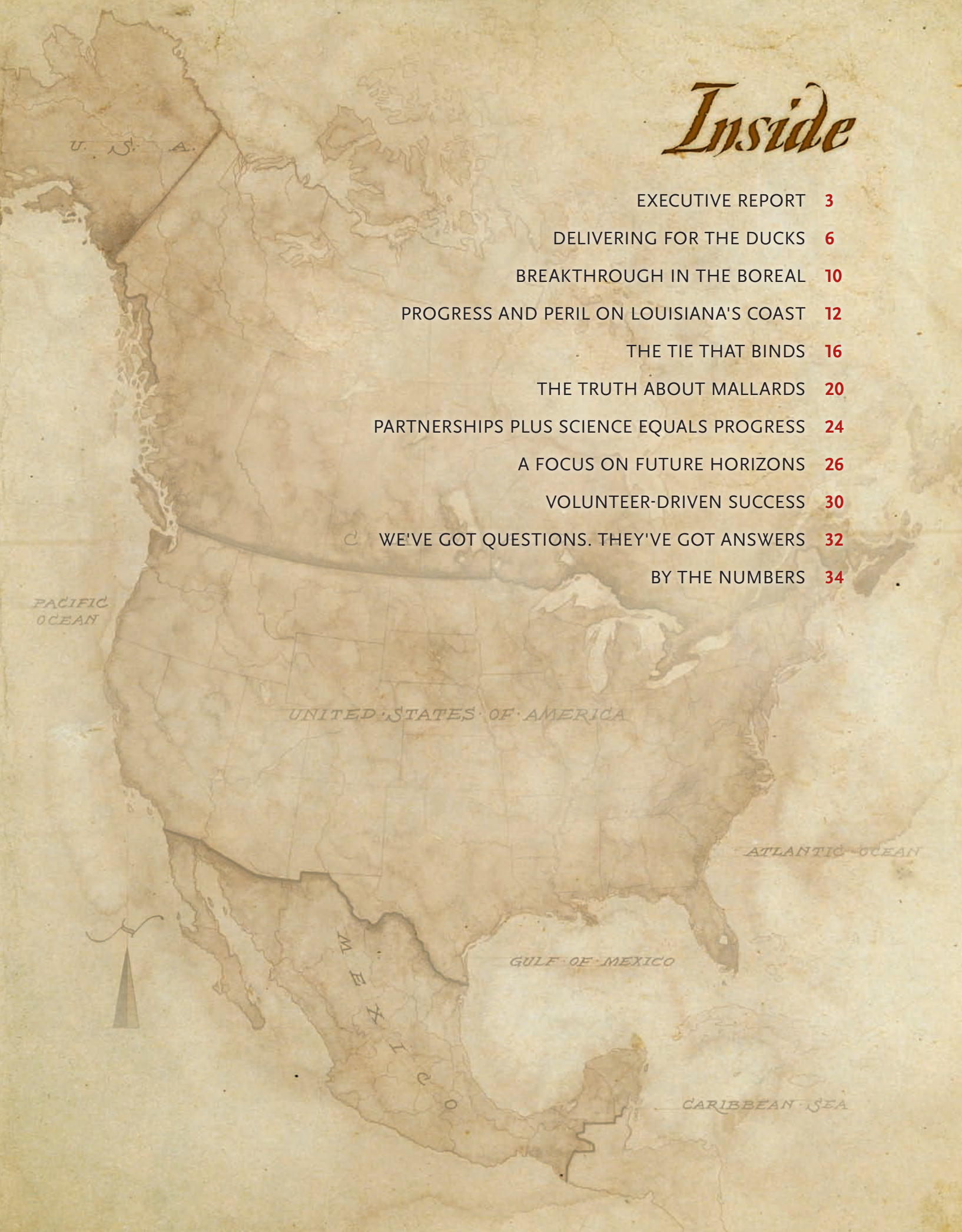
CARIBBEAN SEA



WETLANDS FOR TOMORROW
CAMPAIGN REPORT 2004-2011.

Inside

EXECUTIVE REPORT	3
DELIVERING FOR THE DUCKS	6
BREAKTHROUGH IN THE BOREAL	10
PROGRESS AND PERIL ON LOUISIANA'S COAST	12
THE TIE THAT BINDS	16
THE TRUTH ABOUT MALLARDS	20
PARTNERSHIPS PLUS SCIENCE EQUALS PROGRESS	24
A FOCUS ON FUTURE HORIZONS	26
VOLUNTEER-DRIVEN SUCCESS	30
WE'VE GOT QUESTIONS. THEY'VE GOT ANSWERS	32
BY THE NUMBERS	34





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVES

Waterfowl hunters instinctively look to the horizon – whether scanning for ducks or watching the sunrise, it’s in our nature to take the long view. The same is true for Ducks Unlimited. Since DU’s founding in 1937, we’ve focused on the future – aiming to secure healthy habitat and strong waterfowl populations for generations to come. It’s in that same spirit that Ducks Unlimited launched *Wetlands for Tomorrow*, the most ambitious conservation campaign in history.

Through *Wetlands for Tomorrow*, Ducks Unlimited set an unprecedented goal to raise \$1.7 billion by the end of 2010. We asked DU’s leaders and supporters to stand with us in the name of wetlands and waterfowl conservation, and across the continent, Ducks Unlimited stood in full force. The result: almost \$1.9 billion raised, and 2 million acres conserved across the continent.

From new members who joined to save an acre of habitat to Major Sponsors who witnessed key waterfowl habitats being destroyed and then committed to protecting entire landscapes, our success comes down to you. Thank you.

The following pages chronicle a few of the highlights from *Wetlands for Tomorrow* and pay tribute to several philanthropists who helped make this campaign a success. People like Jim Kennedy and John Childs, who stepped up to lead the campaign with their time, talent and treasure. Or Lucille Pate, who gave DU its largest conservation easement in history, permanently protecting more than 3,600 acres in South Carolina’s Lowcountry. Corporate and foundation partners also answered the call. For example, a \$20 million grant from Bayer CropScience is helping promote sustainable winter wheat growth on the prairies, which provides critical nesting habitat for waterfowl and economic benefits for producers. It’s people and partnerships like these and many more that helped DU achieve our campaign goals and maximize our conservation impact.

While 2010 marks the end of DU’s *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign, it also ushers in the beginning of a new era for Ducks Unlimited. With new leadership at the helm and a new organizational structure in place, Ducks Unlimited is poised to tackle the imposing challenges facing waterfowl conservation. It won’t be easy. The threats to North America’s wetlands and waterfowl are becoming more complex every year. From urban sprawl and habitat conversion to water shortages across the continent and public policies that impact people, wildlife and waterfowl, the ducks need our help now more than ever. With your continued support, DU will face those challenges head-on with science-based solutions and cooperative conservation.



John Pope
Chairman of the Board



Dale Hall
Chief Executive Officer

The good news is, we’re already making progress. Despite tremendous economic uncertainty, Ducks Unlimited conserved nearly 110,000 acres in the last year alone. Every acre is strategically selected for its importance to North America’s waterfowl. Our scientists compare the flight paths of waterfowl to multi-layered GIS maps to identify the most critical, threatened waterfowl habitats on the continent.

On the prairies, we continue to lose irreplaceable native grasslands, but our efforts to Rescue the Duck Factory are gaining ground as we continue to chip away at the lengthy list of landowners wishing to preserve their family heritage with a conservation easement. Thanks to the Rescue the Duck Factory campaign, DU and partners have secured more than 112,000 acres of grassland easements and nearly 22,000 acres of wetland easements. This is the kind of progress that makes a difference for the ducks.

Farther south, the Louisiana Coast suffered another setback this year with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This tragedy compounded existing problems facing the Gulf Coast, and underscored the urgency to conserve and restore coastal marshlands – an effort DU has championed for more than 20 years. This year, Ducks Unlimited celebrated more than 100,000 acres conserved in coastal Louisiana.

At the beginning of DU’s *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign, Canada’s boreal forest was under siege with no protection plan for its vast natural resources. Today, with the help of The Pew Charitable Trusts, DU and partners have worked with the government and native peoples to protect the beauty and vitality of this landscape, ensuring that future generations of people and waterfowl can thrive on these working lands.

Looking back on the success of the campaign, we also look forward to new horizons. Thank you for standing with Ducks Unlimited to ensure we have *Wetlands for Tomorrow*. Together we stand as a united force for conservation. A force for waterfowl. A force for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Pope". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John Pope, *Chairman of the Board*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Hall". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dale Hall, *Chief Executive Officer*

*Do not look to the ground for your next step;
greatness lies with those who look to the horizon.*

– NORWEGIAN PROVERB

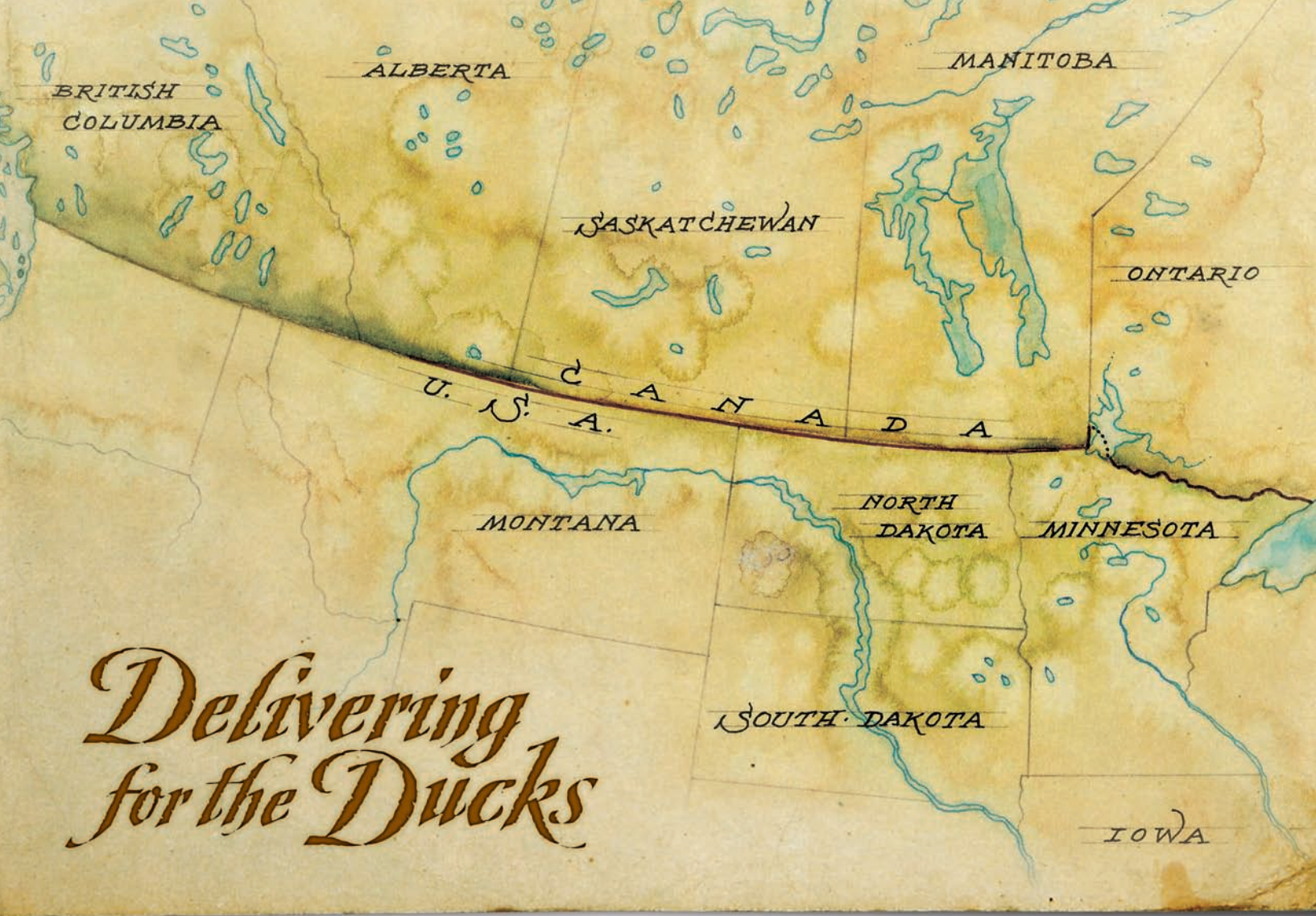
On the Horizon

It's more than a campaign. *Wetlands for Tomorrow* is the essence of Ducks Unlimited's mission. For the sake of our children and grandchildren, for the future of our hunting heritage, and for the security of our wildlife and natural resources, it is incumbent upon our generation to leave healthy *Wetlands for Tomorrow*.

That's what Ducks Unlimited's founders did more than 70 years ago. Just before the beginning of World War II, in the depths of the Great Depression, a few good sportsmen put wetlands conservation at the top of their priority list.

Over the last seven decades, Ducks Unlimited supporters have done the same. Despite the Great Recession, devastating hurricanes, flooding and drought, Ducks Unlimited supporters rallied in the name of *Wetlands for Tomorrow*.





IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN WARMED ON A COLD, GRAY DAY BY THE SIGHT OF DUCKS ON THE HORIZON; IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN STARTLED BY THE ROAR OF TEAL RIPPING THROUGH THE AIR, OR MESMERIZED BY A MALLARD SUSPENDED IN FLIGHT; IF WATERFOWL HAVE EVER INFLUENCED YOUR LIFE, THEN NORTH AMERICA'S PRAIRIES HAVE TOO.

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More waterfowl are hatched in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) of North America than any other place on the continent, hence the region's nickname, the "Duck Factory." Spanning some 300,000 square-miles across southern Canada and the northern U.S., the PPR forms the core of the continent's Great Plains. It was named for "potholes" left on the prairie more than 10,000 years ago by receding glaciers. During wet years, snowmelt and spring rains fill these basins with water, creating a wetland system that was once among the most expansive on the continent. It's the perfect plot for breeding waterfowl. Potholes offer a steady stock of food, while surrounding grasslands lend shelter and security to nesting hens.

On a normal spring day in the PPR, the sky is bustling with drake pintails and mallards intently pursuing elusive hens. On the wetlands below, ruddy ducks flash their fanned tails at potential mates while a sampling of waterfowl, from gadwall to blue-winged teal, gorge on invertebrates and aquatic vegetation. Nearby, expectant hens fill the

grasslands, building nests and laying eggs to hopefully hatch the next generation of waterfowl.

No other habitat impacts North America's ducks and geese more than the grasslands and wetlands of the PPR. In 1937, this is where DU's founders conserved their first acre - on a prairie pothole in Manitoba, now known as Big Grass Marsh. Today, that marsh still thrives, along with 4.7 million acres DU has conserved in the PPR since then.

Unfortunately, the threats to North America's Duck Factory have also multiplied. The region has lost 70 percent of its original grasslands. From 2002 to 2007, North and South Dakota lost more than 500,000 acres of native prairie, converted to cropland. In Iowa and Minnesota, which at one time may have contained the most productive waterfowl breeding habitat on the prairies, more than 95 percent of historic wetlands and grasslands have been converted to other uses. Experts predict such losses will continue across the

Dakotas and Montana at the rate of 200,000 acres per year.

“We know that waterfowl populations are directly influenced by the amount of healthy habitat in the PPR, so it stands to reason that as this habitat declines, so will waterfowl populations,” says Jim Ringelman, DU’s director of conservation programs for the Dakotas and Montana.

To counter the ever-escalating threats to the PPR, DU launched the North American Grasslands Conservation Initiative, an effort to escalate conservation work in the Duck Factory.

PROTECTION IN PERPETUITY

As DU’s manager of conservation programs in Bismarck, Randy Renner understands the stakes all too well. Renner was born and raised in North Dakota. He’s seen firsthand how the landscape is changing.

“The changes are subtle from year to year but over time I have seen thousands of acres of grass converted,” says Renner. “Now rows of cropland stretch to the horizon where fields of native grass once grew.”

Twenty years ago, Renner decided to dedicate his career to conserving North America’s Prairie Pothole habitat. Today, he manages DU’s easement program on the prairies.

“We can’t turn back time, but we can protect the habitat we have left,” says Renner. “Fortunately, there are still parts of the Duck Factory where large tracts of wetlands and grasslands remain intact. These are the habitats we’re working to conserve.”

Research has shown that in the PPR, healthy wetlands are among the most important landscape features for duck production. Without wetlands, waterfowl won’t even attempt to breed. Further research revealed that duck productivity increases with the amount of grassland surrounding a wetland. Using GIS technology and LANDSAT satellite imagery, DU locates areas of the PPR where this ideal mix of healthy wetlands and spacious grasslands exist. Further analysis reveals details about the terrain and surrounding property, allowing DU to identify the most productive habitat at the greatest risk of loss.

“We focus on conserving those areas first,” says Renner. “The best way to do that is through conservation easements, where for a one-time payment, willing landowners agree to never plow up the prairie or drain its wetlands.”

Partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DU has permanently protected more than 1 million prairie pothole acres through conservation easements. More than 450,000 of those were the result of *Wetlands for Tomorrow*.

In Canada, easements are helping address a similar problem. There, grassland loss isn’t as high as in the U.S., but wetland loss is rampant.

“DU Canada has been using conservation easements since the late 1990s as a tool to conserve wetlands and native uplands for the future,” said Paul Thoroughgood, regional agrologist for DU Canada. Ducks Unlimited Canada has more than 600 conservation easement projects signed in the country, conserving nearly 150,000 acres, mainly in the PPR.

RESCUING THE DUCK FACTORY

It’s not a shortage of opportunities, but a shortage of cash that limits DU’s conservation easements in the PPR. In 2008, DU and the Fish and Wildlife Service had 600 landowners waiting to enroll a total of 300,000 acres in the heart of the PPR. The problem was, DU couldn’t afford the easements. In response, Ducks Unlimited launched Rescue the Duck Factory, an aggressive campaign to raise the \$40 million in private funds it would take to leverage the full \$120 million needed to purchase the easements.

John Childs, president of Wetlands America Trust, made Rescue the Duck Factory a top priority. Under his leadership, and with funding from DU Major Sponsors, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the federal duck stamp program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, DU and the USFWS purchased easements on more than 100,000 acres in the first two years.

“This milestone represents a great investment from our donors and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in protecting native prairie, and a lot of hard work by DU and our partners in the field,” said Childs.





As more landowners learn about the conservation easement program, interest from landowners in the PPR continues to grow.

“Our progress on the Duck Factory is only limited by our ability to raise the funds that drive it,” said Childs.

GIVING LARGE

Across the continent, DU supporters are joining the effort to rescue the Duck Factory. In South Carolina, 53 guests at the “Granders” event raised more than \$100,000 for the cause. There was no auction or raffle; donors contributed directly to habitat conservation on the prairies.

“It’s not about what you get at a DU event,” said Jay Owen, chairman of the Louisiana Major Sponsor Committee. “It’s about giving something back, and knowing that your gift will continue giving for generations – in the form of habitat on the ground and ducks in the sky.”

Jim Kennedy, former president of Wetlands America Trust, Chairman of *Wetlands for Tomorrow* and long-time DU supporter, knows the gift of giving well. For more than 30 years, Kennedy has given his time, energy, and financial support for DU’s mission. As an avid duck hunter, Kennedy has visited the Duck Factory several times.

“Every time you go, you see examples of that landscape changing – being destroyed – and you begin to understand what that means to waterfowl and people,” says Kennedy.

He decided to personally do something about it. With the largest gift by an individual in the history of Ducks Unlimited, Kennedy gave \$21 million to the North American Grasslands Conservation Initiative. He

didn’t want a big media splash, but in 2007, Kennedy shared the news with fellow supporters at DU’s Annual Convention. His commitment inspired many others to give what they could for conservation.

“I’ve been very fortunate in my life to be in the position to make that kind of contribution to Ducks Unlimited,” he said. “There are rare opportunities where we can actually do something as a group that can be remembered forever. We’re at that stage right now, where as a group we can save some of the most critical waterfowl habitat in North America.”

PRAIRIE POLICY

For every acre DU conserves on the ground, many more hang in the balance of decisions made by government in both the U.S. and Canada. On both sides of the border, public policy is arguably the most powerful influence on the prairies. The U.S. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a prime example. With adequate funding and federal support, CRP was hailed as the greatest conservation success in history. Through CRP, landowners receive federal funds to restore cropland to grassland habitat. In 2007, the program, which annually added 2.2 million ducks to the fall flight, was cut more than 18 percent, reducing enrollment from 39.2 million acres to 32 million acres. The PPR has since lost more than 1.6 million acres of CRP land, and another 2.8 million acres are set to expire by 2012. DU is working to increase CRP enrollment in the 2012 Farm Bill.

While programs like CRP encourage conservation, some federal subsidies do the opposite. According to a report by the Government Accountability Office, federal crop insurance and disaster assistance

programs actually encourage landowners to convert native prairie to cropland. DU is working with Congress, the administration and conservation partners to implement a Farm Bill policy provision we call Sodsaver, which would prohibit such payments on any newly broken native prairie for a period of several years.

The U.S. Clean Water Act is another example of the power of policy. Two recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions and subsequent guidance by federal agencies removed Clean Water Act protections from what they call “geographically isolated” wetlands, including up to 96 percent of prairie potholes in the Duck Factory. This is arguably the gravest threat to the PPR and the future of North America’s waterfowl. Without Clean Water Act protections, the only line of defense for these wetlands is the swampbuster provision of the Farm Bill. As with all such provisions, swampbuster is up for review with the 2012 Farm Bill.

To understand why wetlands need federal protection, one need only look north of the 49th parallel. In Canada, there is no national wetland protection policy. Jurisdiction for wetlands lies with provincial governments.

“In some areas, such as Atlantic Canada, wetland policies are good. However, many prairie provinces either don’t have or don’t enact wetland protection plans,” says Dr. Karla Guyn, DU’s director of conservation planning in Canada.

The result is drastic drainage of Canada’s prairie wetlands. The PPR of Canada has lost up to 70 percent of its original wetlands, and continues to lose more than 20,000 acres per year.

Canada’s grasslands have fared slightly better than its wetlands, thanks in part to the federal Greencover Canada program, which gave landowners a subsidy for restoring grassland habitat. Unfortunately, Greencover has not been offered since 2007. DU is working to ensure a similar program is included in future policy.

CONFIRMED BY SCIENCE

Whether addressing policy issues on Capitol Hill or delivering habitat work on the ground, DU’s actions are always driven by science. More than 15 years of extensive research guides DU’s conservation work on the prairies.

DU scientists are now analyzing data collected over the last 10 years on nest survival and duck brood abundance in the Missouri Coteau region of North and South Dakota. This region holds some of the finest remaining habitat for breeding waterfowl in the PPR.

“Armed with this information, DU can maximize its efficiency by focusing on the most critical habitat in the Missouri Coteau,” said Scott Stephens, former director of conservation planning for DU’s Great Plains region and now director of regional operations-Prairies.

In 2010, DU launched a new three-year study to evaluate nest success in winter wheat. This research is part of DU’s partnership with Bayer CropScience on the Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action initiative (see sidebar: Harvesting Habitat). Researchers expect results from the U.S. study to mirror findings from similar research in Canada, which found substantially higher nest success in fall-planted winter wheat fields than in spring-planted crops.

DU is also investigating the influence of wind energy development on breeding ducks in the PPR. Researchers are monitoring breeding duck pairs on wetlands near wind farms compared to wetlands without wind development.

“We want to ensure wind energy developments are benign to breeding waterfowl and that the regulations governing wind development don’t discourage landowners from conserving key breeding areas,” explains Stephens.

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*For more information on DU’s conservation work
in the Prairie Pothole Region, log on to*

WWW.DUCKS.ORG

HARVESTING HABITAT

Ducks Unlimited has a long history of working with agriculture on sustainable, wildlife-friendly farming practices. This is especially important in the Duck Factory, where millions of grassland acres have been converted to cropland. If healthy wetlands remain on the land, waterfowl will still attempt to nest in the cropland. Many nests are destroyed each spring by farm machinery. Some lucky birds, however, nest in fields of winter wheat, which are neither planted nor harvested during nesting season. While native grasslands are best, winter wheat is an excellent alternative for nesting waterfowl.

“Some prairie acres will never be put back into grassland; that’s something we understand from the agricultural perspective,” explains Steve Adair, director of operations for DU’s Great Plains region. “But by encouraging producers to plant winter wheat, we can put millions of productive nesting acres back on the landscape.”

Bayer CropScience, a world leader in agri-science, is collaborating with DU on a new initiative called Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action. Through research and education, this initiative aims to improve winter wheat productivity in Canada and the U.S. while providing habitat for wildlife. A \$20 million grant from Bayer CropScience is funding the work.

“Our goal is to enable cereal growers to produce more food on the same amount of land while preserving and improving the habitat important to North America’s waterfowl and other wildlife,” says Geoff Kneen, vice president and head of bioscience RTP operations for Bayer CropScience.

In 2010, three regional universities joined the effort to research improved winter wheat varieties, which would encourage more producers to try winter wheat in their crop rotation. The initiative will also research best management practices to improve winter wheat yields and profitability.



Breakthrough in the Boreal

UNTIL ABOUT 12 YEARS AGO, THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF NORTH AMERICA'S WESTERN BOREAL FOREST LIVED IN A PREDOMINANTLY UNTOUCHED MOSAIC OF FORESTS, RIVERS, WETLANDS AND LAKES THAT MADE THE BOREAL ONE OF THE MOST ECOLOGICALLY DIVERSE NATURAL WONDERS IN THE WORLD.

Spruces and pines grew in abundance. Families of deer roamed freely among the vast expanses of pristine forests. And the 1.8 million square miles of western boreal habitat provided safe breeding, spring staging, molting and fall migration habitat for almost half of this continent's waterfowl, as roughly 13-15 million ducks use the western boreal forest of Canada and Alaska in spring.

Fast forward to 1999, when a rising demand for natural resources led to a dramatic increase in logging, oil and gas exploration and production, mining, hydroelectric development and agriculture in the region. This development began decimating older forests, threatening waterfowl and other wildlife populations, and making the subsistence-based survival of aboriginal peoples increasingly bleak. Such drastic developments prompted a consortium of aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial governments; private conservation organizations; and visionary industries to work toward the goal of conserving a substantial portion of Canada's boreal region. Taking a leadership role in this effort, The Pew Charitable Trusts created a partnership ultimately known as the International Boreal Conservation Campaign, of which Ducks Unlimited is a central partner.

After years of negotiation between industry, government, First Nations and conservation organizations, 130 million acres of important wetlands and wildlife habitat have been conserved throughout the vast western boreal forest over the course of the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign. This agreement, signed by the Forest Products Association of Canada and organized by the Pew Environment Group, will ensure this area — twice the size of Germany — will be managed according to the highest environmental standards.

"This agreement is so important because it will protect many of the boreal forest's most important wetlands, which provide breeding, migration and molting habitat for more than 40 percent of North America's waterfowl," said Dr. Fritz Reid, director of conservation planning at DU's Western Regional Office. "If this group had not stepped in to save the western boreal forest, there's no telling how many critical acres of wetland habitat would have been lost to development."

Another victory for boreal conservation occurred when the government of Ontario announced in July 2008 its commitment to protecting at least 50 percent of the province's 110 million acres of boreal forest and conserving the rest of this area with high-level

environmental standards. In neighboring Quebec, the provincial government has recently pledged to protect more than 140 million acres of boreal landscapes.

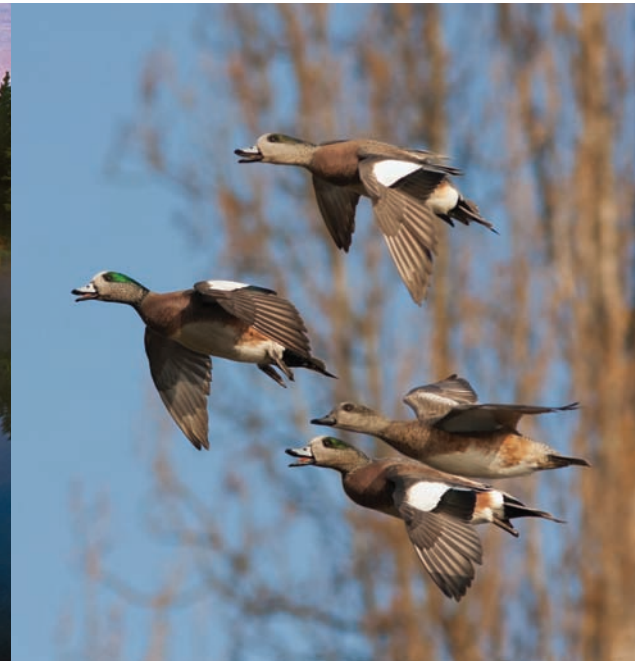
FIRST NATIONS

In northern Canada, land claim agreements have afforded aboriginal governments and communities significant land management authority, so DU Canada's approach to habitat conservation must be community- and partnership-based. "The nature of a partnership with an aboriginal group varies but usually includes providing much-needed capacity and hands-on support to navigate what are often fairly lengthy and bureaucratic processes," said Shannon Haszard, Northwest Territories manager for DUC. "It also involves providing support for a member of the community to work on the conservation initiative, and providing GIS, science, and other information to inform community decisions."

At 3 million acres in size, Old Crow Flats — home of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation — is the largest wetland complex with the highest density of waterfowl in the entire Yukon Territory. Located just above the Arctic Circle, 17 different waterfowl species breed

there, including significant portions of the continental populations of scaup and scoters. Since 2003, DUC has provided scientific support by conducting waterfowl surveys and sitting on the technical working group that developed recommendations for how the area would be managed. In June 2009, this partnership resulted in full protection of Old Crow Flats.

The Ramparts River and Wetlands in the Northwest Territories is 3.8 million acres and contains more than 30,000 individual wetland basins. This critical waterfowl breeding site provides nesting, brood-rearing and staging habitat, and the area has also been used for trapping, hunting, fishing and social gatherings for generations. Since 1997, DUC has conducted waterfowl surveys and earth cover classification and has worked in partnership with the tiny community of Fort Good Hope to move this area toward permanent protection as a National Wildlife Area. In 2007, the area was granted five years of interim protection from any development to enable stakeholders to finalize their evaluation of the area and make decisions about final boundaries and appropriate management. It is expected that the Ramparts River and Wetlands will be designated as a National Wildlife Area in 2013.



Donor Spotlight: PAUL RALSTIN

For some DU Major Sponsors, their vision of conservation extends internationally across North America. Such is the case with Idaho native Paul Ralstin, who has been involved with DU for nearly 25 years. Ralstin says his perspective was considerably widened thanks to some eye-opening international hunting trips in the mid-1990s.

"I began hunting waterfowl internationally in 1994, and that experience has really made me appreciate the wonderful organization we have in DU. I truly hope that other countries will someday follow suit, as we must preserve and protect our vital wetlands both for animals and people."

Thanks to success in the construction business, Ralstin was able

to become a DU Life Sponsor in 1992, a DU de Mexico Life Sponsor in 1995 and a Grand Slam Life Sponsor in DU Canada in 1996.

He and his wife, Jeanne, are also Heritage Sponsors in DU.

"Being associated with Ducks Unlimited on an international level has been one of the most enriching experiences I've had in my lifetime," Ralstin said. "All three countries need our financial support, and the camaraderie I have built with friends from other countries who share that passion for conservation is invaluable to me. We must remember that the nesting grounds in Canada, the nesting grounds in the United States and the wintering grounds in Mexico need our protection and support."



Progress and Peril on Louisiana's Coast

RAVAGED. RUINED. AT RISK. THAT'S HOW MEDIA RECENTLY DESCRIBED LOUISIANA'S COAST, BUT THE TRUTH IS, LOUISIANA'S WETLANDS HAVE BEEN IN TROUBLE FOR DECADES, AND FOR DECADES DUCKS UNLIMITED HAS BEEN WORKING TO RESTORE THEM.

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When DU launched *Wetlands for Tomorrow* and named Conserving Louisiana's Coastal Wetlands one of its nine initiatives, the state had already lost 1.2 of its original 3.1 million wetland acres. And that was before a series of disasters put Louisiana's habitat in the headlines.

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina slammed the Gulf Coast in the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. In response, DU pledged \$15 million for coastal conservation in Louisiana. Within weeks of Katrina, Hurricane Rita struck. Together, the two storms destroyed 126,000 wetland acres. In 2008, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike battered the coast with massive flooding and devastating winds. Louisiana again made national news in the summer of 2010, when the Deepwater Horizon oil spill spewed nearly five million barrels into the Gulf. It was the largest environmental catastrophe in U.S. history, and much of the oil threatened Louisiana's coast. DU quickly assembled a team to assess damages, plan restoration and prepare alternative habitat for wintering waterfowl. On Capitol Hill, DU's policy experts continued to call for federal funding of large-scale coastal restoration.

"Each of these disasters exacerbated wetland loss that had already reached a crisis point in Louisiana," said Tom Moorman, director of conservation planning in DU's southern region and leader of

DU's Gulf Coast Response Team. "The waterfowl, other wildlife and people who depend on Louisiana's wetlands cannot sustain such losses much longer, but there is hope. The forces that created these wetlands are impaired, but they still exist and can be used to restore some of what has been lost."

CREATING AMERICA'S WETLAND

Wading through Louisiana's wetlands is like taking a walk through time. Every step sinks into ancient soil that, thousands of years ago, may have been part of Montana, Minnesota or even New York. For 7,000 years, the Mississippi River's floodwaters carried sediment from 40 percent of North America to the river's mouth in southern Louisiana. Over the years, the river's mouth would move, spreading sediment that formed new wetlands and replenished the old. Wherever this rich silt settled, aquatic plants took root. That rare but perfect mixture of soil, vegetation and fresh water created the coast we now know as the "Sportsman's Paradise."

This marshland is more than a wilderness. It's a basis of life, culture and industry. Louisiana's coast is home to 47 percent of the state's population. Its wetlands provide 30 percent of the nation's fishery catch and a third of its shrimp and oyster harvest. They also

provide oil, gas and commercial shipping infrastructure for the entire United States.

Louisiana's marshes are also among the most important habitats on the continent for wintering waterfowl. The majority of North America's mottled ducks live here year-round. Each winter, millions of waterfowl join them, including gadwall, green-winged teal, pintail, mallards, wigeon, ring-necked ducks, canvasback and white-fronted and snow geese to name a few. Joining the hordes of ducks and geese are flocks of herons, egrets, ibises, roseate spoonbills and uncountable numbers of shorebirds, terns and other waterbirds.

These birds instinctively flock to Louisiana's coast where aquatic vegetation yields a feast of seeds, tubers and invertebrates every winter. This food fuels bird migration north come spring, sending waterfowl back to the breeding grounds in prime condition to reproduce.

Louisiana's marshes also serve as the first line of defense against violent storms and hurricanes, diminishing storm surge energy and storing floodwaters. Great expanses of marsh between human infrastructure and a land-falling hurricane can reduce storm surge height and energy because of the wetland's flood storage capacity.

When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck, the world awoke to the value of Louisiana's vanishing wetlands. The oil spill further threatened an already ailing resource. Before these tragedies, coastal wetland loss was an emerging crisis. Today, it's a full-scale emergency.

BAYOU ON THE BRINK

Louisiana's wetlands are still disappearing rapidly, and the wetlands that remain are insufficient to support population goals for wintering waterfowl along the Gulf Coast. A recent Gulf Coast Joint Venture study found that in southeast Louisiana alone, coastal marshes could feed 1.3 million fewer waterfowl than they did during the 1970s.

The causes behind Louisiana's wetland loss are numerous and complex, man-made and natural. It started when the Mississippi

River was tamed. No longer does the mighty river channel shift, building new wetlands to offset those lost by natural forces. Today, miles of levees line the river from Illinois nearly to the Gulf. The rich silt that once spread along the coast forming new marsh is now forced off the continental shelf into several hundred feet of water where it is lost forever.

Without sediment to sustain them, Louisiana's marshes are eroding with the tide; sinking into the ocean at the rate of 50 acres per day. With sea levels projected to rise at least three feet over the next century, subsidence and erosion will get worse.

Compounding the problem are thousands of miles of canals built to access vast oil and gas deposits beneath the marsh. No one expected canals to kill the marshlands, but we now know the waterways provide a conduit for Gulf salt water to enter interior marshes, killing wetland plants by raising the salinity. And when you kill a wetland's plants, you kill the wetland.

"Vegetation in interior marshes is not adapted to high salinity, so as Gulf salt water slowly destroys the plants, their root systems no longer hold the marsh soils tightly in place," explains Dr. Tom Moorman. "With no roots to hold the soil, wind-driven waves and tidal energy can quickly break apart a wetland. The result is open, muddy water with little value to humans or wildlife."

Aquatic vegetation is a staple of life in coastal marshes. Besides holding the soil in place, aquatic plants provide seeds, tubers and leaves for hungry waterfowl and a multitude of other wildlife. Beneath the plants, detritus, or decaying vegetation, sustains organisms that support the entire ecosystem's food web. Wetland plants are also a nursery for millions of juvenile fish, shrimp and crabs that depend on submerged aquatics for food and shelter.

Experts agree that reversing saltwater intrusion and restoring wetland vegetation is one of the core solutions to sustaining the future of coastal Louisiana.





SAVING OUR SWAMPS

Ducks Unlimited has been conserving Louisiana's coastal wetlands since 1985, and in 2010 DU conserved its 100,000th acre in the region.

"Like everything DU does, our work in Louisiana is based on sound science and strong partnerships," said Moorman. "This problem is bigger and more complex than any one organization can tackle alone. But we absolutely must tackle it on every front—from sediment loss and saltwater intrusion to public policies that could fund large-scale restoration. That's the only way to achieve sustainable, long-term solutions for Louisiana's coast. And it's possible. Ducks Unlimited has been doing it for 25 years; we just need to do more, and do it faster, to meet this huge challenge."

One way Ducks Unlimited is meeting that challenge is by restoring natural hydrology to degraded wetlands. Where salt water has killed vegetation and broken marshlands, DU installs perimeter levees, water-control structures, canal plugs or a combination of the three, to limit saltwater intrusion and restore the wetland's natural salinity.

Once salinity is restored to a marsh, DU can often restore its vegetation by building earthen terraces that reduce wind and wave action and control erosion. Biologists found that by limiting wave action, water clarity also improves, allowing sunlight to reach the marsh bottom and stimulate growth of submerged aquatic vegetation.

In 2010, DU and partners like the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation celebrated the completion of a \$4.48-million coastal restoration project in southwest Louisiana. Through the Black Lake Terracing Project, Ducks Unlimited built more than 50 miles of marsh terraces to restore 2,500 acres of critical coastal wetlands. State Senator Dan Morrish called the project "a true example of the power of partnerships."

Ducks Unlimited often partners with key state and federal agencies, private landowners, major sponsors, foundations, and many others to ensure that every project is delivered to its fullest potential.

Another way DU maximizes its impact is by securing matching grants from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). Since the beginning of *Wetlands for Tomorrow*, DU has submitted 11 proposals for NAWCA grants to support work in Louisiana. Of those, 10 grants were secured, and one is still pending. These grants, coupled with contributions from DU supporters, allow Ducks Unlimited to put habitat back on the ground in places like the Pointe-aux-Chenes Wildlife Management Area, where DU is restoring more than 4,700 acres of coastal marsh destroyed by saltwater intrusion.

In some cases, the problem is not excessive salt water, but inadequate sediment. To restore sediment-starved marshes, Ducks Unlimited reconnects the marsh to its natural sediment source. In 2005, thanks to funding from the Breaux Act, Shell Oil and Freepport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Foundation, DU restored 1,300 acres of the Pass-A-Loutre Wildlife Management Area by creating crevasse-splays in the levee that once separated the marsh from the Mississippi River. These splays allow silt-laden water from the Mississippi to flow into the marsh and restore sediment supplies to the once-sinking wetlands.

DU is making great progress on the ground, but the future of Louisiana's wetlands also depends on work done on Capitol Hill. Public policy will play a crucial role in restoring Louisiana's coastal marsh. Paramount will be policy to fund large-scale restoration work under Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast. DU also supports funding for the Louisiana Coastal Area Plan, which includes detailed, but presently unfunded, restoration projects authorized under the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. These plans, if funded, would restore both coastal wetlands and the processes that built them over time – ultimately leading to a sustainable system for future generations.

Looking forward, Ducks Unlimited is poised and prepared to lead the charge in conserving Louisiana's coastal wetlands. In 2010, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal appointed Ducks Unlimited CEO Dale Hall to the Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration and Conservation. This commission advises the governor on the status of Louisiana's coastal protection and restoration program.

"It's hard to overstate how important these wetlands are for North America's waterfowl, other wildlife, and ultimately for waterfowl hunters and people across the country," said Hall. "I look forward to working with the commission to forge solutions to the challenges we face in coastal Louisiana. DU will continue to stand strong with the commission, and with all of our conservation partners, to ensure coastal Louisiana's wetlands exist for generations to come."

While recent events sparked news of damage and loss on Louisiana's coast, Ducks Unlimited has a different story to tell. In the wetlands of tomorrow, if Ducks Unlimited has its way, the tale will be of skies filled with waterfowl, marshes full of fish, and generations fulfilled by outdoor excursions in Louisiana's wetlands. And the headlines will read: Revived, Renewed, Restored.

Donor Spotlight: J. STOREY CHARBONNET

J. Storey Charbonnet had been a member of Ducks Unlimited for more than a decade attending events in New Orleans; Corpus Christi, Texas; and Newcastle, Delaware, when he decided to join the ranks of Life Sponsor during the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign.

When asked why he makes Ducks Unlimited a giving priority, Storey said, "As an avid waterfowler, I believe in Ducks Unlimited's mission. DU has great focus on coastal wetlands restoration, and I wanted to be part of restoring and conserving the Gulf's fragile habitats. My sons and I have a small duck club near Slidell, Louisiana, and every year we look forward to our time together out

in the field. Giving to Ducks Unlimited is my way to perpetuate this wonderful sport and the habitat that supports it. Simply put, conservation is a good investment."

Storey has also handed down the tradition of conservation to his sons. Both boys are Legacy Greenwings and share his love of the outdoors and waterfowling.

A graduate of the University of Virginia, Storey is a partner at Johnson Rice & Company, LLC, in New Orleans, where he works with a couple of other avid DUers.



FEW PEOPLE ALIVE TODAY HAVE SEEN FIRSTHAND A TRULY NATURAL NETWORK OF WETLANDS. IT'S RARE TO FIND SUCH A SYSTEM THESE DAYS – AN ENTIRE AREA UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DRAINAGE OR WATER CONTROL. TWENTY YEARS AGO, THE MANGROVE SWAMPS OF WESTERN MEXICO MIGHT HAVE QUALIFIED.

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Mexico's Pacific coast is lined with thousands of acres of pristine wetlands. Beneath the shallow water, thick, silty mud supports a tangled web of mangrove trees, making the wetlands nearly impassable and construction very expensive. Few beachfront properties and seaports have been developed here, and since no known petroleum products lie beneath the wetlands, they haven't been damaged by exploration or extraction. The wetlands of Mexico's Pacific coast are among the few ecosystems on the continent that remain—at least in some areas—nearly as functional as they've been for centuries. The wetlands even have a natural barrier to protect the coastal system from contaminated runoff. At the mouths of many rivers, where runoff often enters the coast, cattail marshes have formed to absorb nutrients in runoff that would otherwise pollute the mangrove swamps.

With so little development, the area isn't a vacation hot-spot for people, but for blue-winged teal, northern pintails and many other waterfowl species, it's the migration destination. According to U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service surveys, Mexico supports more than 15 percent of North America's wintering waterfowl, and about one-third of them flock to the country's west coast.

Recently, however, commercial shrimp farms have emerged as a serious threat to Mexico's western wetlands. The greatest impact is where shrimp farms are placed in or near mangrove swamps, which serve as the transition zone for freshwater and brackish marshes. Shrimp farms require channels for seawater from the Gulf, and diked areas in which to grow the shrimp, all of which dramatically alter the natural hydrology, killing the mangroves and vegetation in any affected wetlands.

Tens of thousands of acres of mangrove swamps have already been converted to shrimp farms, and science has shown that the farms also have indirect, but equally damaging effects on nearby wetlands.

"Wetland loss has a ripple effect on the ecosystems in which they are embedded – whether we're talking about mangroves in Mexico or potholes on the prairies," said Dr. Scott Yaich, DU's director of

conservation operations. “Unfortunately, wetland loss is still too common a problem across the continent.”

Every nine minutes, the United States loses a football field worth of wetlands. In Canada, the rate is likely even higher, and in Mexico, wetland conservation is often overshadowed by the need to address poverty and public safety issues in the developing country.

That’s where Ducks Unlimited comes in. DU is one of the few organizations that crosses international borders to conserve waterfowl habitat in all three countries of North America. And through Ducks Unlimited’s Threatened Wetlands Initiative we’ve made great progress.

CANADA

In terms of waterfowl production, the prairie potholes of Canada are among the most critical breeding grounds in the world. They’re also among the most threatened.

In Canada, no federal laws exist to protect wetlands. The government leaves wetland regulation to the provinces. Some have relatively clear, strong wetland protection laws, while others either don’t have wetland regulations, or are challenged to enforce them. Unfortunately, the provinces with the weakest wetland protection in Canada – Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba – also contain some of the most important wetlands for breeding waterfowl.

In Saskatchewan, for example, two consecutive years (2006-2007) of rain and snow soaked the province’s prairies. While the wet weather was great for ducks, it stifled grain production – a staple industry in prairie Saskatchewan. By 2008, several landowners had had enough. Together, they hired a contractor to drain all the wetlands on their property. It only took five months for heavy machinery to dig miles of new drainage ditches. Soon after, 700 wetlands went down the drain.

Without wetland protection, landowners can easily drain seven or 700 potholes with little or no legal deterrent. Of course, surrounding wildlife and downstream communities may suffer everything from declining waterfowl and wildlife populations to increased flooding and water pollution, but with few federal or provincial regulations to clearly and consistently regulate wetland use, it’s difficult to prevent wetland loss.

Ducks Unlimited is working with federal and provincial governments to find sustainable solutions that support both economic land use and wetland conservation. DU is also working on the ground to conserve and restore Canada’s prairie potholes and other critical wetlands before it’s too late.

THE UNITED STATES

Canada’s rampant wetland loss is the very problem Ducks Unlimited hopes to avoid seeing reignited in the United States. The U.S. national goal is “no net loss of wetlands,” which the country has inched closer to achieving since 1972, when the Clean Water Act was passed. Thanks largely to federal protection from the Clean Water Act, loss of the wetlands most important to waterfowl and other wildlife gradually declined from about 500,000 acres per year in 1972, to the current rate of about 80,000 acres per year. That all changed recently, and as a result, wetland loss in the United States could rapidly accelerate.

In 2001 and 2006, two U.S. Supreme Court decisions and subsequent guidance by federal agencies withdrew Clean Water Act protection from many of America’s remaining wetlands, including more than 20 million acres of what legislators called “geographically isolated” wetlands. An estimated 96 percent of the country’s prairie potholes fall into that “isolated,” thus unprotected category. So do many playas and rainwater basins.

“What too many people don’t really understand is there’s no such thing as a truly isolated wetland,” said Yaich. “Virtually all waters are connected in one way or another, whether it’s through aquifers and groundwater, tributaries, or other surface overflow. Just because you may not see the connection doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist.”

Ducks Unlimited is at the forefront of efforts to restore wetland protection in America. Since 2001, DU has been helping lawmakers understand the scientific connection between wetlands and other waters of the United States.

In Colorado, for example, water from distant wetlands is valued and traded based on the knowledge that these wetlands recharge groundwater supplies and sustain water levels in the South Platte River. These wetlands also provide critical habitat for waterfowl in the Central Flyway. DU often helps private landowners restore





and manage wetlands in the region, and landowners can receive compensation for the work based on the documented value of their wetlands to water supplies and river flows.

Wetlands also help recharge underground aquifers. On the southern Great Plains, for example, the Ogallala aquifer feeds water directly into the Platte and Arkansas rivers, and supports agriculture and communities in eight states. Sandhill wetlands and rainwater basins in Nebraska directly recharge the aquifer, as do many playas farther south.

These are the kinds of wetlands that lost Clean Water Act protection. As a result, the rivers, aquifers and communities that depend on them are also at risk.

Many communities already suffer from problems caused by wetland loss—increased levels of flooding and higher water treatment costs, to name just two—that further illustrate the connection between wetlands and larger waterways.

Chesapeake Bay, for instance, is the largest estuary in the U.S., and was once a haven for waterfowl and sportsmen in the Atlantic Flyway. For years, dabblers and divers flocked to the bay by the thousands, until relatively recently. Chesapeake Bay has lost more than 60 percent of the original wetlands in its 64,000-square-mile watershed. Those wetlands once filtered sediment, nutrients and other pollutants from runoff water before it entered the bay. Without them, runoff from six states pours into the bay. The nitrogen and phosphorous that wetland plants could have absorbed instead enter the bay, causing algae blooms that consume oxygen and create hypoxic areas known as “dead zones,” where aquatic life cannot survive. As water quality has declined in the bay, so have its waterfowl and wildlife populations.

DU is working with public and private landowners in key areas of the Chesapeake Bay watershed to restore and enhance wetlands, plant upland grass buffers, reforest riparian corridors and restore coastal salt-marsh habitats, all of which improve water quality in the bay.

Wetland loss along the Mississippi River is causing similar

problems in the Gulf of Mexico. Most of the wetlands that once buffered the Mississippi River are now gone – converted for agriculture and development, or cut off by dikes, dams and levees. Without wetlands to stop them, nutrients from 31 states flow into the river and eventually the Gulf of Mexico, where a dead zone the size of New Jersey continues to grow.

Ducks Unlimited has been restoring and conserving wetlands throughout the Mississippi’s massive watershed for more than three decades.

“The problem is, once wetland loss reaches this stage, restoration solutions are often expensive and expansive, needing to occur across many states and thousands of miles of rivers and tributaries,” explains Yaich. “It makes more sense and is much more economical to protect existing wetlands now than to restore them later.”

HINDSIGHT IS 20:20

In many cases, wetland restoration is the only choice. The U.S. has lost more than half of its original wetlands and, without renewed federal protection, will likely lose many more.

“Unfortunately, the benefits of wetlands are often most obvious when they’re gone,” says Yaich. “But once we see a storm like Hurricane Katrina that coastal marshes could have buffered, or find water polluted by contaminants that wetlands could have filtered, as we’re seeing in Chesapeake Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, people begin to realize how many economic and other values wetlands provide to us all.”

If experience teaches an appreciation of wetlands, it’s no surprise that waterfowl hunters are the world’s leading wetland conservationists. Few people experience wetlands on a more personal level. For duck hunters, wetlands do more than store and purify water, or buffer storms and control erosion. For duck hunters, wetlands are a sanctuary – a place where memories are made, bonds forged and adventures shared.

“When you’re out in the duck blind in the morning and the sun

is starting to rise, and the mist is on the water, you feel a peace come over you,” explains Dale Hall, chief executive officer of Ducks Unlimited. “That’s my cathedral – where I commune with my Maker better than anywhere else in the world.”

It’s that kind of passion that led sportsmen to found Ducks Unlimited in 1937, and it still drives DU members and volunteers today. Across the continent, DU members and supporters are helping conserve and restore the continent’s most critical wetlands and waterfowl habitats.

That often means undoing work that damaged wetlands years ago, just as DU and partners recently did in California. For the first time in more than 100 years, 6,500 acres of brackish marsh in the lower Napa River Valley are being flooded by the tides of San Francisco Bay. More than a century ago, these wetlands were isolated from the bay by levees and converted to farmland, and then salt evaporation ponds. Salt production gradually faded from the region, but the levees remained – depriving the wetlands of the tides that sustained them. In one of the largest salt marsh wetland restoration projects in U.S. history, DU and partners recently reconnected the marshes with the tides of San Francisco Bay.

“By restoring these wetlands, our goal is to also restore waterfowl and wildlife populations in the region,” says Mark Biddlecomb, director of DU’s Western Regional Office. “This area was among the earliest hunting grounds for market hunters. Wetlands here were once covered with waterfowl – from dabblers like pintails and mallards to divers such as canvasback, scaup and ring-necked ducks. Several endangered fish species including salmon, steelhead and green sturgeon also rely on tidal wetlands. We’re optimistic that with this restoration work, the wildlife will return with the tide.”

Salt marsh restoration is a relatively new field in wetland management, and DU is pioneering the progress with science-based solutions grounded in years of intensive research.

“Wetland conservation sounds a lot simpler than it is, because no two wetlands are exactly alike,” explains Yaich. “There are potholes, playas, bottomland hardwood forests, tidal estuaries, brackish marshes and the list goes on. The one thing they all have in common is water. Every DU project is scientifically tailored to meet the specific hydrologic conditions and address the unique challenges of that wetland. DU’s experts in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico consistently research and rely on science to guide every action we take.”

MEXICO

In Mexico, DU is using information gained through science and research to restore mangrove wetlands.

“We applied what we learned about mangrove ecology to restore degraded areas – often with dramatic results,” says Eduardo Carrera, executive director of Ducks Unlimited de Mexico (DUMAC). “In many cases, recovery of a mangrove swamp can be put into motion by simply restoring a more natural hydrology.”

DUMAC’s restoration techniques are so effective they’ve become the standard used by Mexico’s National Forestry Commission to demonstrate how to restore mangroves in Mexico.

DU’s research is also guiding national wetland policies and helping conserve vital wetland habitats. The marshes and swamps of Mexico are a final migration stop for millions of waterfowl and other migratory birds from across North America.

“DU’s role in Mexico is especially important because many of the nation’s most important wetlands are threatened and limited resources are available to conserve them,” explains John Tomke, president of DUMAC.

To maximize its resources, DU partners with government agencies, foundations, corporations, private landowners and other conservation groups to deliver conservation projects on the ground. DUMAC is also using satellite imagery and field work to map and classify Mexico’s waterfowl habitat, which guides conservation delivery for DU and partners throughout the country. With more than 64 million acres mapped and classified, the work is nearly complete.

CONTINENTAL CONSERVATION

The threats facing North America’s wetlands are even more diverse than the waterfowl that depend on them, but one thing remains the same: wherever waterfowl breed, migrate or winter, Ducks Unlimited is there. DU’s work is driven by passion, backed by science and supported by waterfowl hunters - world leaders in conservation. It’s that foundation that enables DU to work with lawmakers, agencies and landowners throughout Canada, the United States and Mexico as a respected voice and champion for wetland and waterfowl conservation.

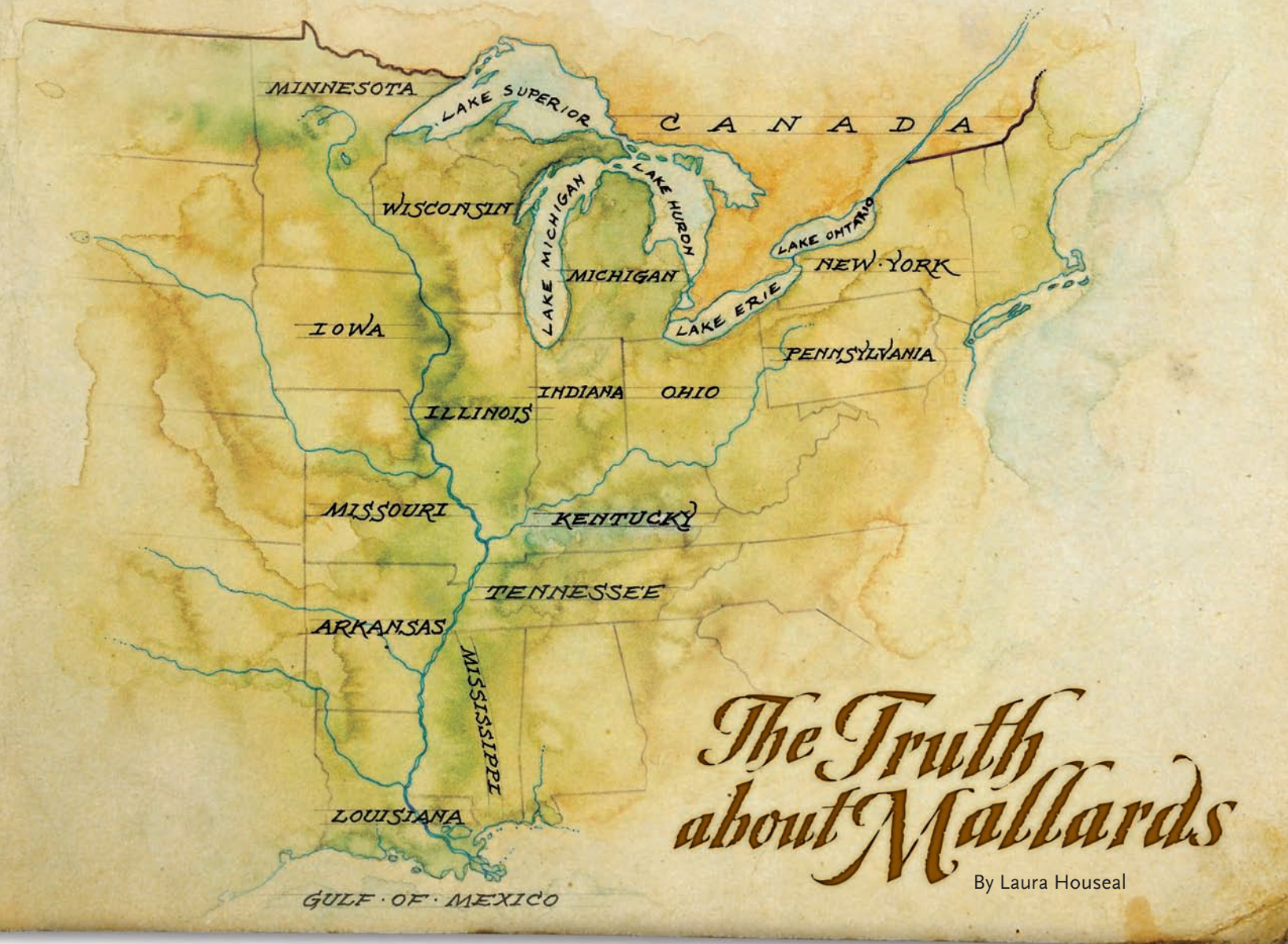
THE WEALTH OF WETLANDS

Waterfowl hunters have long known that wetlands are a precious commodity. Without wetlands, waterfowl populations would plummet, along with our waterfowl hunting traditions and the \$2.3 billion they generate each year. Without wetlands, we’d also see more flooding and more severe floodwater damage, because wetlands store and retain excess water. Just one wetland acre can hold 1.5 million gallons of water. One mile of marsh can reduce a storm surge by one foot.

Contrary to popular belief, marsh water doesn’t just sit stagnate, either. The soil and plants in a wetland purify water by removing nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus before they reach our

rivers, lakes and streams. Without wetlands, those nutrients end up in places like the Gulf of Mexico, causing algae blooms that consume oxygen for miles. On the Gulf Coast, the result is a “dead zone” the size of New Jersey where no marine life can survive. Wetlands help prevent dead zones. They also help control erosion, and some wetlands can even remove toxic chemicals and heavy metals from the water.

Many marshes also recharge underground aquifers, which store 97 percent of the world’s unfrozen fresh water. Although freshwater wetlands only cover one percent of the Earth’s surface, they support more than 40 percent of the world’s species.



WARNING:

FOR MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY. NOT APPROPRIATE FOR SMALL CHILDREN.

(Probably shouldn't let Arkansans see it either.)

“Do you know *anything* about ducks?” I’ll never forget that question. I was 21 years old, one week into my dream job with Ducks Unlimited, and interviewing the waterfowl guru himself, Dr. Bruce Batt, then chief biologist for Ducks Unlimited. He’s since retired, but few people alive today know more about waterfowl than Dr. Batt. I was obviously in over my bowed and blushing head.

I thought I knew about ducks. I grew up in eastern Arkansas, where duck hunting is a way of life. Greenheads and green timber, Hot Hands® and cold feet, wet dogs and warm trucks, and most of all, my Dad. Standing hip-deep in muddy water, hidden under blood-stained camo, he looked as strong as the big oak beside him. With his head down, eyes up and cheeks puffed out like Louis Armstrong, Dad could hit this special comeback call on his old walnut “Timber Rattler,” and I knew the greenheads were close, but not quite committed. When his call faded to a long, reassuring “*quaaackkk*,”

action was imminent. Watching Dad work mallards down from the sky was better than any Barnum and Bailey lion-taming act I could imagine. The pride and pleasure in our yellow Lab’s eyes as he retrieved the downed greenhead, well, it just doesn’t get much better. That’s what I knew – and loved – about duck hunting. Not much compared to Dr. Batt.

He didn’t realize it, but Dr. Batt was about to turn my world upside down. See, I was raised with a certain degree of Arkansas pride. We may not have beaches to bask on or mountains to ski, but in Arkansas, we have mallards! They migrate, of course, but when the weather turns cold, every mallard in the world flocks straight to eastern Arkansas – at least it seemed that way when I was a little girl. I don’t know which was worse, learning that Santa wasn’t real, or that my state didn’t have a monopoly on mallard hunting. I was crushed. Turns out, mallards are the most numerous, widespread waterfowl



species on the planet. North America has the good fortune of having more mallards than any other continent, and the birds are seasonal visitors across most of the United States and Canada. So bountiful are mallards on this continent that the population is broken down by regions. There are western mallards, eastern mallards and of course, the mid-continent mallards I knew as a child.

Whether your mallards hail from Alaska, the Maritime Provinces, or the prairies, they all have one thing in common: Ducks Unlimited. Across the continent, DU is conserving mallard habitat through its Mallard Conservation Initiative. Millions of other waterfowl also benefit from this work, because most dabbling ducks rely upon the same habitats.

BREEDING MALLARDS: THE BIRDS AND THE LEAS

Mallards are successful because they are adaptable. They thrive on diverse wetlands, eat a varied diet and are persistent breeders, sometimes nesting three to five times in a single season if that's what it takes for a successful clutch. That flexibility has enabled mallards to reproduce across the northern half of the continent.

The most important breeding area for mid-continent mallards, and many other common duck species, is the famed Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) of the U.S. and Canada. The PPR and adjacent prairie parklands generally support up to 60 percent of the continent's mallards. DU has been conserving habitat in the PPR since its founding in 1937, and in 2004, launched its Conserving North America's Grasslands Initiative to accelerate conservation work in the PPR (See "Delivering for the Ducks" on page 6).

The Prairie Pothole Region didn't get its nickname the "Duck Factory" for nothing. It is unquestionably the most critical, productive, and therefore the most studied breeding area on the continent. Years of research have shown that on the prairies, intact

habitat is key for nesting ducks – a strong mix of wetlands and grasslands promotes nest success. However, as DU scientists recently demonstrated, research on the prairies should not necessarily guide conservation on other landscapes. DU's Great Lakes Mallard Study is a prime example.

The Great Lakes region annually supports more than 1 million breeding mallards. For decades, conservation there focused on restoring grassland habitat, much like on the prairies. In the mid-1990s, however, mounting evidence suggested mallard populations were declining in some Great Lakes States. In 2001, DU launched the Great Lakes Mallard Study to identify and address the problem. Over a three-year period, DU field crews surgically implanted radio transmitters about the size of a 12-gauge shotgun shell into 560 hen mallards breeding in the Great Lakes region. Researchers recorded their movements, nest success, clutch size, brood survival and habitat use. The results showed that unlike on the prairies, where nest success is the primary problem, in the Great Lakes region duckling survival is the main factor for mallard production. Low duckling survival is often related to inadequate wetland habitat, which is frequently limited by development in the Great Lakes region. Armed with this information, DU and partners are using satellite imagery and a complex Habitat Evaluation Network (HEN) to identify and restore wetlands and grasslands in the Great Lakes region. For more on this study, log on to www.ducks.org.

The western boreal forest is second only to the prairies in terms of waterfowl production. On average, around 13 million waterfowl breed there every year, including more than 2 million mallards. Spanning some 1.8 million square miles across northern Canada and central Alaska, the western boreal forest was once a true wilderness, largely untouched by modern development – until now. Recent increases in natural resource extraction have put the



forests wildlife and habitat at risk. DU scientists are monitoring waterfowl populations on the ground, and using GIS and satellite landcover images to map habitat in the region. Working with natural resource managers, The Pew Charitable Trusts and other partners in the forest, DU is conserving habitat and ensuring development there is as compatible as possible with wetlands and waterfowl conservation. For more on DU's work in the western boreal forest, see "Breakthrough in the Boreal," on page 10.

THE LATE MIGRATION

Mallards are hardy ducks, often lingering on the breeding grounds long after teal and pintails have left for warmer climes. Many mallards will withstand bitter cold to search for food until blankets of snow and ice finally force their migration. When mallards do head south, the majority funnel through the Central and Mississippi flyways.

Many head to the cornfields of Kansas; some westerners fly through the Pacific Northwest on their way to the Central Valley of California. Most mallards, though, will flock to the Mississippi River and its floodplain like metal to a magnet. Thanks in large part to grants from The McKnight Foundation, DU is conserving habitat from the river's headwaters in Minnesota to its mouth in southern Louisiana. DU is at the midpoint of its second two-year McKnight grant, and has conserved more than 242,000 acres along the 10-state Mississippi River corridor.

In Minnesota, mallards feast on wild rice growing in shallow lakes, but these lakes are becoming increasingly rare. Through the Living Lakes Initiative, DU has conserved more than 180 shallow lakes in Minnesota since 2004. That work got a boost in 2008, when Minnesota voters passed a constitutional amendment that will generate about \$300 million annually for 25 years (that's \$7.5 billion), and the majority will go to conservation. DU is helping Minnesota turn those dollars into habitat throughout the state. Missouri and Arkansas have long had similar legislation, and in 2010, Iowa passed its own conservation amendment with strong support from more than 20,000 Iowa DU members. All are critical states for migrating mallards - one of the many wildlife species that benefit from such far-sighted legislation.

In the Central Flyway, some of the highest mallard harvests occur along the Platte River, where many mid-continent mallards migrate every year. Early settlers described the Platte as "a mile wide and an inch deep," a wild, meandering river with abundant sand bars and backwater sloughs. However, after years of water diversions and reservoir developments, the Platte has lost 70 percent of its historic flows, 80 percent of its channel width, and the majority of its floodplain wetlands. Recent housing developments are also threatening the river and further tapping its limited water supply. Today, the Platte is one of the West's most contested rivers, providing habitat for four threatened and endangered species in central

Nebraska, drinking water for 3.5 million people and irrigation for 2 million acres of farmland. When snow in its headwaters falls short, though, the Platte can't meet its users' demands.

With the help of DU supporters, Ducks Unlimited is restoring habitat and hydrology throughout the Platte's watershed. In Nebraska alone, DU has permanently protected more than 4,200 acres thanks to conservation easements with private landowners. DU is also restoring wetlands along the Platte by removing accumulated sediment, clearing invasive trees and restoring shallow riverine wetlands and backwater sloughs. It's a challenging task because hydrology throughout the Platte River watershed is permanently altered. DU biologists and engineers are making remarkable progress, however, with innovative restoration techniques that restore wetland functions and provide habitat for millions of mallards and other waterfowl.

WINTERING GROUNDS: SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

As mallards wing their way south for the winter, the majority will visit the Mississippi Alluvial Valley (MAV). The MAV is by far the most significant wintering area on the continent for mallards, hosting up to 40 percent of North America's mallard population. Once a vast, seasonally flooded bottomland forest, the MAV originally spanned nearly 25 million acres in seven states, from southern Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico. During the latter half of the last century, however, elaborate flood-control networks and agriculture expansion took a heavy toll on the MAV's environment. Today, only 4.5 million acres – or roughly 20 percent – of the region's original bottomland hardwood forests remain.

DU is at the forefront of wetland conservation in the MAV. Efforts there focus on permanently protecting existing habitat through conservation easements donated by private landowners. On public land, DU helps restore lost wetlands and replant bottomland hardwood forests, often with funding from NAWCA grants matched by DU donors and partners. DU also works with farmers to create alternative wintering habitat on flooded rice and soybean fields.

One of the most effective conservation programs in the MAV is the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), which helps landowners restore habitat on flood-prone cropland. DU has a long history of working with landowners and the NRCS to put WRP projects on the ground, including more than 250,000 acres in the lower MAV alone. It's an impressive start, but represents just one percent of the region's original forested wetlands. DU is determined to do more, and WRP will be key to that work. Nationwide, more than 2.3 million acres are enrolled in WRP, but current demand exceeds the program's enrollment cap. DU is working with Congress to increase WRP enrollment and secure additional funding in the 2012 Farm Bill.

While most mallards remain in the interior of the continent, many have pushed their populations east to the Atlantic and west to the Pacific Flyway. Wherever the ubiquitous greenhead is found, Ducks Unlimited will always be there conserving habitat for the future of mallards, waterfowl and our hunting heritage.

As for me, I've recovered from my conversation with Dr. Batt. Through the years, we've become good friends and he continues to enlighten me with his waterfowl wisdom. I'll never lose that Arkansas pride, but I've since gained a new pride, a Ducks Unlimited pride. I'm proud of the sportsmen who are securing the future of North America's waterfowl. Maybe someday, thanks to Ducks Unlimited, my own children will learn the joy of greenheads and green timber, Hot Hands® and cold feet, wet dogs and warm trucks, and most of all, their Daddy working ducks down from the sky.

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Laura Houseal is a Communications Project Manager with Ducks Unlimited, and is a mother of two who cherishes her time in the outdoors with family.

Donor Spotlight:

PETER TREIBER

Peter Treiber and his twin brother Scott are active supporters of Ducks Unlimited with a family history of giving to protect the waterfowling heritage that dates back more than 25 years.

"The reason why we support Ducks Unlimited is simple. We love the outdoors, always have," said Peter. "My brother and I grew up exploring and adventuring on Long Island; it's in our blood. Those early experiences developed into a lifelong passion for all things wild. We want to do whatever we can to keep these places for our children and their children to enjoy."

Peter and Scott are the third generation in the Treiber family to support wetlands conservation and their family gifts have spurred many others to become involved with Ducks Unlimited. Both Treiber brothers are Charter Members of the President's Council, an honorary society that recognizes DU's most philanthropic annual donors, and are deeply rooted in the success of their local chapter.

"We run a little branch called the North Shore Chapter. Through our chapter involvement we underwrote the New York Sponsorship print that helped generate over three-quarters of a million dollars over three years. We are glad we could do this for the ducks" said Peter.

"For me, supporting Ducks Unlimited and being part of protecting these places others may overlook as being significant are my way of saying thank you for the great resource that I've always enjoyed and that has kept me healthy and strong."



NICKNAMED THE “GREYHOUND OF THE AIR,” A PINTAIL DRAKE—
AMONG THE MOST GRACEFUL AND ELEGANT OF NORTH AMERICA’S WATERFOWL
—IS A PRIZE WORTH MOUNTING FOR MOST WATERFOWLERS.

.....

Unfortunately, pintails have grown more prized as their numbers have dwindled in many regions. At one time, more than 10 million nesting pintails dotted the grasslands and boreal forest of western Canada and the United States. Today, pintails number fewer than 4 million.

As with everything Ducks Unlimited undertakes, we have used partnerships and leading-edge science in an effort to unravel the mystery of the pintail’s decline. Going into the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign, DU had completed four years of research to uncover the most limiting factors for pintails—unsuccessful nesting and habitat loss.

A WINTER WHEAT REFUGE

To be successful on the breeding grounds, ducks, including pintails, need abundant, healthy wetlands and extensive nesting cover. Healthy wetlands provide rich food resources to meet the nutritional requirements of laying and incubating females. Extensive research by DU and our partners has shown that nest success improves as the percentage of grassland increases on the land surrounding the nest. For thousands of years, this nesting cover was provided in the Prairie Pothole Region’s native grasslands, which continue to provide the backbone of North America’s waterfowl production. However, beginning in the late 1800s, the grasslands in the deeper soils of the Prairie Pothole Region began to fall to the plow to feed a growing human population. This conversion has continued; today, most of the eastern prairies are extensively cultivated.

To reverse this trend, in 1999 DU undertook a rigorous program

aimed at incorporating winter wheat and reduced tillage on existing croplands in North and South Dakota to boost the fall waterfowl flight and create a more sustainable prairie landscape. Winter wheat is planted in September, overwinters under the snow, and then grows rapidly as the soil warms in spring. Since there is no cultivation or planting during the nesting season, breeding waterfowl are undisturbed. During the seven years of the campaign, our efforts have resulted in more than 2.7 million acres planted in North Dakota alone, and spring 2010 research shows the results: 135 pintail nests in winter wheat, 34 nests in spring crops and 52 nests in grassland.

A breakthrough for the winter wheat program occurred in 2008 when Bayer CropScience encouraged DU to “think big” and offered an investment that would take winter wheat to the next level across the U.S. and Canadian prairies. In 2009, the partnership set a “stretch” goal of annually planting 11.6 million acres in winter wheat on the prairies, a move that would contribute approximately 2 million ducks to the fall flight each year. In 2010, the partnership began working with three regional universities to research improved winter wheat varieties. New varieties and research into making the crop more profitable will go a long way in attracting producers to try winter wheat in their crop rotation.

CENTRAL TO PINTAIL PRODUCTION

California’s Central Valley is the most important wintering area for pintails on the continent. It supports 75 percent of the Pacific Flyway’s pintail population and 50 percent of the continent’s.

In the Central Valley, DU focuses on providing waterfowl access

to healthy wetlands. During the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign, DU undertook more than 75 projects in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys that restored or enhanced habitat for the northern pintail. Collectively, these projects improved more than 64,000 acres of wetland habitat for wintering and staging pintails.

Agricultural easements are also a key cog for pintails in California. Agricultural lands provide nearly 70 percent of the nutritional needs of wintering waterfowl, and winter-flooded rice lands provide the bulk of these food resources. DU has permanently protected substantial acreage of rice lands in the Sacramento Valley by establishing agricultural easements. Through *Wetlands for Tomorrow*, DU has secured nine easements that permanently protected more than 4,000 acres of rice lands.

COASTAL PARADISE

With its mild winter climate and diversity of wetland habitat, the Texas coast is a premier waterfowl hunting area that annually attracts a variety of waterfowl, especially northern pintails. During the 1970s, when continental pintail populations were last at high levels, more

than 1 million of these birds wintered along the Texas coast.

Unfortunately, a sharp decline in rice production in recent decades has greatly reduced wintering habitat along the Texas coast. The decline in rice acreage has been especially severe in the Mid-Coast region west and south of Houston, an area that supports some of the largest concentrations of wintering pintails in the Central Flyway.

As a result, DU and its partners are continually working to increase the amount of winter foraging habitat on the Texas coast. DU, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service developed the Texas Prairie Wetlands Project (TPWP) in 1991. The goal of TPWP is to restore, enhance and protect shallow, seasonally flooded wetland habitat on private lands within Texas' 28 coastal counties. TPWP provides cost-share assistance and technical advice to private landowners wanting to manage wetlands on their property to benefit waterfowl and other migratory birds. TPWP has been a major focal point of DU's pintail efforts, and through the efforts of *Wetlands for Tomorrow*, DU has conserved 20,196 acres of habitat with an additional 7,500 acres under construction.



Donor Spotlight: MAJOR IN BUSINESS, MINOR IN WATERFOWL

Hunting is more than a pastime for Eric Dillon; it fuels his lifelong passion for conservation.

Dillon got hooked on the sport at age 12 when his grandfather gave him his first gun, "an Ithaca 16-ga. pump." He attended Washington State to stay near "the best pheasant hunting" locale but went to graduate school in the East. Limited access to hunting and fishing prompted a move back to Seattle where he began his career in the investment business and learned about the science behind the sport.

"My love of hunting and fishing is highly correlated to my interest in conservation and in the habitat that is critical to perpetuate these activities today and for future generations,"

Dillon said. He fed this passion for conservation by becoming involved with DU in the mid-1990s and has played a major role in the success of the Seattle chapter, DU's top fundraising chapter for four of the last five years.

"I wanted to support DU because I believe strongly in the core principle of preserving wetlands for migratory waterfowl," Dillon said. "And I was delighted to support the Pintail Initiative by contributing to the Klamath Basin project in Oregon. Not only were pintails my grandfather's favorite duck but I was greatly impressed with the science from DU on how critical this region is to the western pintail flyway. Through this science it became clear how imperative it is that this land be preserved."



“DON’T JUDGE EACH DAY BY THE HARVEST YOU REAP BUT BY THE SEEDS THAT YOU PLANT.”

– Robert Louis Stevenson

More than 12 million acres... 74 years... 60,000 volunteers... 1 million members and donors. No matter how you tally it up, Ducks Unlimited is a successful organization. So when the leadership for the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign met to discuss goals and initiatives for the most ambitious conservation campaign ever conducted, they looked not at what DU had already done, but what was left to do. What seeds had we not planted or not nurtured enough?

The answer became a strong focus during the campaign on ensuring the long-term health and viability of the unique organization that is Ducks Unlimited. As the only group with a singular mission of wetlands and waterfowl conservation, being around for the next 75 years was important, and three of our campaign initiatives—Educating Youth About Wetlands, the Endowment and the Strategic Conservation Initiative Fund—focused on shaping the future.

THE FUTURE BEGINS TODAY

Recent studies show that the hunting population is aging, waterfowl hunter numbers are declining, and fewer young people are taking up the gauntlet to learn the sport. DU hopes to reverse this trend through the Educating Youth About Wetlands Initiative by engaging the conservationists of tomorrow at a young age and keeping them engaged over the course of their lives. DU’s Great Plains Regional Office (GPRO) in Bismarck, N.D., has taken steps to promote the Youth Initiative since the start of the WFT campaign. Most recently, the GPRO launched a youth waterfowl hunting clinic aimed at future duck hunters, aged 16 or younger. The free clinic provides instruction on duck calling, setting out decoys, working

with retrievers, duck identification and basic duck biology. Students also have a chance to practice their shooting techniques at a local sporting clays range.

“We’re trying to inspire young people to start hunting by giving them the basics,” said Steve Adair, director of operations for the Great Plains Regional Office. “We’re concerned about the number of hunters dropping in recent years, and we want to help turn that number around. Hunters are inclined to invest in conservation, so we want to invest in getting young people interested in waterfowling.”

DU is also collaborating with other youth organizations to get young people outdoors. The Boys Scouts of America (BSA) is well known for rewarding young men for their achievements through merit badges and rank advancement within the organization. By partnering with the BSA, DU can take advantage of built-in opportunities to turn this group of future leaders into conservation leaders. DU and BSA have agreed to host special youth events with a wetlands and waterfowl conservation slant. This concept, pioneered by the Northern Virginia Chapter’s volunteers, will be replicated for other Greenwing programs across the nation.

In addition to the Greenwing program, which focuses on youth up to age 17, Ducks Unlimited also has a college chapter program. College students are notoriously busy people, but thousands of young adults across the country have made time to get involved in a DU chapter at their school. When the WFT campaign began in 2004, there were 46 official DU college chapters. Now, with that number up to 100 chapters, college chapter fundraising has grown from \$250,000 to more than \$2.5 million. Not only do these numbers bode well for the ducks through increased funding for conservation

programs, but they also support the adage: if we build it, they will come. Getting our youth involved at an early age through Greenwing or college programs could be the key to creating the next generation of conservationists.

The bottom line is simple, according to Bruce Deadman, DU senior vice president and chairman of the Youth and Education Committee, "If we don't fill the membership and volunteer pipeline with young folks who share our values and commitment to wetlands conservation, then frankly all the success we have enjoyed in the past won't mean a thing 20 years from now."

The Educating Youth About Wetlands Initiative was the impetus for many chapters across the U.S. to make Greenwing and college student recruitment a high priority, but volunteers made it successful. Youth and Education Committee members like Deadman have been looking for ways to plant the seeds that will grow new conservation leaders. In addition to authoring "best practices" manuals for creating or improving Greenwing events and a soon-to-be published manual for college chapters, the committee undertook a thorough review of the materials that help tell the DU story to our youth.

In 2009, the committee recommended revamping the communications tools created for Greenwings. For the Junior Greenwings (ages 0-11), DU added an electronic version of the quarterly *Puddler* magazine. This version is a replica of the printed one, yet it also contains embedded videos and clickable links to informative wetland and waterfowl resources. *Puddler* is a great way for young people to learn about wildlife, general ecology, ecosystems and animal behavior. The two versions provide opportunities for children to delve deeper into the subject matter. Online readers also can submit photos, artwork, questions and feedback using the website.

The Youth and Education Committee also voted to expand the Greenwing edition of *Ducks Unlimited* magazine to include a special eight-page section for adolescents. This section, which is swapped out for other editorial in the adult edition of the magazine, includes content that promotes DU's waterfowling heritage and encourages young readers to become more actively involved in outdoor activities and conservation. The Greenwing edition of *Ducks Unlimited* magazine is sent to all Senior Greenwings (age 12-17) as well as Legacy Greenwings (age 17 and younger) in the United States.

"Our goal," said Deadman, "is to get young people excited and energized about DU, not just for a little while, but for life!"

OPPORTUNITIES AND ENDOWMENTS

Youth programming can provide future conservation leaders, but DU's focus on short- and long-term financial reserve planning will ensure the organization has the resources to nurture its conservation mission. With the Strategic Conservation Initiative Fund, DU created a savings account for those unexpected situations that arise in every organization. A small portion of each Major Sponsor gift was put into a venture capital fund to be used for high priority, unplanned conservation opportunities, such as major land acquisitions and easements, or if need be, to offset revenue shortfalls. With the advent of this fund, which currently stands at \$4 million, Ducks Unlimited will be able to meet critical habitat opportunities that require quick action.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Endowment Initiative may be one of the most important avenues for ensuring that DU is able to restore and conserve North America's wetland resources for future generations of waterfowl hunters and outdoor enthusiasts. With an "untouchable principal," endowed funds are a permanent source of incremental funding for the DU mission. The Endowment Initiative, buoyed primarily by gifts through estates and bequests from DU's Feather Society members, ensures a stable source of funding for DU's vital conservation mission and research programs. Over the course of the campaign, DU's endowment grew from \$14.1 million to \$24.2 million, and the number of planned gifts made during that time stands at just over 600. Because of this solid endowment fund, DU will continue its legacy one seed at a time.

Donor Spotlight:

WITH PRIVILEGE COMES RESPONSIBILITY

For Richard Bechtoldt, waterfowling is more than just a sport. It's a window into his past, a simpler time spent growing up in southern Illinois duck hunting on the mighty Mississippi. Though it's been 50 years, Richard remembers those days vividly. He remembers them being spent in an old wooden boat pulled up on a sand bar or back in a slough with his best friend, his grandfather. He remembers sitting back in amazement listening to his grandfather talk about the days when the ducks would be so thick that you didn't believe they were real. And he remembers one of the most important things his grandfather ever told him: that hunting ducks was a privilege not to be taken lightly and that it was Richard's responsibility to do what he could to ensure the future of the sport he loved. Then he told Richard about Ducks Unlimited.

"My grandfather was not a wealthy man and could only do a few dollars here and there, but he did something," Bechtoldt says. "Too many times, we think we can't make a difference because we are not wealthy. But do what you can; it really makes you feel like a part of something bigger." For Bechtoldt that "something bigger" was a commitment through the Feather Society. He and his wife included DU in their estate plans, effectively ensuring the future of the sport he loved. "The program fit our needs perfectly," said Bechtoldt.

"Our investment in the Endowment Initiative assures us that future generations will have some of the lasting memories spent with their father or grandfather that I have been allowed to enjoy. As I've gotten older, I may no longer get to spend as many days in the field, but through my support, DU will be able to save more valuable habitat and continue the waterfowling heritage I have treasured for most of my life."

Connecting Passion and Philanthropy

SHARING THEIR PASSION IS WHAT DUCKS UNLIMITED VOLUNTEERS DO BEST. AND FEW DO IT BETTER THAN THE MEMBERS OF WETLANDS AMERICA TRUST. FOUNDED AS THE DUCKS UNLIMITED FOUNDATION AND RENAMED WETLANDS AMERICA TRUST IN 1993, WAT— AS THE GROUP IS COMMONLY CALLED—IS DU'S NUMBER ONE ADVOCATE.

WAT, while a separate 501c3 organization, was founded specifically to support the conservation mission of Ducks Unlimited, especially in the areas of fundraising, managing the endowment and overseeing the revolving land fund and conservation easement program. Its members are top business leaders and conservationists from across the continent. And, as they do in business, these men know how to leverage their personal resources and connections to make the greatest impact. Over the course of the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign, the members of WAT collectively contributed \$85 million to the effort led by WAT Presidents Jim Kennedy and John Childs. But probably their biggest impact comes from spreading the word about Ducks Unlimited's mission to their friends and business associates through highly personalized gatherings.

Over the years, our WAT presidents have hosted donors and WAT trustees at their lodges in Mississippi, Alaska and Argentina. Each event mixes DU business with waterfowling pleasure as the agenda is structured to facilitate small group discussions and in-the-field opportunities for WAT members to get to know each other better and to meet prospective members. In addition, at the recommendation of current trustees, two or three potential WAT members are invited to each board meeting, allowing them to experience the work of WAT firsthand.

WAT is also hosting a series of "Meet the CEO" events in their respective cities. These intimate gatherings bring local business leaders and philanthropists together with DU's new chief executive officer, Dale Hall, who joined DU in May of 2010. These gatherings give Hall a platform for sharing his passion for conservation and Ducks Unlimited's mission while also providing a forum for potential donors to learn more about the world's leader in wetland conservation.

With their input of time, talents and treasure, WAT trustees have been instrumental in the success of the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign. One of the initiatives of the campaign was to increase funding for the endowment. In 2004 at the start of the campaign, DU's endowment stood at \$14.1 million; today the endowment exceeds \$24 million. Another area of success is the WAT-endorsed "Rescue the Duck Factory" campaign, launched as a part of the North American Grasslands Initiative to raise \$40 million targeted for conservation easements in the US Prairie Pothole Region. With trustee-funded challenge grants, the goal has been achieved. Finally, with the implementation of easement "focus areas" in the highest priority landscapes, the donated conservation easements managed by WAT have exceeded \$546 million in value, and today our program has the accreditation of the Land Trust Alliance. DU is one of the few national organizations to achieve this distinction.

"The Land Trust Accreditation seal signifies that both DU and WAT operate under the highest legal, ethical, fiscal and procedural standards," said Dan Thiel, chief operating officer for WAT. "Accreditation indicates to funders, partners and landowners that DU takes seriously our legal responsibilities as stewards of conservation easements and that we engage in real estate transactions using the highest ethical and legal standards. Success of our partnerships, and thus the achievement of our conservation mission, depends on establishing and maintaining a mutual trust among all players."

The *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign may have ended, but the campaign by WAT trustees to share their passion for the work of Ducks Unlimited has only just begun.



Wetlands America Trust, Inc.

MEMBERSHIP

KEVIN ALBERT is managing director of Pantheon Ventures, a private investment management firm specializing in alternative investments in New York.

ROBERT M. (MIKE) BENGE is the president of Delacroix Corporation in New Orleans, Louisiana. He serves as senior VP of development for the DU Inc. Board.

JOHN W. BERRY JR. is the CEO of Berry Investments, Inc. in Dayton, Ohio, and president of the Berry Family Foundation.

PAUL R. BONDERSON JR. is the retired co-founder and VP of engineering for Brocade Communications Systems, Inc. Paul serves as the senior VP of conservation programs for the DU Inc. Board.

JOHN W. CHILDS, president of Wetlands America Trust, is the chairman and CEO of J.W. Childs Associates in Boston, Massachusetts.

WILLIAM F. (BILL) D'ALONZO is the CEO and CIO of Friess Associates, which manages the Brandywine family of mutual funds.

JOHN S. DALE is a principal and portfolio manager for Peregrine Capital Management in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

SKIPPER DICKSON is president of Morris & Dickson Company, a pharmaceutical wholesale company based in Shreveport, Louisiana. In addition, he is president of Sports South, the oldest American distributor of firearms and ammunition.

GEORGE H. DUNKLIN JR. is the president of Dunklin Holding, an extensive agriculture operation in Arkansas and is the owner/operator of Five Oaks Lodge in Stuttgart. He is the first VP for the DU Inc. Board.

DAVID F. (DAVE) GROHNE is president and founder of Independence Tube Corporation in Chicago, Illinois.

ROBERT S. (BOB) HESTER JR. is managing partner at Deloitte Service LP in Memphis, Tennessee. He serves as secretary and treasurer for Wetlands America Trust and treasurer for the DU Inc. Board.

ORRIN H. INGRAM II is president and CEO of Ingram Industries Inc., a Nashville-based privately held company with four operating divisions.

JAMES C. (JIM) KENNEDY recently retired as CEO of Cox Enterprises where he continues as chairman. He is a past member of the DU Inc. Board and former president of Wetlands America Trust.

BRUCE LAURITZEN is chairman of 1st National Bank of Omaha, Nebraska. His family history with Ducks Unlimited goes back to the 1950s.

W. BRUCE LEWIS is a practicing attorney and partner in the law firm Gwin, Lewis and Panches in Natchez, Mississippi. He is a former president of DU Inc.

STEVE MARITZ is chairman and CEO of Maritz LLC in St. Louis, Missouri. He is active in a variety of community and national boards.

DAVID MCLEAN is chairman of the board of CN Railway Co. and chairman and CEO of the McLean Group in Canada.

JOHN W. NEWMAN is the CFO/treasurer for LLOG Exploration Company in Louisiana and is the president of the DU Inc.

DOUGLAS R. (DOUG) OBERHELMAN is the chairman and CEO of Caterpillar, Inc. in Peoria, Illinois. He serves as the chairman of WAT's Nominating Committee.

MARK PINE is retired from his role as managing director for Sigma Partners in San Ramon, California.

JOHN R. POPE is the chairman and past president of Ducks Unlimited Inc. He is a financial advisor with Collins Financial Services in Jacksonville, Florida.

DAN RAY is a principal with Jeffries, a global investment banking group. Dan and his family reside on an historic 5,000-acre plantation in Georgetown, South Carolina.

TOM A. SEENO is president of Nortom Corporation in Walnut Creek, California.

MARK STITZER is CEO of Hamlin Capital Management, LLC in New York.

DAN THIEL is COO for Wetlands America Trust and executive secretary of Ducks Unlimited Inc.

JOHN W. THOMPSON is chairman of Symantec in Cupertino, California.

JOHN A. TOMKE is the president of Ducks Unlimited de Mexico. He is retired as VP of Global Operations at Dow AgroSciences in Indianapolis, Indiana. John is the chairman of WAT's Government Affairs Committee.

WILLIAM E. (WILL) WALKER III is the president of Jackson Air Charter in Jackson, Mississippi, and a trustee of the Walker Foundation.

DAVID K. (DEKE) WELLES JR. is the former chairman and CEO of Therma-Tru in Maumee, Ohio. Deke is the chairman of WAT's Development Committee.

Volunteer-Driven Success

WHEN DU CLOSED THE BOOKS ON THE WETLANDS FOR TOMORROW CAMPAIGN ON DECEMBER 31, 2010, WE HAD RAISED \$1.88 BILLION FOR CONSERVATION ACROSS THE CONTINENT, ALMOST \$200 MILLION ABOVE THE GOAL. WHILE THAT NUMBER SHOWS THE OUTWARD SUCCESS OF THE CAMPAIGN, IT DOESN'T TELL THE WHOLE STORY.

The real story of *Wetlands for Tomorrow* is told through the comprehensive nature of the effort. Every volunteer, staff member and donor had a hand in raising that \$1.88 billion; every priority landscape for waterfowl in North America felt the impact of that total with almost 2 million acres conserved.

The *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign secured a million new members, Sponsors and supporters during the campaign's tenure. Of that number, more than 400,000 are still partnering with DU to conserve America's wetland habitats. Our Major Sponsors also played a significant role in the campaign's success with more than 3,000 new donors and an additional 1,900 who stepped up to make upgraded commitments. We introduced a recognition society for our top annual donors during the campaign; President's Council honors those who give \$10,000 or more annually—there are more than 500 Charter Members of this philanthropic group.

Ducks Unlimited has a strong history as a grassroots organization, leading the way with events-based fundraising efforts that have become a model for other organizations to emulate. During the course of the campaign, our grassroots program brought in almost \$350 million through the tried-and-true local dinners, raffles, membership appeals and live and silent auctions. Our volunteer and staff teams also introduced new opportunities to raise revenue for the ducks like Waterfowl Hunter Parties, barbecue contests, motorcycle rides, crawfish boils and fish fries.

One shining example of volunteer ingenuity is in the tiny town of Manito, Ill., population 1,595. The Manito Chapter has been one of the Top 100 DU Chapters for every year of the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign. When we talked to District Chairman Todd Livengood, a Gold Sponsor and 11-year DU member, he gave us some insight on the chapter's success and his passion for DU and our conservation mission.

The Manito Chapter has 15 active volunteers and another 8 to 10 who play a smaller role in the day-to-day management of the chapter. Todd keeps the volunteers motivated and moving by having them set personal goals of getting 15-20 percent "more" each year—more attendees, more underwriting, more in-kind donations. He believes his strategy of spreading the responsibility is one reason for the

chapter's success. "We like people who want to 'do something.' We give them a role and a title, and once they're involved, they stay involved," said Todd. "Getting the younger generation of volunteers on board has been key. You definitely have to have new blood— young blood—to help motivate each other."

Each year, the Manito Chapter's membership banquet sells out its 425 seats. The chapter has a simple message: "Want to support us? Be a Sponsor." The chapter does not hold corporate tables and has open seating at the banquet. While the doors open at 4:30, the line of people waiting to get in starts forming at about 2:00 p.m. These folks aren't just from Manito either. This banquet has state-wide appeal drawing attendees from surrounding communities and beyond. Everyone wants to be associated with the top chapter in Illinois.

In addition to the membership banquet, the Manito Chapter hosts a Waterfowl Hunter's Party and a Fish Fry that appeal to the younger generation of members and volunteers. The chapter's "Lucky 13" or "13-gun Salute" is a popular fundraiser that keeps the excitement building all year for DU. A \$20 raffle ticket gets your name in the monthly drawing for either a DU-branded or vendor gun. The excitement builds as the final gun winner is drawn at the sold-out banquet.

Todd knows you have to keep the passion burning, especially with long-time volunteers. "I try to keep them focused on the big reason we do this. If we who love the sport of waterfowling don't do this for Mother Duck, no one else will. We have to preserve the sport and the tradition."

Todd's favorite part of working with the Manito Chapter is seeing the regular faces year after year. "I love to see people having a good time and giving back," he said. "I just love to see people support Ducks Unlimited," and he reminds them that a "dollar is more than a dollar with DU" referring to our ability to match raised funds over and over to increase the on-the-ground impact.

So, what's Todd's favorite DU "project"? The Prairie Pothole Region, of course. "It all starts there," he says. He is right about the PPR for the ducks, but we might say it all starts with a volunteer like Todd to help DU become the greatest conservation organization ever.



Wetlands for Tomorrow: TOP 100 CHAPTERS

The following chapters achieved Top 100 status for all seven years of the campaign, bringing in an average of \$50,000-\$150,000 per year for the ducks. Congratulations on your part in the success of *Wetlands for Tomorrow*.

Benton County, AR

Placerville, CA

Kent County, DE

Central Delaware

Eastern Sussex, DE

Brandywine, DE

Jones County, IA

North East Illinois

Manito, IL

Lake Cumberland, KY

Lafayette Area, LA

Central Maryland

North Oakland, MI

St. Croix Valley, MN

Billings, MT

Gallatin-Madison, MT

Raleigh, NC

Clinton, NC

Hastings Area, NY

Sparks, NV

New York City

Lexington, SC

East of the Cooper, SC

Houston, TX

Galveston, TX

Corpus Christi, TX

Texoma, TX

McKinney, TX

Fredericksburg, VA

Richmond, VA

Seattle, WA

Q&A

Why was it important to take a leadership role in the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign?

What were your personal goals for the campaign?

Was there one part of the campaign (initiative or program) that you felt most strongly about? Why?



Jim Kennedy
Wetlands America Trust President (1993-2009) and Chairman of Wetlands for Tomorrow

Childs: It takes leadership to drive a campaign forward and the best form of leadership I know is to lead by example.

Sundberg: That's an easy one. I was asked to do this by some people who have made a much greater commitment than I have to Ducks Unlimited and its mission. It was the example of leadership set by Presidents John Tomke and Jim Hulbert and the very pressing need to save our wetlands that led me to accept this challenge.

Long: For me, personally, *Wetlands for Tomorrow* was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have an impact on the landscape of the continent.

Childs: My overriding personal goal was to meet our campaign objective. Within that goal, however, I had an additional purpose of raising \$40 million for the Prairie Pothole Region, a mini-campaign called "Rescue the Duck Factory." Thanks to the strong response from across the organization, we appear to be very close to that goal but I will not stop pushing it until we have achieved it.

Sundberg: We originally set a goal of less than \$1.7 billion—I think it was 1.2 in the pre-announcement stage and then 1.5. With the encouragement and passion of people like John Childs, Jim Kennedy and Paul Bonderson, this goal was very quickly escalated to \$1.7 billion. My personal goals were to build enthusiasm within the Development Committee and to include the staff and committee as a team and have fun. I think we accomplished this.

Long: I zeroed in on activating the volunteer forces to increase gifts from Major Sponsors, especially by engaging volunteers in this process – not just for the campaign, but for the long run.

Childs: I felt most strongly about preserving the Prairie Pothole Region for a variety of reasons. First, without the resources in this region we will not breed enough ducks to sustain duck hunting as we have known it in North America. Every duck hunter and every duck club will suffer if we are unable to maintain this region. There is no landscape more critical to the future of waterfowl and all of those who enjoy the benefits of waterfowl. This land is under great pressure, particularly from agriculture and energy programs like ethanol. Time is not on our side so the urgency to save this land must be understood by all who cherish waterfowl.

Sundberg: It was clearly the concept of developing a series of initiatives that different people in our constituency could relate to. My personal favorite was the North American Grasslands Initiative that focused on the Prairie Pothole Region. Today, I feel more strongly about the Louisiana Coastal Conservation Initiative, especially because of the oil spill.

Long: Personally – the tremendous accomplishments in the breeding grounds and also not only what we have done so far, but also the awareness and the message spread to our supporters – these folks have grasped this idea and understand why it's important



John Childs
Wetlands America Trust President (2009-Present) and Chairman of Wetlands for Tomorrow



Bob Sundberg
Chairman of the Development Committee (2002-2006)



Kel Long
Chairman of the Development Committee (2006-2011)

Have you been pleased with the campaign results? Why/why not?

Kennedy: Yes and no. Yes, because we were able to succeed in difficult economic times, but no, because we have been less than successful in getting non-duck hunters to step up to the plate the way hunters have to save North America's wetlands.

Childs: I am pleased that we met our overall objectives, but I had hoped we would have greater success raising discretionary funds to fulfill our highest priorities, like acquiring easements on critical landscapes.

Long: I am very satisfied. We were able to use the campaign as a platform to engage people in major gift fundraising from a variety of aspects. We made big steps forward in public policy, easement programs and corporate partnerships – big strides that may not have happened without the campaign.

What was the greatest accomplishment of the campaign?

Childs: I think everyone should take justifiable pride in the great and broad support that the campaign received, and in the fact that we were able to meet a very ambitious financial goal. That said there is clearly more to be done to ensure the longevity of waterfowl and waterfowling.

Sundberg: I think it would be wrong to try to pinpoint one single greatest accomplishment. Obviously, a ton of money was raised to secure some very important land easements in the Prairie Pothole Region. I think the Gulf Coast area's problems became much more apparent to all of us during the campaign; unfortunately that came about in part because of the oil spill. I think this campaign showed us that we have some very strong and capable supporters to help us reach our ambitious goals.

What is "unfinished business" after the campaign?

Kennedy: Unfortunately, our work is never done, so we need to make sure and stay vigilant and look for new young leaders.

Sundberg: We have not yet begun. Working on the Mississippi River will not only save our precious ducks but will stop unnecessary flooding and will restore sustainability to much of the Louisiana coast. We still need tens of millions of dollars for conservation easements in North and South Dakota and for work in Canada. California and the East Coast are being developed at such a rapid pace that I don't think we could ever raise enough money to save the wetlands that need to be saved there.

Childs: The work of preserving and enhancing the waterfowl population is ongoing. A healthy duck population requires undisturbed landscapes across North America. In particular, preservation of the Prairie Pothole Region is paramount to producing a new generation of waterfowl each year. This represents the most pressing need because of the current pressures on that landscape combined with the amount of land already lost. There are also pressures on the wintering grounds; the number of ducks wintering along the Louisiana coast has diminished dramatically over the years, so restoration of these marshes is a priority. We need to redouble our efforts to preserve the pristine waterfowl landscapes that remain.

What would be your advice to the person who helps lead future campaign efforts for DU?

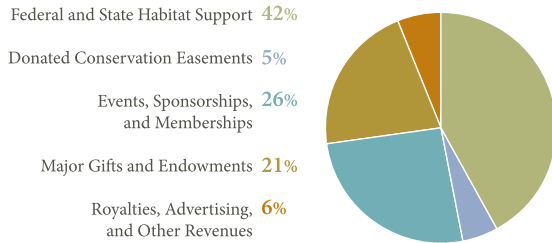
Sundberg: I would start by saying that whoever volunteers to lead a similar effort should start by building a very positive relationship with staff. This campaign was, and I suspect all future campaigns will be, so complex that without a very solid staff/volunteer blend, we will not reach our goals. I would also tell these people to look at how *Wetlands for Tomorrow* was put together and emulate it.

Long: Bring as many people as possible into the process—not just from a funding standpoint, but from the perspective of the knowledge base of our supporters and broadening the base of support. A broad coalition brings value to the table in many different ways and in many measures.

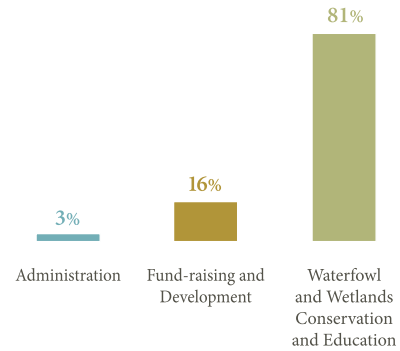
By the Numbers

THE COMPLETE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR DUCKS UNLIMITED CAN BE OBTAINED BY SENDING A WRITTEN REQUEST OR CALLING OUR TOLL FREE NUMBER.

1 WATERFOWL WAY, MEMPHIS, TN 38120 or **1.800.45.DUCKS**



SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE



WHERE YOUR DU DOLLAR GOES

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Fiscal Year 2011: July 1 to June 30)

- DU/Wetlands America Trust received accreditation for our conservation easement program—the highest mark of distinction in land conservation—through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.
- DU completed the North Carolina Sound CARE Initiative—seven years, 82,474 acres conserved and \$28 million invested in the state’s resources.
- DU received \$4.1 million from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to invest in habitat as a result of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. More than 97,000 acres were improved along the Texas and Louisiana coasts as a result.
- In San Francisco Bay’s Napa River estuary, Ducks Unlimited was granted \$8.5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through the NOAA Restoration Center to restore the former salt processing plant site near American Canyon. DU worked with the NOAA, Cargill, and the landowner, California Department of Fish and Game, to restore 960 acres of former salt crystallizer ponds back to tidal estuarine habitat.
- The Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional Office has been awarded over 30 grants in the first two years of Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding. The GLRI is a federal program designed to target the most significant problems in the Great Lakes ecosystem, including habitat conservation, invasive aquatic species, non-point source pollution and contaminated sediment.

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Fiscal Year 2010: July 1 to June 30)

- Ducks Unlimited conserved nearly 110,000 acres in fiscal year 2010.
- We hit a milestone 100,000 coastal acres conserved in Louisiana and an additional 240,000 acres statewide.
- DU welcomed a new era of conservation with new CEO Dale Hall.
- DU and WAT increased its portfolio of lands perpetually protected with conservation easements to a total of over 360,000 acres. An additional 24,000 are protected by fee-title ownership.

WETLANDS FOR TOMORROW CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

(Jan. 1, 2004 to Dec. 31, 2010)

- The comprehensive campaign raised a record \$1.88 billion for conservation.
- More than 2 million acres were conserved during the campaign.
- DU completed the largest tidal restoration project ever in the Pacific Northwest at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge at the south end of the Puget Sound.
- DU has reached the 900,000-acre milestone for permanently protected wetlands and grasslands in the U.S. Prairies.
- Science is the foundation for everything DU does. During the course of the campaign, DU collaborated with agency and university partners to conduct more than 100 investigations into waterfowl biology, landscape ecology and habitat management.
- 1 million new members and Sponsors joined the ranks of DU with almost 400,000 continuing their partnership
- More than 3,000 new donors joined the Major Sponsor ranks and another 1,900 increased their giving to the next level.
- DU thanks the almost 500 Feather Society members who made a new or additional commitment during the campaign.
- 100% participation in the campaign by DU Inc. Board and Wetlands America Trust members. And of course, our staff members also did their part to ensure success!



MAP ILLUSTRATIONS

Mike Reagan

PHOTOGRAPHY

Cameron Davidson

page 13

Charlie Hohorst

inside covers, pages 14, 31 (blue-winged teal)

Cliff Beittel

page 7 (prairie)

Clint Farlinger

page 22

Dave Reede

page 8

David Stimac

page 25 (pintails)

Garry Crabbe

pages 2, 25 (wetland)

Grand Maison

pages 11 (wetland), 18

Jason Riopel

page 7 (canvasbacks)

Jim Thompson

page 35

Ken Archer

pages 11 (wigeons), 21

Lee Kjos

page 17

Ron Erwin

page 5

Tom Bean

page 31 (prairie)

PRINTING

RR Donnelley

