

DU
CONSERVATION REPORT
2017

(CALIFORNIA)

As California emerges from a historic drought, the facts remain that only a little more than five percent of the state's historic marshes and 10 percent of its riparian corridors remain, a mere fraction of their original four to five million acres. And these numbers have the potential to get worse over time without action. Ducks Unlimited considers the Central Valley and San Francisco Bay wetlands to be one of five highest-priority habitats in North America and is spearheading California's wetland conservation efforts. Every opportunity to protect, restore or rehabilitate the state's shrinking wetlands habitat is being fully explored and carefully considered.

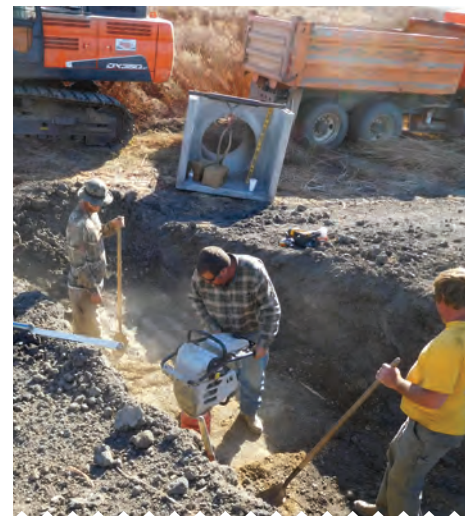
While DU has hundreds of conservation projects throughout the state, many recently completed are particularly noteworthy: at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area and Llano Seco Ranch in the Sacramento Valley, Honey Lake and the Butte Valley Wildlife Area in Northern California, Eden Landing and the Napa-Sonoma Marshes in the Bay Area, and Mendota Wildlife Area and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Area in the Central Valley. Whether the projects are enhancement or restoration, subsidence reversal or groundwork for wildlife-friendly agriculture, all share a common spotlight for being some of DU's finest and most groundbreaking conservation efforts.

WHITE LAKE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently completed a 350-acre restoration on White Lake in central Stanislaus County. Funding was provided by a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, in conjunction with USFWS and Ducks Unlimited.

This backwater lake on the Haggemann tract of San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge was historically a seasonally-flooded lake, marsh, and riparian forest along the San Joaquin River. In the 1930s, the site was drained for agriculture and was farmed until the 1990s. A historic 1997 flood prompted the sale and transfer of the site to the USFWS. Over a decade, River Partners and USFWS restored over 1,000 acres of riparian forest, but floods in 2006, 2010, and 2011 illustrated the need to manage floodwaters. During these devastating floods, USFWS lacked the infrastructure to manage or drain these flooded sites efficiently which often led to fish stranding and tree mortality.

The White Lake Project was the first step to address USFWS concerns on how to manage floodwaters by dividing the lake basin into three managed units. One unit would be



continued on back page ►



▼ *continued from front*

managed seasonally for moist-soil while the other two units would be managed as a semi-permanent emergent marsh. New water control structures were installed to facilitate off-site run-off and to manage water levels, with construction wrapping up in October 2016. DU is currently esigning Phase II which will add 180 acres of restored wetlands to the White Lake complex with construction beginning in spring of 2018.

TAKE THE INITIATIVE – HELP DU PRESERVE CALIFORNIA’S ENDANGERED WETLANDS

Ducks Unlimited needs your help. The best way to promote healthy waterfowl populations is by volunteering with your local DU committee. Funds raised through local events are the foundation of the organization’s conservation efforts. Your support also helps DU’s policy team positively influence legislation important to waterfowl. There are three areas of particular concern under the new California Wetlands Initiative: San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Valley, and the Lower Klamath Basin. While each area offers a unique set of needs and challenges, water management issues are among the highest

concerns across the board. With your gift to the California Wetlands Initiative, Ducks Unlimited will continue to work with partners and landowners to address water shortages and management concerns from a waterfowl perspective. DU will also remain focused on restoration in the high-priority Central Valley, where 95 percent of historic wetlands critical to millions of wintering waterfowl have been lost and continue to disappear each year. Your charitable support of the California Wetlands Initiative will enable Ducks Unlimited to conduct important science, public policy, and outreach efforts, as well as con-

serving the breeding habitats important to waterfowl that migrate and winter in the state. DU’s research and evaluation efforts are the foundation upon which our direct conservation programs and our policy and outreach work are based. A gift to DU’s California Wetlands Initiative will support projects close to home, but also will ensure that the remaining undisturbed wetlands in Canada’s boreal forest will be protected before restoration is required. Stable, healthy breeding grounds there will keep ducks in the air throughout California and the entire Pacific Flyway.

For more information on DU’s California Wetlands Initiative:

Anne Hansen • (916) 851-5333/ahansen@ducks.org

Steve Schmitt • (360) 991-7461/sschmitt@ducks.org



Western Region • 3074 Gold Canal Drive • Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
916.852.2000 • www.ducks.org/california

our mission

Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America’s waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.