

# DU CONSERVATION REPORT

*Colorado*  
2018

*Martin Grenier*  
*Manager of Conservation Programs for Colorado*

February in Colorado brings the DU state convention and the close of another hunting season. As I reflect on the accomplishments of Ducks Unlimited's Colorado conservation program, I am encouraged about where we are headed.

Spring is a rewarding time for me as waterfowl begin their migration back to Prairie Pothole Region (PPR). This spectacle would not be possible without the habitat we restore, enhance and protect across Colorado. These wetland mini-marts help waterfowl quickly replenish their reserves with protein, minerals and carbohydrates so they can arrive at the PPR in the best possible condition.

One encouraging aspect of our Colorado program is, in the next few years, you will see some remarkable new ventures. These include opportunities with new partners, such as Audubon Rockies and City of Grand Junction. Other opportunities will include some of our most important existing partners in Colorado, including Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Colorado Water Conservation Board, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Utilizing these strong partnerships, we are finding novel ways to expand our conservation work in every corner of the state.

One of our new endeavors with CPW and FWS focuses on increasing the volume of projects we deliver on Colorado public lands. During the last few years, wetland work on public lands has decreased. Most of the reasons have little to do with DU.

However, by engaging our partners, we hope to remove some impediments so Ducks Unlimited partnerships can flourish. During 2018, I hope to reveal more details about these projects. I know Ducks Unlimited's volunteers, major sponsors, staff and partners will bridge this gap because we share a common passion and dedication to conserve, restore and enhance waterfowl habitat in Colorado.



CINNAMON TEAL (MALE)





## DU WILL AUCTION COVETED MOOSE LICENSE THIS YEAR

Since 2012, Colorado DU has been awarded a statewide moose auction license by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Colorado Ducks Unlimited will again auction a statewide moose license in April.

Last May, DU Director of Development Kirk Davidson auctioned the Colorado tag during a Denver area DU dinner banquet. The winning bid came from Georgia businessman and retired Army veteran Tony Loop at \$62,000 setting a record for this coveted license.

This license allows a hunter to hunt in any open moose unit in Colorado, including archery, rifle and muzzleloader seasons. While the Colorado moose season ends in mid-October, the holder of this license may continue to hunt until Dec. 31 with all legal methods of take. Except for these few special tags, all Colorado moose licenses are limited and awarded by random drawing.

DU’s special license was approved by the Colorado legislature with the goal of providing a small number of licenses to conservation organizations for fundraising. DU returns at least 75 percent of the proceeds from the sale of this license to Colorado Parks and Wildlife where the funds are used for moose research, management and education projects. DU retains 25 percent of the proceeds for wetland conservation efforts. Wetlands are used and enjoyed by waterfowl and moose.

This year’s license will be auctioned on Thursday, April 26, during the live auction at the Highlands Ranch DU banquet in the south Denver area. Interested bidders unable to attend may participate by phone.

Contact Kirk Davidson at 303-927-1949 or [kdavidson@ducks.org](mailto:kdavidson@ducks.org).



## DU HELPS PARTNERS IN SAN LUIS VALLEY

Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have asked Ducks Unlimited to assist with three projects on national wildlife refuges in the San Luis Valley. Restoration and enhancement projects are underway on Baca, Monte Vista and Alamosa national wildlife refuges. DU plans on completing these projects prior to the fall waterfowl migration.

The partnership will invest more than \$655,000 to restore or enhance more than 1,700 acres of degraded habitats. The goal is to improve water management on the refuges and restore flow paths to wetlands that are important public waterfowling areas.

Restoration activities include fencing, new water-control structures and removal of dilapidated infrastructure. As a result, managers can manipulate water levels to promote and sustain desired habitat conditions for migratory birds, including waterfowl.

According to DU Manager of Conservation Programs Martin Grenier, “productivity of wetlands and infrastructure often degrades with time, due to natural processes. This results in wetlands that are less attractive to waterfowl.”

To keep wetlands productive and functioning properly, Grenier says that it is imperative to replace infrastructure and periodically disturb vegetation. This stimulates growth of desired wetland plants that waterfowl need during migration.

The San Luis Valley is an important migratory stopover for waterfowl during spring and fall migrations and part of Ducks Unlimited’s Peaks to Prairie Initiative. The area is known for high densities of breeding ducks, particularly cinnamon teal, spectacular views and great hunting opportunities.



## DU’S FIRST COLORADO PROJECT TURNS 30 AND SETS THE STAGE FOR MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Streamflow augmentation via wetland recharge has been part of Ducks Unlimited’s conservation plan since it began working in Colorado and the Brush Prairie Ponds State Wildlife Area (SWA) project started it all. In 1988, DU partnered with the city of Brush, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Fort Morgan Reservoir and Irrigation Company and the Colorado Division of Wildlife for the first phase of wetland creation on the SWA.

When the final phase of the Brush project was completed in 2009, DU and partners restored 650 acres of wetlands and native grass

uplands. Today the SWA is a birding hotspot and a destination for waterfowl and upland bird hunters. In the first year of operation, the wetlands took in more than 1,600 acre-feet of water for recharge.

Augmentation projects receive water into wetlands during the non-irrigation season and provide critical migratory waterfowl habitat and hunting opportunities while generating augmentation credits that benefit local water users. Water diverted into the wetlands percolates into the alluvial aquifer and returns to the South Platte River. Credits generated by these projects cover municipal, industrial and agricultural depletions to the system and contribute to long-term water supply sustainability. Brush Prairie Ponds augmentation credits support the local economy and provide drinking water for the town of Brush.

Work is underway on the latest augmentation project, the Petersen Bend Farm near Ovid, Colorado. The property will bring an estimated annual recharge volume of 500 to 1,000 acre-feet to offset groundwater pumping from surrounding farms. DU’s engineers developed conceptual designs for the project to restore approximately 30 acres of shallow wetlands and associated upland habitat. When completed this year, Petersen Bend Farm will contribute to the Colorado Water Plan goal of providing an additional 400,000 acre-feet of storage by 2050.

## COLORADO DU FUNDRAISING TOPS IN NATION

The Colorado Ducks Unlimited fundraising staff took top honors at DU’s Leadership Conference in Memphis in 2017. Kirk Davidson was named National Ducks Unlimited Director of Development of the Year and Erik Wettersten was awarded National Regional Director of the Year.

“Kirk and I served many years as volunteers before joining DU as full-time staff. The relationship, rapport and shared humor we’ve built through years of hunting and working together has served to help each of us in our fundraising roles,” Wettersten said.

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Davidson exceeded both his development goals, one of them by 209 percent. Davidson hosts the Colorado Platte River Experience for major sponsors, and he and Wettersten play pivotal roles in the Denver Sponsor Gala, the top DU fundraising event in the nation.

"I truly have the greatest job in DU, having the distinct honor of serving and working for major donors. These are folks who love and monetarily support our organization and it's a pleasure to be their interface with DU," Davidson said.

Wettersten has been a RD for eight years, working with Colorado volunteers to develop and grow DU's event fundraising system. He designed a software system called Frontdesk, used for running DU events across the country. Wettersten also developed the "Area Chair Bootcamp" curriculum and the DU Banquet Survival Guide.

"Being a DU regional director has allowed me the privilege of working with a fantastic group of passionate sportsmen and sportswomen volunteers," he said. "This award is really something

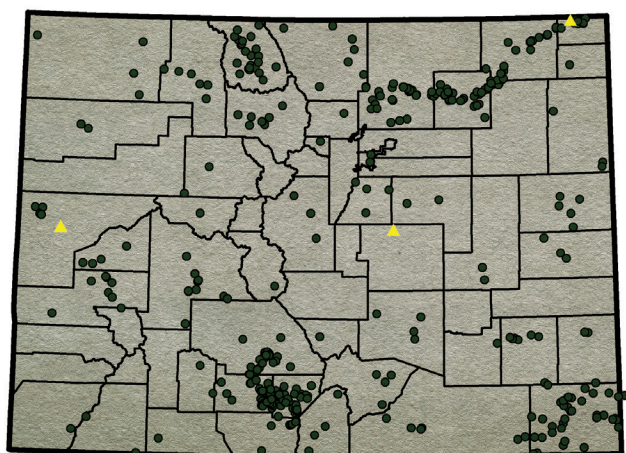
I share with hundreds of great volunteers because it is the energy, ideas and hard work of those volunteers that made it possible."



*Regional Director Erik Wettersten and  
Director of Development Kirk Davidson*

## ducks unlimited CO PROJECTS

● Completed Projects    ▲ 2017 Completed Projects



### Accomplishments (2017)

972 acres conserved • \$1,434,495 invested

## STATE CONTACTS

### For information on DU's conservation programs

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### For information on event fundraising

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*Erik Wettersten  
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### For information on becoming a Major Sponsor

*Kirk Davidson  
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## GREAT PLAINS REGION

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## 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.