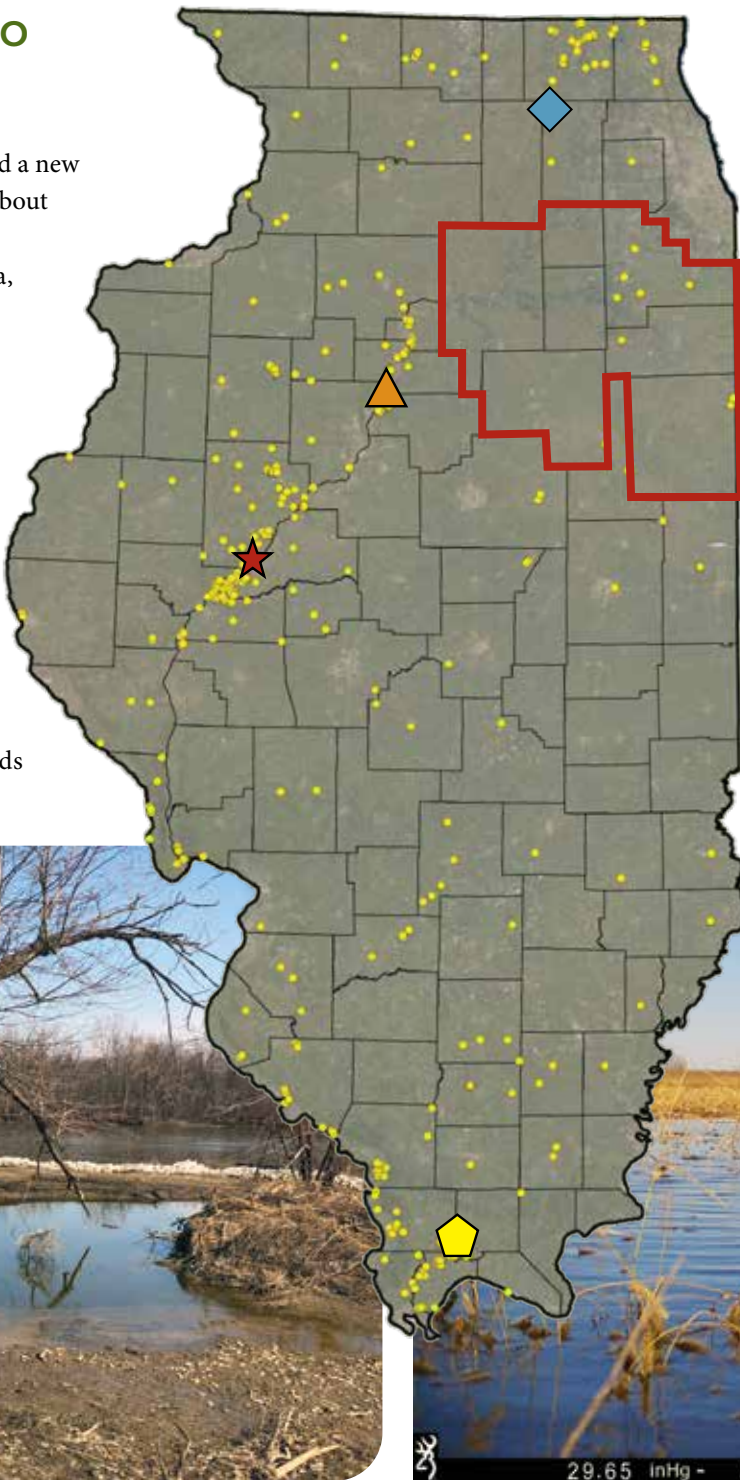




▲ NEW WATER BUBBLING INTO WOODFORD SFWA

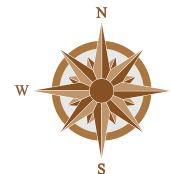
Woodford County

Ducks Unlimited and several partners installed a new pump to return water level management to about 190 acres of mixed bottomland hardwood forested wetlands at Woodford State Fish and Wildlife Area, allowing the state to emulate natural functions of bottomland wetland habitat. The Greentree Units can now be flooded to their full capacity ahead of the fall migration for waterfowlers. These forested floodplain wetlands will benefit numerous species of migratory waterfowl and other forested wildlife species, such as deer and turkeys, and migratory birds. The ability to ensure that these hunt areas have adequate water for hunting season was made possible by this project. Partners include the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois River Valley Conservation Group and North American Wetlands Conservation Act.



◆ NATURAL AREA RETURNING NEAR CHICAGO

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County's 949-acre Burlington Prairie Forest Preserve is just west of Chicago. Ducks Unlimited is helping the Forest Preserve District restore areas of former agricultural land back to native wetlands and prairie communities. The project is in phase two of a three-phase effort and is restoring 45 acres of prairie and nine acres of wetlands. Once the third phase is complete next year, a total of 88 acres of prairie and 23 acres of wetlands will be restored. Burlington Prairie will become a prime eastern tallgrass prairie and pothole wetland habitat, with breeding potential for mallards. Other important grassland bird species expected to make use of this site include bobolinks, Henslow's sparrows and eastern and western meadowlarks.



Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

● Completed ▲ Featured ◆ Featured
Note: Project points may represent more than one project.



★ FLOOD REINFORCEMENT TO HELP ANDERSON LAKE SFWA

Fulton and Schuyler Counties

The Carlson Unit at Anderson Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area is a 240-acre backwater wetland of the Illinois River, managed to provide waterfowl habitat and waterfowl hunting opportunities. Like many waterfowl management areas, changes in Illinois River hydrology and flooding intensity has hindered management capability and negatively impacted habitat quality. DU and Illinois Department of Natural Resources are installing a new armored emergency spillway that will more quickly equalize water pressure on the existing infrastructure to avoid damage and withstand the changes in hydrology under the current and future flooding regimes of the Illinois River. The improved management capability will increase the DNR's ability to provide migration, wintering and breeding habitat for a variety of waterfowl species and increase waterfowl hunter and wildlife viewer access and success.

□ PRIVATE LANDS WORK HELPS DUCKS AND WATER

Grundy, Iroquois, LaSalle, Kankakee, Kendall, Livingston and Will Counties

Ducks Unlimited is providing staff support and state grant funds to help Pheasants Forever and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program restore and enhance wetlands on about 60 acres of private land in east-central Illinois. The projects are located on existing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program-enrolled grasslands. This region of Illinois is former prairie pothole landscape and has an abundance of restorable wetlands and grasslands. The partnership will increase breeding and migration habitat important for waterfowl and a variety of other wildlife species in this region of Illinois. These wetlands offer not only the potential for increased recreation but are also located within a region of Illinois that is one of the highest contributors to low oxygen levels downstream in the Gulf of Mexico. The first phase of the project will be complete in 2021.

Conservation Spotlight:
CACHE RIVER PROJECT READY FOR DUCKS AND OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

The bottomland hardwood floodplain forests along the Cache River in Johnson County are home to thousands of plant and animal species, many of which are threatened and endangered. Flood waters from the river fill these forests and welcome tens of thousands of waterfowl annually during fall migration, and in ever increasing numbers during the wintering period.

Prior to 2010, the 30-acre Owens Tract within the Cache River State Natural Area was still an agricultural field, cleared and drained by ditches to support agricultural farming in the fertile bottomlands of the Cache River. A partnership effort between the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service and Ducks Unlimited began to change the landscape to return natural water flow to the forest.

On-the-ground restoration efforts began with planting native bottomland trees on the site. Restoration efforts aimed at restoring natural hydrology to the site were completed in September 2020. It's the first DU project completed in Johnson County.

The 30-acre site's restoration back to pre-settlement condition, featuring meandering cypress-tupelo swales rising into oak-hickory ridges, was a cooperative effort. Restoration activities included filling drainage ditches, building low level berms, and installing a water control structure to manage water levels.

Because of their beauty and ecological diversity, bottomland hardwood floodplain forests are focal points on the landscape for outdoor enthusiasts.

“The Cache River State Natural Area is as important to those who recreate there with a kayak and a camera as it is to those who chose to use to use decoys and a gun,” said Dane Cramer, DU regional biologist in Illinois.

These wetland habitats reduce flooding by temporarily storing water, improve water quality by filtering and collecting sediment from runoff, and provide clean drinking water for all of us, all free of charge.



LOOKING AHEAD

Northern Illinois – DU and Illinois Department of Natural Resources will break ground on a 200-acre Coleman Lake enhancement project at Donnelley-DePue State Fish and Wildlife Area (SFWA). DU engineers will conduct initial site visits at Big Bend SFWA and Black Crown Marsh State Natural Area to begin identifying future projects. DU will continue to refine our breeding habitat work across northern Illinois, including potential projects in Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle and Winnebago Counties.

Central Illinois – DU engineers will begin designing upcoming projects at Sanganois, Anderson Lake, and Rice Lake SFWAs, and Emiquon Preserve, as part of the \$1 million Conserving the Illinois River Legacy North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant. We will also continue to further develop project opportunities at Delair, Meredosia, Chautauqua, and Emiquon National Wildlife Refuges and other DNR SFWAs. We also continue to explore public and private wetland conservation opportunities to help us expand our program along the Mississippi River.

Southern Illinois – As our \$1 million Heart of the Big Rivers North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant moves toward completion, we're lining up new opportunities to conserve wetlands throughout this landscape in a second phase. The foundation of our next proposal will include land protection at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, bottomland tree plantings elsewhere on the refuge, and the potential for a hydrologic restoration of a large state-owned bottomland area. Finally, multiple wetland enhancement projects are underway at Horseshoe Lake State Park that will enhance habitat quality and benefit waterfowl hunters using this popular public area.

Illinois by the Numbers

2020

- 7 projects completed
- 392 acres conserved
- \$811,373 invested

HISTORICAL

- 525 projects completed
- 69,414 acres conserved
- \$24.8 million invested



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

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.DUCKS.ORG/ILLINOIS

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