

Indiana

2021 CONSERVATION REPORT



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◆ REYNOLDS CREEK GAMEBIRD HABITAT AREA Porter County

Reynolds Creek Gamebird Habitat Area was established in 2011 with the transfer of 1,250 acres from the Indiana Department of Corrections to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The habitat area is comprised mostly of agricultural fields, small woodlots and several restorable grassland and wetland sites. After taking possession, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources began planning to phase out many of its current agricultural practices in lieu of restoring native grassland and wetland habitats. Ducks Unlimited will help design the wetland restoration component and the National Wild Turkey Federation will manage the grassland restoration component. Only three and a half miles from Lake Michigan's southern shoreline, the seasonal, shallowly flooded wetland will receive extensive use by migrating shorebirds such as solitary sandpipers, short-billed dowitchers and American woodcock. The area's proximity to the lake shore also invites visitors not often associated with prairie restorations like wintering snowy owls and bald eagles.



Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

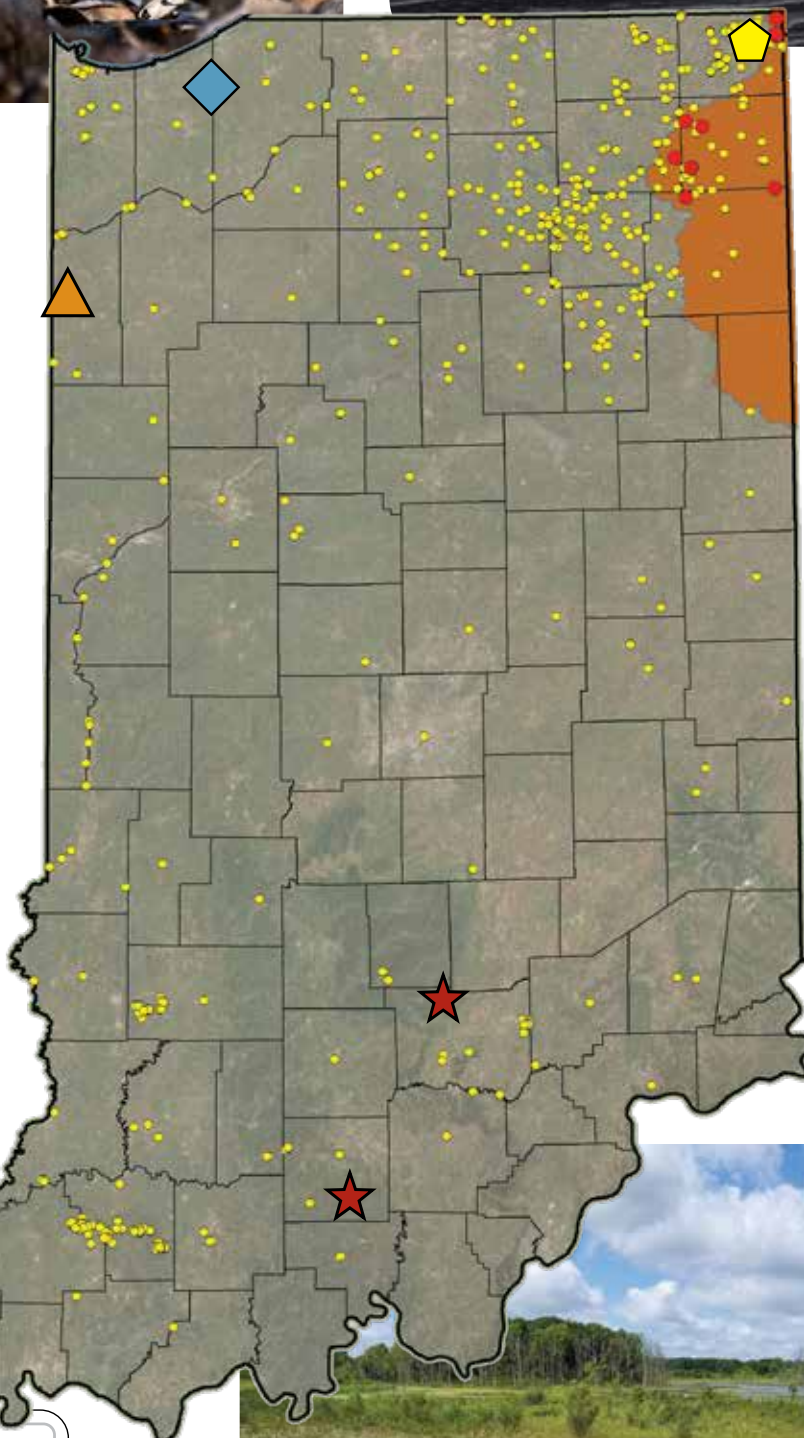
● Completed ●▲★◆ Featured

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.



PLATE UP FOR HABITAT CONSERVATION

As funding for conservation in Indiana remains at critical levels, Ducks Unlimited members continue to show their support and raise valuable dollars for restoration through the purchase of DU license plates. With every plate purchase, \$25 goes back to DU conservation efforts in Indiana. In 2020, Indiana Ducks Unlimited surpassed a significant milestone, selling over 2,000 license plates and generating more than \$50,000 for wetlands and waterfowl conservation for the first time ever. Funds generated by the sale of Ducks Unlimited license plates are the backbone of DU's conservation program in Indiana. See the back page of this report to see one example of how the funds are used. Visit www.ducks.org/Indiana to order your plate.



● MULTI-STATE EFFORT CONTINUES TO RESTORE NORTHEAST POTHOLES

Numerous agencies from Indiana, Michigan and Ohio and Ducks Unlimited have combined resources to help private landowners address water quality issues in Lake Erie through habitat restoration. In 2014, Ducks Unlimited was awarded the first Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act on behalf of the partnership with the goal of restoring 285 acres of wetlands and 125 acres of adjacent grasslands. In 2017, the partnership was awarded a second grant to restore an additional 250 acres of wetlands and 250 acres of grasslands and is nearly completion. A third phase has been awarded to restore an additional 200 acres of wetland and is supported by \$350,000 from the Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act. The ecosystem services provided by wetlands are extensive. The wetlands restored at the top of the watershed in Indiana provide important breeding habitat for mallards, wood ducks and blue-winged teal, while filtering sediment and nutrients to reduce economic and environmental losses caused by harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie.



▲ WILLOW SLOUGH FWA RESTORATIONS TO BEGIN Newton County

The 9,956-acre Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area includes nearly 1,200 acres of managed emergent marshes, forested wetlands and open water habitats, upland habitats and at its center, the 1,000-acre J.C. Murphey Lake. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources and DU have started designing three restoration projects here: Northwinds West, the Muck Hole and Pin Oak Flats. These sites were historical wetlands that were ditched and drained to facilitate agriculture. All three sites will be restored by plugging ditches and installing water-control structures to facilitate water-level management. The three projects will restore 330 acres and construction is expected to begin in 2021.

NEW TOOLS FOR BETTER HABITAT AT CEDAR SWAMP WCA

A big fix in northeast Indiana will keep a beloved wetland productive for future generations of waterfowl and nature lovers. Because of its natural beauty and ecological diversity, the 400-acre Cedar Swamp Wetland Conservation Area in Steuben County is a focal point on the landscape for a variety of outdoor enthusiasts. Whether they carry a camera, a kayak paddle or a shotgun, the marsh is an important recreational outlet.

This wetland basin also helps reduce flooding by temporarily storing water, improving water quality by filtering and collecting sediment from runoff and providing clean drinking water for all of us, all free of charge.

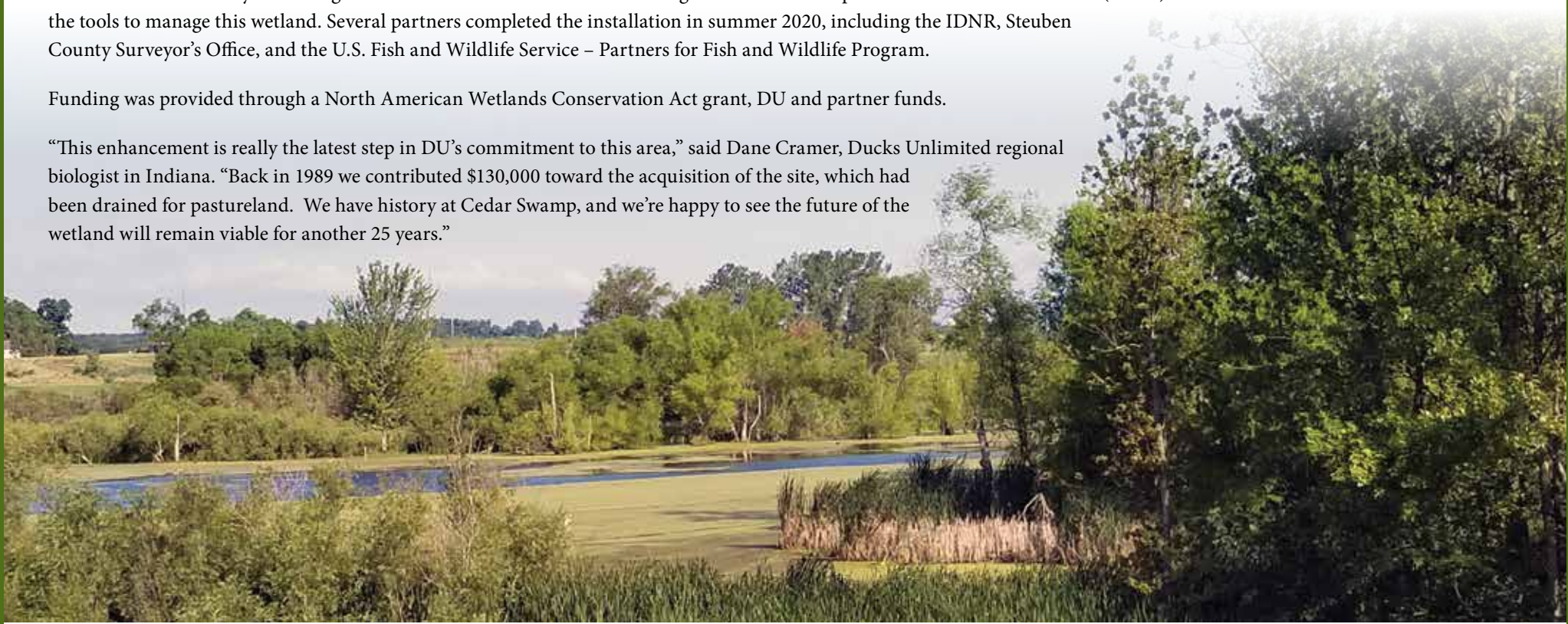
Cedar Swamp provides important habitat for breeding and migrating waterfowl and is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. Several of these species are threatened and endangered, and all benefit from the conservation of wetlands by sportsmen and women.

But the large water-control structure at Cedar Swamp WCA, situated at the head of the county drain, had reached and surpassed its usable lifespan after about 25 years of service. Enhancing and managing nearly 400 acres of wetlands for the next 25 years would require replacing this dilapidated structure before it failed.

Ducks Unlimited surveyed and engineered a new water-control structure to give the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) the tools to manage this wetland. Several partners completed the installation in summer 2020, including the IDNR, Steuben County Surveyor's Office, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

Funding was provided through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, DU and partner funds.

“This enhancement is really the latest step in DU’s commitment to this area,” said Dane Cramer, Ducks Unlimited regional biologist in Indiana. “Back in 1989 we contributed \$130,000 toward the acquisition of the site, which had been drained for pastureland. We have history at Cedar Swamp, and we’re happy to see the future of the wetland will remain viable for another 25 years.”



INDIANA MOTORISTS HELP DU IMPROVE WOODED WETLANDS

Ducks Unlimited is using license plate sales to help fund the restoration and enhancement of two wetlands in Indiana’s Hoosier National Forest, an important breeding habitat for wood ducks and migration habitat for a number of puddle ducks and geese.

The effort is a partnership between DU, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the U.S. Forest Service. Construction will begin in July on two wetlands in Jackson and Orange counties in south-central Indiana.

The Forest Service will handle construction over the next two years, resulting in 100 acres of improved habitat, increased wetland acreage, improved water-level management and wetland productivity.

The Hoosier project is a strong example of the importance of Ducks Unlimited license plate sales.

“Since 2012 when we introduced the DU license plate in Indiana, we’ve raised more than \$305,000 from supporters and motorists to benefit wetlands conservation in the state,” said Michael Sertle, DU regional biologist in Indiana. “This Hoosier National Forest restoration is possible because of these license plates, and we thank drivers for putting DU on their vehicles.”

Hoosier National Forest is 203,000 acres and comprises about half of the public forest land in Indiana. The enhancements will improve moist soil habitat for ducks and turkeys, improve water quality and add to public recreational opportunities including hunting, bird watching and wildlife photography.



Indiana by the Numbers

2020

- 7 projects completed
- 678 acres conserved
- \$192,355 invested

HISTORICAL

- 602 projects completed
- 32,980 acres conserved
- \$19.3 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/INDIANA



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