

GREAT LAKES/ATLANTIC REGION

LIVING LAKES INITIATIVE



★ **HABITAT REVOLVING FUND SECURES 43 ACRES IN HANCOCK COUNTY**

In 2022, Ducks Unlimited (DU)

entered a new era of wetlands conservation in Iowa. In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), DU purchased 43 acres of wetlands and prairie to secure for future acquisition by the USFWS. While we have provided grant funds to public agencies for acquisitions in the past, this is the first time DU has acquired fee title ownership in Iowa. The project was made possible using DU's Habitat Revolving Fund, which allows us to quickly capitalize on emerging high-priority protection projects until state or federal partners can secure the necessary funding and buy the property from DU. In this case, the USFWS will purchase the property from DU within the next year using federal duck stamp dollars. The property is adjacent to Gladfelter Marsh, a 700-acre prairie pothole complex in Hancock County. The new site will be managed by IDNR for waterfowl production and outdoor recreation.

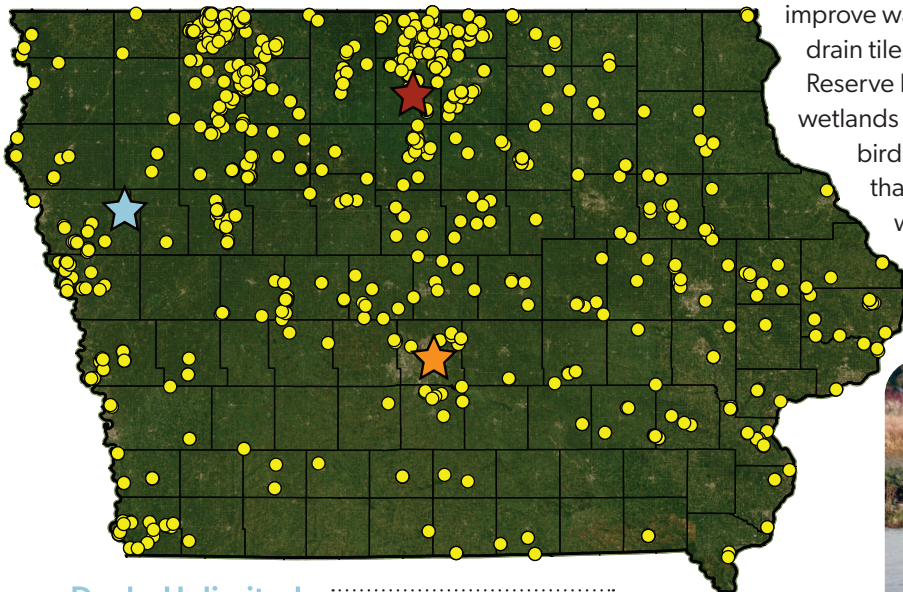


★ **BRIESE TRACT ACQUISITION COMPLETE**

The Woodbury County Conservation Board, with significant funding from DU, recently completed the acquisition of the 109-acre Briese Tract in eastern Woodbury County. This new addition to the 609-acre Little Sioux Park is a mix of cropland, forest, prairie, and bottomland riparian habitat along the Little Sioux River. The property was threatened by expanding gravel mining operations, so the county requested DU's help in securing the necessary funding to purchase the site. DU provided \$50,000 from a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant and a generous donation from the Gilcrest Foundation in Sioux City. The property will be restored and managed to maximize wildlife habitat for public recreation.

★ **TWO-YEAR WETLAND STUDY KICKS OFF IN THE PPR**

Iowa State University and DU are partnering on a unique project that will explore the nexus between water quality and waterbird habitat conservation in the Prairie Pothole Region. One method to improve water quality and capture nitrogen is by unearthing drain tiles on agricultural lands by creating Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) wetlands. These wetlands also provide habitat for waterfowl and other marsh birds. This two-year study will compare wetlands that are specifically restored for wildlife with CREP wetlands. The goal is to determine how birds use the two distinct types of wetlands so that future construction and management can be optimized for both water quality and wildlife.



Ducks Unlimited
PROJECTS

● Completed Project(s)
Note: Project points may represent more than one project.



2023 IOWA DUCKS UNLIMITED STATE CONSERVATION REPORT

BIG CHANGES AHEAD FOR IOWA CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Since 2007, the primary focus of DU's conservation program in Iowa has been the Living Lakes Initiative (LLI). This initiative targets enhancement of publicly-owned shallow lakes in the Prairie Pothole Region of Iowa for migrating and breeding waterfowl. This program has been immensely successful, with over 700 projects completed.

With the success of the LLI, DU recently formalized a new partnership with Iowa DNR to restore and enhance wetlands across the remainder of the state. This agreement will let DU biologists and engineers work with DNR staff to improve habitat on public wildlife areas from Green Island on the Mississippi River to Riverton on the Missouri River, and all points in between. This new partnership allows us to repeat the successes of the Living Lakes Initiative and increase our impact across the state.

In addition to our public land habitat programs, DU is also forging new partnerships with private landowners and agricultural partners. DU has been working with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) for several years, assisting with the delivery of water quality wetlands on private lands. Today, DU and IDALS are building on this partnership to make DU the preferred partner for development of water quality wetlands. Our goal under this agreement is to deliver up to 20 wetlands annually, resulting in a substantial improvement to Iowa's water quality and habitat of breeding waterfowl.



As a further sign of our commitment to sustainable agriculture, Ducks Unlimited recently partnered with the National Pork Board, Trust in Food, and other conservation partners in the development of a proposal that will bring significant resources and conservation outcomes to Iowa producers. Funded through USDA's Climate SMART Commodities RFP, this proposal will provide conservation technical assistance support and financial incentives to agriculture producers to strengthen their bottom line and sustainability outcomes. This ambitious program can improve soil health on tens of thousands of acres across Iowa and reduce sedimentation rapidly filling our wetlands.

DUCKS UNLIMITED WELCOMES NEW CONSERVATION STAFF

Since Iowa DU's first wetland conservation project near Ruthven in 1984, Ducks Unlimited has restored and protected over 83,000 acres of habitat across the state. This type of success is only possible through the dedication and expertise of a diverse team of DU professionals located both locally and in DU regional offices. Over the last several years, DU's conservation programs in Iowa have expanded as we explore new opportunities and partnerships, often requiring more staff with an expanded skillset.

With all the innovative programs across the state, DU supporters might notice a few new faces among the DU staff in the state. In addition to long-time Regional Biologist Mike Shannon, we have Derek Ballard (Biologist) and Annina Rupe (GIS Analyst) assisting with the IDALS partnership. Our engineering department is also increasing to keep up with the demand for our services. Andrew Schippers (Regional Engineer, left) started with DU almost two years ago and was recently joined by John Washington (Regional Engineer, middle) and Alonzo Barkley (Engineer, right). As our collaboration with both public and private partners increase, we expect to add more staff in the future.



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

IOWA CONSERVATION STAFF

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IOWA NUMBERS 2022

- 13 projects
- 956 acres conserved
- \$1,924,326 invested

HISTORICAL

- 1,172 projects
- 83,861 acres conserved
- \$18,313,481 invested



GREAT LAKES & ATLANTIC REGION

NEW ADDRESS EFFECTIVE 04/2023
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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT US ONLINE
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