



# The MI Marsh Chatter



Michigan Ducks Unlimited

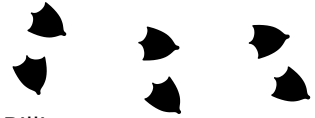


Volume 5, Issue 1

1st Quarter 2019

## A Word from our Chairman

*Jim Toth: 2019 - 2020 State Chairman*



Greetings to all of you DU Volunteers, DU Members, Sportsmen, and Conservationists. I am Jim Toth, the new Michigan Ducks Unlimited State Chairman for 2019-2020, succeeding Dale Borske. I am honored to be selected and voted the MI DU State Chairman, 2019 -2020 by the State Council. I pledge to you, to perform the duties of this office, for benefit of the State Committee, and all of the MI DU Chapters. I have Dale Borske as my mentor, so hopefully my transition into this office will be seamless.

A lot of the readers of the Marsh Chatter know me, but because of the wide distribution of this newsletter a lot of you won't know me, so I will give you a brief overview of my MI DU history.

I became a member of Ducks Unlimited at the first Flint Chapter Dinner in the fall of 1972. I remained at the Member status until December of 2005, when I joined the Davison Chapter, and became the Area Chairman for the 2007 campaign, and remained the AC through 2015. During this time the Davison Chapter grew from a 100 guest Dinner Event to a three Event Chapter in 2015; and clocked in at the #5 Chapter in the State in total raised funds for that year. I currently remain on the Davison Chapter Committee. Also, in 2012 I received the State Area Chairman of the Year Award.

In year 2009, I took on the responsibilities of District Chairman; working with Bret Plasters, for three Chapters. These responsibilities quickly morphed to five Chapters, and then six when I spearheaded the founding of the

Hunters Creek Club Chapter. When Billie Ray Fann came on board as Regional Director in 2013, my responsibilities expanded to eight active Chapters.

In 2017 I was elected to the State Treasurers position, where I have served until January 1 of 2019; taking on the duties of State Chairman.

I am married to the beautiful "Miss Toni", my wife of fifty years; who has been very understanding of my passion for DU, and has been my right arm and loyal assistant at DU activities. Miss Toni and I are also Diamond Life Sponsors.

In my previous life, I worked for General Motors for 45 years, starting out as a Toolmaker Apprentice in 1965; and retiring out in 2010 as Supervisor.

I am looking forward to my leadership responsibilities and opportunities these next two years, especially working with the Volunteers, and participating in the state activities. Two of the headliners coming up this year are the Leadership Conference at the Ralph A. McMullen Conference Center, Higgins Lake, on January 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>.; and the MI DU State Convention, which will be held in Lansing this year, at the newly renovated Causeway Bay Hotel, on July 19<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup>.

The MI DU Calendar Raffle 2019 sales will be finished by the time you read this newsletter. It sold well in spite the cost going up to \$60.00. There is a great selection of firearms, and (4) Polaris 4X4 ATVs, and 12 YETI Coolers are also added the prize list for 2019. Good Luck to all who bought a MI DU Raffle Calendar.

The Spring Event Season will also kick-off this first quarter of 2019, and there will be DU Events all over the state to attend and have a great time at. To find an Event near you just log on to: [ducks.org](http://ducks.org)/Michigan and click on Local Events.

In closing I would like to relate to you a high note in recent MI DU History. Michigan Ducks Unlimited is a member of Region 3, which also consists of the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Region 3 closed the fiscal year of 2017 - 2018 as number 1 in the nation in fundraising. Go Region 3! Go Volunteers!

*GO for the DUCKS!*

Jim Toth

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## Meet Your Michigan DU State Officers for 2019-2020

### State Secretary—Max Lehman



Max Lehman, our current Ducks Unlimited State Secretary, started with DU as a volunteer with the Flat River Chapter, eventually becoming its Chairman. Currently, in addition to his State Officer responsibilities, Max is a District Chairman, and also helps with the Flat River Chapter.

Max lives in the Stanton area of central Michigan and is the father of two grown children. He also has a one-year old grandson; Camdyn that keeps him occupied. He has worked for Big L Lumber for over 25 years and is currently their corporate Sales Manager. In his free time, you can often find Max working or playing around his farm. When not out in the woods or on the water, you'll often find him cooking dinner for family and friends or enjoying a cigar and cocktail on the patio after crawfish boil.

### State Treasurer—Tracy Oberleiter



Tracy has been a longtime volunteer in Ducks Unlimited starting back some 35 to perhaps 40 years ago. He was served our organization as an Area Chairman, Local Committee Chapter Treasurer and Executive Board Member for a number of years and State of Michigan Major Donor Chairman for the past few years.

Tracy also currently serves on behalf of Monroe Bank & Trust as Chairman of the Monroe County Economic Development Corporation for the past nine years. Other community organizations that Tracy holds leadership positions in include the Miss Monroe County Scholarship Program as Treasurer and Executive Board member. Tracy is also very proud to be a member of the Kiwanis Club of Monroe for the past 40 years and just recently received the Kiwanis Club International George F. Hixon Fellowship Award in recognition of his community leadership in Monroe area organizations. Some other past notable accomplishments is he also served the County of Monroe as the United Way Chairman and served as President of the Monroe Jaycees. Tracy often times assist other organizations as available. Tracy lives in Monroe with his wife Marsha and has three grown daughters.

State Council Chairman: Dale Borske

Major Donor Chairman (State Campaign Chair): Dave Steinbach

Art Chairwoman: Kathy Krupa

State Convention Chairman: Dave Perry

Public Policy Chairman: Steve Wyckoff

Marsh Chatter Newsletter Editor & State Convention Co-Chair: Dave Bowers

Volunteer Recruitment Chairman: Dean Noble

SBA Chairman: Dan Heuer

Webmaster: Jan Marra

Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee (CWAC): Dale Borske



## Venison Backstrap with a Smoked Cherry Reduction

By Dave Steinbach

### Ingredients:

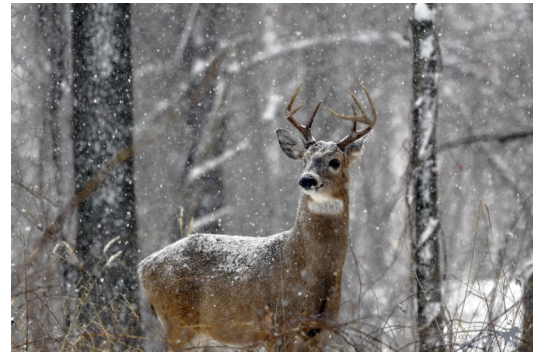
½ Venison Backstrap (the fat end)  
Sea Salt and Fresh Ground Black Pepper  
½ stick Butter  
1 Tbsp Garlic paste  
2 sprigs frsh Thyme  
1 cup Pitted and halved Cherries  
¾ cup Red wine or Port  
1 Tbsp. Balsamic Vinegar  
Pinch of dried cloves

### Directions:

Preheat the SousVide to 133 degrees.  
Season Backstrap with salt and pepper.  
Place Backstrap in Vacuum Sealer bag with 2/3 of the butter, Garlic, and Thyme.  
Seal the bag, emerse in the SousVide and let cook for 2-3 hours.

Smoke the Cherries is a foil pan for 45 minutes at 165 degrees.  
In a small pan combine Cherries, Wine, Cloves, and Balsamic Vinegar.  
Simmer over medium heat until sauce thickens and reduces a little  
Wisk in 1 ½ Tbsp butter.

Remove Backstrap from bag.  
Sear on a hot grill for about 3 minute per side.  
Let rest, wrapped in foil for 15 minutes.  
Slice Backstrap, plate, and cover with sauce.



ART OF NATURE IMAGES  
Dave Bowers Wildlife Photography 



# Save the Date!

## *2019 Michigan Ducks Unlimited*

# State Convention

## July 19-20

# Causeway Bay Hotel and Conference Center Lansing, Michigan

### **Planned Events and Activities**

Friday, July 19th

10:00 am—4 man scramble at College Fields with trophies, prizes, games

4:00 pm—board buses to Lumnuts Stadium for a DU night at the ballpark with private area, raffles, games, all you can eat ballpark fare plus special Lumnut plans to make our night fun

10:00—open hospitality



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Saturday, July 20th

8:00 am—State shoot with special awards to winners at Capital Area Gun Club

10:00—Ladies outing to Old Town Lansing for gallery tours, prizes, and many special surprises

12:00—Lunch, open vendor area in main hall with games, raffles, prizes

2:00—First ever, in main hall, the MIDU State Duck Calling Championships with special prizes to the winners

5:00—major donor reception and conservation message

6:00—Saturday night chapter awards banquet, Russ Bengal Award, special guest speaker and lots of fun

Open hospitality after banquet until ???



**Hotel is now accepting reservations**  
**Reserve Your Rooms—special rates for any night during convention**  
**\$98.00 without breakfast,\$102.00 with breakfast**  
**517-694-8123—6820 South Cedar Street**  
**Just tell the receptionist you are with the**  
**DUCKS when registering**



*See You There!*



Thanks to our corporate partners and sponsors of Michigan Ducks Unlimited at the state convention and throughout the year



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## Michigan Ducks Unlimited Volunteer Spotlight



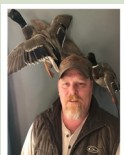
Dr. Chuck Nelson  
Associate Professor and Internship Coordinator  
Michigan State University

I have been a faculty member at Michigan State University for 39 years focused on teaching, research and service related to managing natural resources, people and facilities for sustainable natural resource recreation. In this role I have been privileged to work with more than 10,000 students in classes and individually as the major professor for a number of outstanding graduate students and as the internship coordinator for hundreds of undergraduate interns. These folks today are some of the nation's most respected leaders in NR management in government, non-profits and business. Their knowledge, commitment to conservation and enthusiasm gives me confidence in the future.

I have also had the privilege of serving in a number of volunteer capacities related to conservation. These include: faculty advisor for the MSU Ducks Unlimited chapter, Steering Committee Chair for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Michigan Implementation Committee, president of the Michigan Duck Hunters Association, chair of the Clinton County Parks and Green Space Commission, finance chair of the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks and president of the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. Looking back across those opportunities for service, some key lasting impacts of these efforts with many partners are the passage of the Michigan Duck Stamp (now the Michigan Waterfowl license) in 1976 that has paid for the State of Michigan to acquire 10,000 acres of wetlands for conservation and outdoor recreation; the eight major North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants with DU in the leadership role that the Implementation Committee coordinated that have acquired, restored or enhanced more than 20,000 acres of Michigan wetlands and associated uplands with many governmental and non-governmental partners and the passage of the Michigan Recreation Passport in 2010 that lowered entrance fees for Michigan State Parks while increasing revenue for state park operations and renovations and also provided millions in grants for local parks and recreation services.

Fortunately, I have a great family who supports my commitment to conservation and to fostering the enjoyment of outdoor recreation today, tomorrow and for generations still to come. My wife Susan and sons Mike and Dan are the bedrock that supports all other activities. This has included acquiring a "wildlife" farm with wetlands, grasslands, woodlands and crops. It also includes the opportunity to introduce others to the new outdoor activities. One of the best opportunities is getting new hunters out for Michigan's Youth Waterfowl weekend hunt. Each of those young hunters, often friends of my sons and more recently children of my former students and other friends, truly enjoyed the rush of wings, the excitement of the hunt and the opportunity to learn about become part of the future of conservation by contributing money, time and talent.

Finally, to my many friends and colleagues who share the vision of conservation and outdoor recreation for all now and in the future, it is indeed a privilege and a joy to work with you on this vital and on-going endeavor. It's also a lot of fun! See you in the great outdoors!



**Join a winning team and become a volunteer with Michigan Ducks Unlimited**

*Contact Dean Noble, State Volunteer Recruit Chair*

8421 Peck Road, Marlette, MI 48453

# Michigan legislation will lead to more wetlands across state

## Bill streamlining wetland restoration process approved by House, Senate



LANSING, Michigan – Dec. 21, 2018 – The Michigan legislature has approved a pair of bills to streamline the process for restoring wetland habitats across Michigan, improving water quality for millions of people and habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals. Gov. Rick Snyder is expected to sign the bills.

House Bills 5854 and 5855 are the result of cooperation among Ducks Unlimited, the state Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the conservation community.

The bills provide a transparent process for agencies, organizations and individuals to voluntarily restore vital wetland habitat throughout the state. The bills simplify regulations to advance restoration efforts and reduce time delays and costs.

The legislation was co-sponsored by House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rep. Gary Howell (82nd District) and Committee member Rep. Joseph Bellino (17th District).

“I am particularly proud to have worked with Ducks Unlimited to sponsor and get this legislation adopted. This new law will facilitate the great work that Ducks Unlimited does in preserving and restoring our valuable wetlands,” Howell said.

“I am very pleased to have played a role in this legislative victory that will increase wetland habitat for hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts, Bellino said. “It was a true team effort among the conservation community, DEQ and DNR, and the legislature. This is how good legislation happens.”

### Highlights of House Bill 5854

- Outlines criteria for obtaining a voluntary wetland restoration permit and has a narrow list of wetland restoration organizations and agencies that can apply for this permit.
- Ensures these permits are not used for mitigation purposes and must be on a completely voluntary basis.
- The MDEQ will issue permits and will consult with the MDNR to ensure only the most qualified projects are successful.
- Creates the Voluntary Wetland Restoration Group, made up of equal numbers of MDEQ and MDNR staff, to evaluate voluntary wetland restoration project applications and recommend issuance of permits.
- Creates the Joint Agency Restoration Committee, made up of the directors or their designees of the MDEQ, MDNR and Michigan Office of the Great Lakes, in the case of a dispute between the applicant and the Voluntary Wetland Restoration Group.
- Establishes a more robust pre-application meeting process between the MDEQ and applicant to ensure that applications are as effective as possible, giving it a higher chance of permitting success.
- Limits the entities who can apply for this type of permit to state or federal agencies, tribal agencies, nongovernmental agencies whose stated primary mission, purpose or programs include wetland conservation, or an individual in partnership with these groups.
- Creates a timeline for the permit application and what the various outcomes can be.



## Highlights of House Bill 5855

- Defines different types of adversely affected wetlands and creates a new category of wetland restoration permit for organizations and agencies looking to engage in voluntary wetland restoration.
- Defines a voluntary wetland restoration project as one that will have an overall benefit to wetlands by increasing wetland functions or services through restoration, reestablishment or maintenance.

“Healthy, abundant wetlands provide valuable habitat for Michigan fish and wildlife and play a critical role in maintaining clean, safe water resources,” said DNR Director Keith Creagh. “Wetlands restoration has been a key part of our department’s commitment to ensuring better and more quality outdoor recreation opportunities for hunters, wildlife watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts. This legislation is a strong tool in helping our partners continue their important wetlands work.”

“The DEQ believes that voluntary wetland restoration is a critical part of our work to restore wetland functions and services that have been historically lost, including wildlife habitat, flood storage, and water quality,” said DEQ Director C. Heidi Grether. “We appreciate the cooperative relationship that DEQ, Ducks Unlimited, and DNR had in working together on this legislation to develop new ways to encourage, promote, and streamline voluntary wetland restoration initiatives in Michigan.”

Wetlands are crucial for people and wildlife in the Great Lakes, including waterfowl. Wetlands act as nature’s kidneys by filtering pollutants from rainwater before they enter waterways. Wetland refill groundwater, help alleviate flooding downstream and provide habitat for more than 900 species of plants and animals.

Michigan has lost half of its historic wetlands, including up to 90 percent lost in some parts of southeast Michigan near Lake Erie. Ducks Unlimited, the leader in wetlands conservation, has restored, protected or enhanced [more than 81,000 acres](#) of wetlands throughout the state.

Jason Hill, Ducks Unlimited Manager of Conservation Programs for the Great Lakes, said the bills give Ducks Unlimited and its partners the ability to conserve more wetlands in all corners of the state.

“More wetlands mean more places to get outdoors to hunt, fish, hike and birdwatch,” he said. “It’ll also improve water quality throughout the Great Lakes for all residents and wildlife. We thank Reps. Howell and Bellino for their leadership in making these laws a reality.”

Numerous groups supported the legislation, including Ducks Unlimited, Clay Township leadership, Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen’s Association, Michigan Joint Venture Partners, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, National Wildlife Federation, National Wild Turkey Federation, St. Clair Flats Waterfowlers, St. Clair River Binational Public Advisory Council, Six Rivers Land Conservancy Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club, Upper Black River Council and Upper Peninsula Sportsmen’s Alliance.

**Many thanks to all of the DU Volunteers, Members, Staff, Conservation Partners, and the General Public for reaching out to their State Representatives and State Senators urging passage of these critical bills. The Legislative offices were overflowing with e-mails and phone calls because of your efforts!**

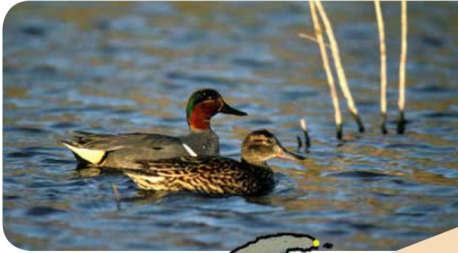




RESCUE OUR WETLANDS  
Banding Together for Waterfowl

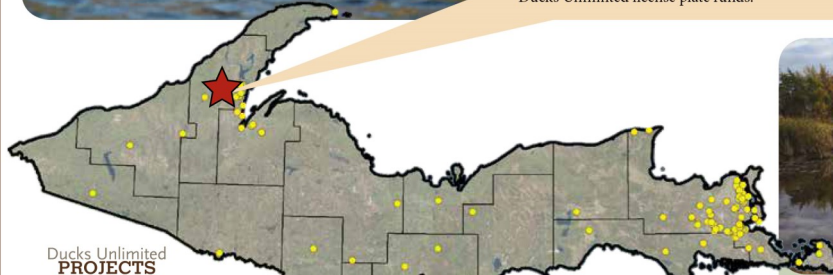
# MICHIGAN

GREAT LAKES / ATLANTIC REGION • 2018 STATE CONSERVATION REPORT



## STURGEON RIVER SLOUGHS

Ducks Unlimited since 2010 has worked with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to develop a long-term, cost-effective alternative to replace the 60-year-old diesel pump system at Sturgeon River Sloughs State Wildlife Management Area. In 2014, DU and its partners secured a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant to address infrastructure needs at Sturgeon River Sloughs. Construction is underway to install a new, more efficient electric pump and water distribution system that will allow wetland managers to more effectively manage Sloughs habitats, one of the Upper Peninsula's most productive wetland areas. Funding was provided through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited license plate funds.



### Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

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



## MICHIGAN DU LICENSE PLATE

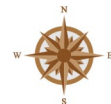
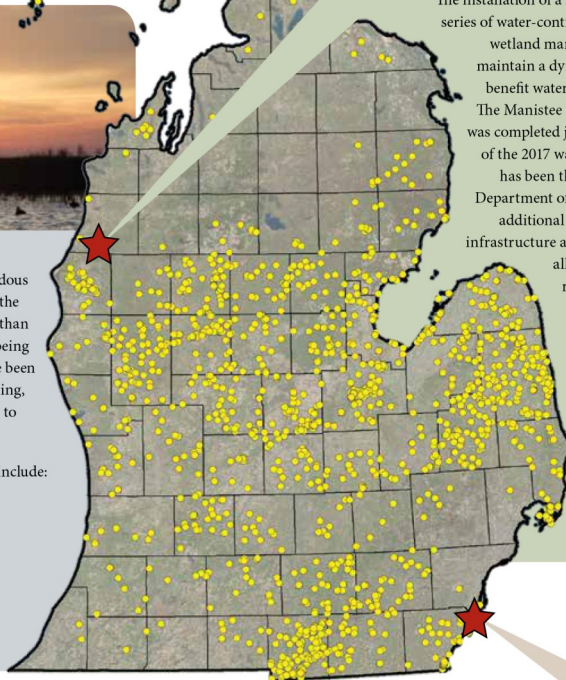
Michigan's Ducks Unlimited license plate program is a tremendous funding tool for conserving wetlands and waterfowl habitat in the state. Funds generated by the license plates are leveraged more than four times over to benefit waterfowl, and now those funds are being used to benefit waterfowl hunters, too. License plate funds have been strategically invested into wetland projects open to public hunting, expanding waterfowl hunting opportunities for all and helping to preserve our rich waterfowling tradition in Michigan.

Wetlands conservation made possible with license plate funds include:

- 53-acre restoration at Fix Unit Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (2016)
- 162-acre enhancement at Manistee Marsh Manistee River State Game Area (2017)
- 90-acre enhancement at Sterling State Park (2018)
- 1,205-acre enhancement at Shiawasee River State Game Area (in progress)
- 715-acre enhancement at Sturgeon River Sloughs State Wildlife Area (in progress)

## MANISTEE MARSH

The installation of a new pump in fall 2015 and a series of water-control structures in 2017 enable wetland managers to better emulate and maintain a dynamic wetland ecosystem to benefit waterfowl and waterfowl hunters. The Manistee Marsh enhancement project was completed just prior to the opening day of the 2017 waterfowl season. This project has been the impetus for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to make additional investments into improving infrastructure and expanding public access, all part of an ongoing effort to revitalize coastal wetlands at Manistee Marsh. Funding was provided through a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant through the Upper Mississippi River/ Great Lakes Region Joint Venture, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited license plate funds.

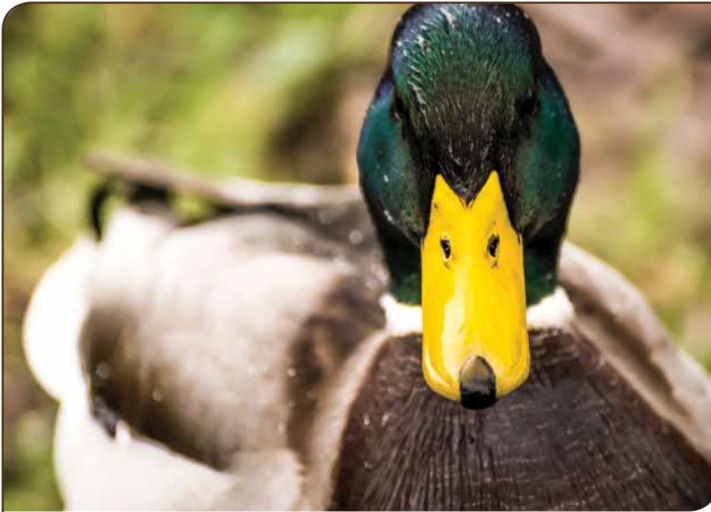


## CRIPPLE POINT UNIT - POINTE MOUILLEE STATE GAME AREA

The majority of coastal wetland habitat at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area is managed using a combination of dikes, water-control structures and pumps. The wetland management infrastructure for the 28-acre Cripple Point Unit was installed decades ago and has exceeded its useful life. The inability of the dikes to hold water on this area has allowed invasive plant species such as phragmites to firmly take hold. Ducks Unlimited and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources have developed a plan to restore Cripple Point by rehabilitating dilapidated dikes, installing two water-control structures, and a ramp for a portable pump. This project will help sustain valuable coastal wetlands, improve waterfowl brood-rearing, nesting and migration habitat, and provide management capabilities to better control invasive plant species. Funding was provided through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes grant, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Coastal Program Great Lakes grant, Pointe Mouillee Waterfowling Festival, Southwest Lake Erie Chapter of Waterfowl USA, Gibraltar Duck Hunters and Ducks Unlimited. The project will be complete in 2019.

PART OF DUCKS UNLIMITED'S GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE





## MICHIGAN IS THE CENTER OF GREAT LAKES CONSERVATION

Michigan plays a significant role for Great Lakes and continental waterfowl throughout their annual migration and breeding cycles. Ducks Unlimited's priorities in Michigan include protecting, restoring and enhancing coastal and river system wetlands from Saginaw Bay to the western shore of Lake Erie, and along the major southeast Lake Michigan river systems. The restoration of wetlands on privately owned lands is essential to the conservation of breeding habitat for Great Lakes mallards.

Ducks Unlimited partners and volunteers support conservation efforts through Ducks Unlimited's Great Lakes Initiative. Cool water, coastal wetlands and an appreciation for the outdoors define the initiative area. The coastline of the five Great Lakes exceeds 10,000 miles and encircles approximately 20 percent of the world's fresh water. Through the Great Lakes Initiative, DU addresses habitat needs and works to provide abundant resources for continentally significant numbers of breeding, migrating and wintering waterfowl.

### LOOKING AHEAD

#### Shiawassee NWR

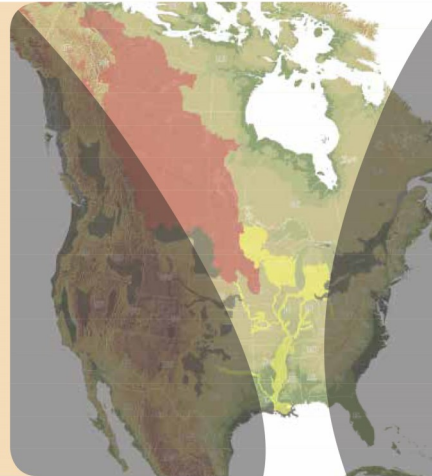
On the coattails of the recently completed, hallmark Maankiki Marsh restoration project, Ducks Unlimited and the refuge have partnered to develop fully engineered plans for several additional restoration and enhancement projects, including the 868-acre Ferguson Bayou, 509-acre Cass River Marshes, 105-acre Moist Soil Unit #9 and potentially others. Our newest cooperative effort will apply lessons learned from the Maankiki Marsh restoration to restore, enhance and reconnect additional floodplain wetland complexes within the Shiawassee Flats.

#### Lady of the Lake

In partnership with the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, Ducks Unlimited will restore and enhance 25 acres of coastal Lake Erie wetlands. By installing a pump and water-control structure, this project will emulate natural coastal wetland hydrology resulting in a positive response by native wetland vegetation important to breeding and migrating waterfowl.

#### Erie Marsh Preserve

Phase III is underway on this 900-acre coastal wetlands enhancement in North Maumee Bay of Lake Erie. Ducks Unlimited has completed survey and engineering design and will rehabilitate existing dikes and build new dikes, allowing The Nature Conservancy and Erie Shooting Club to properly manage water levels.



### A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Michigan is vital to the goals of Duck's Unlimited's Great Lakes/Atlantic Region. The entire team in Michigan, including our volunteers, fundraising staff and conservation staff, has developed a winning strategy that grows stronger each year.

Our 21-state region had a tremendous impact on waterfowl habitat and water quality in 2017. We used private donations and public funds to invest nearly \$22 million on conservation projects. That strong support enabled our biologists and engineers to deliver focused, effective habitat conservation on 48,111 acres of wetlands.

None of this would be possible without our volunteers, conservation partners and financial supporters. The accomplishments of Ducks Unlimited are your accomplishments. As an organization, we can trumpet our success knowing how strongly equipped we are to improve the health of wetlands across North America for the next generation.

Thank you for believing in our mission, and for helping us reach our vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.

David Brakhage, GLARO Director of Operations

### MICHIGAN BY THE NUMBERS

#### 2017

- 11 projects
- 1,164 acres conserved
- \$1,295,224 invested

#### HISTORICAL

- 401 projects
- 82,447 acres conserved
- \$40.25 million invested

For more information visit [www.ducks.org/michigan](http://www.ducks.org/michigan)

### MICHIGAN CONSERVATION STAFF



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Warren Weirich, *Manager of Conservation Services*  
Brian Nicholson, *Senior Regional Engineer*  
Gregg Bachman, *Senior Engineering Tech*  
Jeff Duncan, *Senior Engineering Tech*  
Cody Sargen, *Engineer*

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

Visit us online at [www.ducks.org/michigan](http://www.ducks.org/michigan)



### GREAT LAKES / ATLANTIC REGION

**WE'VE MOVED!** Please note our new address  
7322 Newman Blvd., Building 1, Dexter, MI 48130  
Phone number: 734.623.2000



# Superior Central High School Students

## Building Punt Boat

### for Michigan DU State Convention

Eleven students and their instructor are quite the conservationists, builders, designers, wood workers, researchers, all in addition to their academic work in math, English, history, and many other courses. Their day starts early and oft times ends late to stay on top of their projects and homework.

This is an introduction to these students in the Natural Resources and Watercraft Design class at Superior Central High School located in the upper peninsula near the small town of Eben Junction.

They are building a punt boat from the ground up through diligent research and have donated it to the MIDU State Convention to be used as a fundraiser for wetland conservation. A local friend with an old punt boat built in the 1960's has given them the use of his boat for dimensioning on computer aided design and as a model for the handwork required to cut and assemble the wood.

They will be bringing this boat to the convention in July along with their research project

In addition to the boat, some lucky winner will also win 2 antique decoys, a watercolor marsh print of the boat, and a handmade paddle for the boat. This will truly be a once in a lifetime opportunity for someone to have a special piece of duck hunting history built by a group of students committed to conservation and leaving an early footprint on the great outdoors.

The following articles were submitted by their teacher, Mr. Tim Bliss, and will be the kickoff for the next several newsletters that will show the progress of the boat as they design, model, build, and finish. They have been featured in the school newspaper earlier this year. This article explains the class and requirements for the students along with job functions that each are responsible to maintain. The second article is an introduction to the watercraft design and build class.

This year's Natural Resources and Watercraft Design class consists of 11 students that are setting a fast pace as they research traditional watercraft, add to our ongoing water quality data of the Quarry Pond and the Slapneck Creek, and begin building their own boats.

Here is a brief summary of the very challenging and comprehensive projects to be completed before the end of the school year.

- Improving bat habitat with special consideration to White Nose Syndrome
- Implementation of our expanded aquaponic systems
- Improving our alternative energy system with the addition of solar panels mounted to the wind turbine framework
- Improving grouse nesting sites and exploring how West Nile virus is affecting the grouse population
- Monitoring the effect last year's fish cribs are having on the Quarry's fish populations through the use of an underwater remote operated vehicle and placing more cribs if appropriate
- Partnering with Ducks Unlimited to build a duck hunting punt boat that when sold will provide money for further wetland improvements and protection



## Natural Resources and Watercraft Design Course Description

This is a two credit class that is two class periods long running back to back. One credit will be for Science and the other will be for Fine Arts and both classes must be taken if a student signs up for this course.

The science subject matter will focus on our natural resources; how we use them, how we maintain and monitor their quality and how we ensure their sustainability for future generations. The study of these resources will be leaning heavily towards analysis, application and evaluation. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of school, each student will be required to identify a natural resource issue that exists at school or within the community, design a project to remedy the issue, carrying out the project and visually document the progression of the project, then present their work to the class upon completion. In the past this has involved contacting local natural resource organizations for information, services, and/or financial assistance for the purchase of materials.

This type of class will require considerable effort and discipline on the student's part and will also require us to be outside often. During the warmer months we may spend both class periods studying only science or field sketching outside and during the colder months we may spend both class periods only working on boats in-doors.

The art subject matter will focus on the design and evolution of traditional watercraft and field sketching. We will look at traditional watercraft design from many cultures, what materials were used, why they were designed in a particular manner and how modern materials eventually affected the original designs. All students will participate in the construction of solo 13 foot plywood and fiberglass pirogues (flat bottomed canoes). Working in teams the students will construct, from pre-cut kits, a pirogue for each student in the class.

In the spring of the year everybody will be taking a day -long trip to a nearby lake with their pirogue. The first day (this will be a Friday) is mandatory and each student will receive a grade on the quality of their participation in the safe use of their boats, water quality analysis, invasive species identification, littoral land use recommendations, field sketching, etc.

Upon completion of this course the students may keep the pirogue they constructed.



Students in the class proudly wearing their DU caps posing next to the punt boat that they are using as their model to design and build the MIDU punt boat;

Back row left to right: Jordan, Sophie, Alayna, Charlotte, Abbi, Aurora, Bailey

Front row ledt to right: Mr. Bliss, instructor, Luke, Avery, Jeremy. Not pictured was Wyattte





Offering youth the opportunity to learn about wetland conservation and the outdoor world around them

## Thornapple Valley Wood Duck Boxes

In May of 2018, the Thornapple Valley DU Chapter in Hastings hosted a GreenWing field day where they built wood duck boxes for each of the kids. Several precut kits were left over and the adults and kids assembled and donated them to the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary by Gull Lake near Richmond.

The staff at the KBS recently sent me photos of the wood duck boxes being installed around the lake, replacing many that were old and worn out. Hats off to the Thornapple Valley DU chapter members, the kids, DNR staff and all of the parents that showed up to work and teach the kids about conservation. A job well done!







Michigan Ducks Unlimited State Officer Contacts

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## Marsh Chatter Needs You!

Marsh Chatter is a quarterly newsletter put out by the volunteer group of Michigan Ducks Unlimited to help keep our members and volunteers up on the latest happenings around the State. To make sure we have the latest information, we need YOU! Please submit articles about events and happenings in your area to the newsletter editor Dave Bowers. We will include all appropriate articles depending on space constraints.

Articles should be 175 words or less. Longer articles may be submitted but may be edited or omitted due to space constraints. Feel free to include pictures. All articles need to be in to Dave no later than the middle of the month prior to the beginning of the quarter. March for April publication, June for July publication, September for October publication and December for January publication.

Send articles or photos (with people identified) to Dave Bowers at dtbowers53@gmail.com I can also be reached by cell phone at 517-974-3351

### Congratulation to Top Chef Michelle



Michelle Burdick, Director of Conservation Services for DU at the GLARO office and a longtime volunteer with the Western Washtenaw DU Chapter, once again won the Fall Harvest and Wild Game Feast cookoff as the Top Chef. DU volunteers Ric Eakin and Dave Bowers served as judges for the cookoff as many of the staff prepared wild game dishes for all to enjoy.