



# MINNESOTA

## GREAT LAKES/ATLANTIC REGION

## LIVING LAKES INITIATIVE

### ★ **TIMBER LAKE ENHANCEMENT**

**T**imber Lake is a 190-acre shallow lake near New London in Kandiyohi County, that historically hosted waterfowl during migration because of the wild rice that grows in the basin. Unfortunately, the water-control structure on the outlet of the lake was damaged and became dysfunctional. This unnaturally lowered water levels in the lake for several years and negatively impacted the quantity and quality of wild rice growing in the basin. DU partnered with Minnesota DNR and Kandiyohi County to enhance Timber Lake through the construction of a new, variable-crest water level control structure that will return water levels to normal. This structure will also provide Minnesota DNR the ability to conduct temporary water-level drawdowns in the future to remove rough fish, consolidate bottom sediments and nutrients, and allow aquatic plants to germinate. This newly enhanced shallow lake will provide clear water with abundant wild rice and other aquatic plants and invertebrates to both migratory and breeding waterfowl. There will be more opportunities for public recreation, hunting, and birdwatching. The new water control structure was completed in spring 2022, and while drought conditions lowered the lake in the summer of 2021, the lake is now full of water, wild rice, and wildlife. The cost of this project was over \$200,000, and funding for this project was provided through a 2021 state Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriation to DU as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, a federal NAWCA grant, and private Major Sponsor support for DU's Living Lakes Initiative.



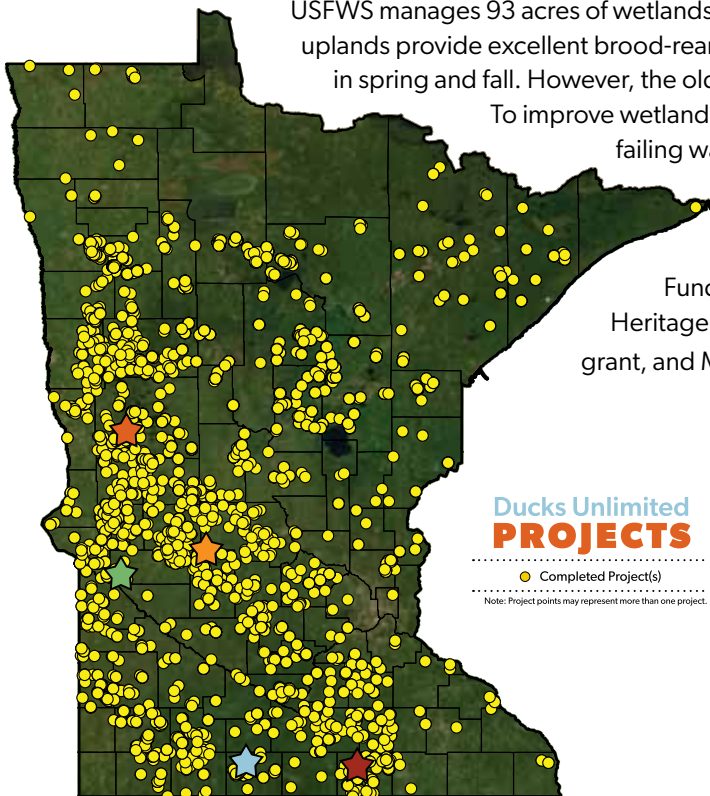
### ★ **NEW WATER CONTROL STRUCTURES AT HALLS LAKE WPA**

**T**he Windom Wetland Management District (WMD) of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service spans the southern portion of Minnesota's Prairie Pothole Region along the Iowa border and east from South Dakota to Interstate I-35 and north to the Minnesota River. The 410-acre Halls Lake Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) is in the eastern part of the WMD just west of Albert Lea in Freeborn County.

USFWS manages 93 acres of wetlands on this WPA for waterfowl. The shallow wetlands and surrounding uplands provide excellent brood-rearing habitat for breeding waterfowl and important migration habitat in spring and fall. However, the old water structures used to manage water levels were beginning to fail.

To improve wetland water management, DU partnered with the USFWS to replace the failing water control structures on the WPA. These new structures will allow the USFWS to improve the water quality of these wetlands and allow submerged aquatic plants and aquatic invertebrates to flourish.

This project was funded through a 2021 state Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriation to DU as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, a North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant, and Major Sponsor philanthropic support of DU's Living Lakes Initiative.



**Ducks Unlimited**  
**PROJECTS**

● Completed Project(s)

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.





## ★ STEINKE TRACT RESTORATION AT LAC QUI PARLE WMA

In 2018, DU purchased the 233-acre Steinke land tract for the Minnesota DNR for inclusion in the Lac qui Parle WMA near Correll on the north side of Marsh Lake. The land purchased by DU included over 50 acres of native wet prairie. The purpose of this public land acquisition project was to restore and protect wetland and upland prairie grassland habitat for breeding waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife and buffer Marsh Lake. DU's work to purchase 233 acres and restore 175 acres of cropland back to small wetlands and native prairie on the Steinke tract was completed in 2022 at a cost of nearly \$2 million. Restored wetlands and prairie grassland will help reduce downstream flooding and improve water quality in Marsh Lake, a 5,000-acre shallow lake recently enhanced with a new outlet water control structure installed by Minnesota DNR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Marsh Lake is an important waterfowl migration and public waterfowl hunting area that helps maintain our waterfowling traditions. Funding for this project was provided through a 2018 state Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriation to DU by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, a federal NAWCA grant, and private Major Sponsor support for DU's Living Lakes Initiative.

## ★ TILE AND SEDIMENT REMOVED AT RIDGEWAY WPA

Ducks Unlimited's partnership with the USFWS continued in 2022 with several small wetland restoration and enhancement projects being completed on WPAs near Fergus Falls. As part of this partnership, DU biologists work closely with USFWS staff to design and implement the restoration and enhancement of small seasonal and temporary wetlands on WPAs. This work involves removing drain tile, plugging ditches with small berms, and removing accumulated sediment from basins. One such project was completed at Ridgeway WPA in fall 2022. Approximately 50 acres were enhanced in 35 prairie pothole wetland basins, primarily through sediment excavation and the removal of over 1,900 feet of drain tile. These wetlands will provide improved breeding and migration habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. Funding was provided through a 2021 Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriation recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, a NAWCA grant, and Major Sponsors supporting DU's Living Lakes Initiative.

## ★ CARON WMA RECEIVES WETLAND HABITAT UPGRADE

Caron Wildlife Management Area is a large and growing complex of wetlands and native prairie grasslands managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) located just north of Sherburn in Martin County. The Minnesota DNR uses water level control structures to manage 160 acres of large wetlands on the unit, but recently, these structures were beginning to fail. Common carp were entering through the outlet of these wetlands and damaging the ecology of the WMA. DU partnered with the Minnesota DNR to re-engineer and replace the existing structures in 2022 with improved design to allow for temporary water level drawdowns and exclude carp. Drawdowns remove invasive fish from the wetlands, as well as giving submersed aquatic vegetation a chance to germinate. These enhanced water control structures will provide excellent wetland habitat for breeding and migrating waterfowl as well as other game and non-game wildlife species. Funding for this project was provided by a 2021 state Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriation to DU as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, a federal NAWCA grant, and private Major Sponsor support for DU's Living Lakes Initiative.



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

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### MINNESOTA NUMBERS 2022

- 31 projects
- 26,293 acres conserved
- \$5,768,651 invested

### HISTORICAL

- 4,425 projects
- 239,793 acres conserved
- \$126,109,000



### GREAT LAKES & ATLANTIC REGION

\*NEW ADDRESS EFFECTIVE 04/2023\*  
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