



Cattails



Special points of interest:

- Brainerd Trifecta Events
- Capital Banquet Approaches 25 Years
- Minnesotans at the National Convention
- Northwest Sportshow DU Room

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Summer-Fall 2016

Official Newsletter of Minnesota Ducks Unlimited

RICE LAKE REVITALIZATION



Above: Rice Lake is packed with emergent vegetation that was partially flooded this spring, resulting in great habitat for over-water nesters, such as these coots crossing the channel to the outlet.

Right: Rice Lake has two MNDNR public accesses for waterfowl hunters to use; this is access on the north side of the lake.



More about the Rice Lake Project on page 4



State Chair's Chatter



Brian Ross, State Chair

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One of the things I love about Ducks Unlimited in general and MN DU in particular is the ability to take on challenges and work through them in a collaborative manner. This ability became well used over the last few years as the Gambling Control Board took a look at our MN DU fundraising using gambling, especially the Calendar Raffle. The Gambling Control Board felt we were stretching the rules regarding limiting non-profits gambling to less than \$50,000 per event because the limit is there so the proceeds do not get taxed. They wanted to remove the ability for us to join the MN DU regions into one raffle as well as limit some of our other raffles so they were working with the legislature to add restrictions. The effect on our fundraising would not be good and required MN DU to take on the challenge to work with the Gambling Control Board on changes that would not affect us so drastically.

The MN DU team who took on this challenge included several senior volunteers and staff, with former State Chair, Mark Peterson, leading the effort. Senior RD Scott Anderson and State Chair at the time, Tim Roble, worked very closely with Mark to collaborate with the legislature and Gambling Control Board staff to attain a compromise on the restrictions (see photo of Mark and Tim to right). The effort resulted in MN DU being allowed to continue the Calendar Raffle, as well as some of our other raffles we use at events. The compromise required MN DU to get a gambling license to continue the Calendar Raffle. Having the gambling license allows us to run other state-allowed gambling, like pull tabs. In fact, on May 1st MN DU started its first pull tab site, at the Lonesome Pine Restaurant near Garrison. As State Chair, I got to open the first one as described in the article on Page 10.



So what is our current challenge? The main challenge we face now is to increase our fundraising in the state to provide greater support for DU programs in general and the DU Living Lakes Initiative specifically. We are not fully funding the amount DU is spending in Minnesota on the Living Lakes Initiative. This requires us to work together and follow the 2016 Strategic Plan (see Winter 2016 Issue of Cattails). One of the Key Areas in the Strategic Plan is to increase membership, which will feed our events and increase our fundraising. Minnesota currently is second in overall membership (see below) behind Texas; therefore, I am challenging all MN DU members to Beat Texas! By taking on this challenge and working collaboratively, we can increase our membership and make MN No. 1 in total members.

Check out Page 3 of this issue of Cattails to see some ideas on how we do this. I believe our ability to take on challenges and work collaboratively will get us to No. 1.

Total Membership

1. Texas	48,959
2. Minnesota	43,043
3. Wisconsin	34,567
4. North Carolina	30,829
5. Illinois	30,651
6. California	27,704

Thanks for reading my chatter; I hope to meet you in my travels to DU events around the great state of Minnesota.



MN DU Strategic Plan-Increase Membership Key Area

The Strategic Plan focused on three key areas: 1) Increase Membership; 2) Grow Volunteer Ranks, and 3) Major Donor Focus. To learn more about the Strategic Plan process, see the Winter 2016 Cattails Newsletter. The Strategic Plan is targeted at our volunteers, who are the grassroots base of Ducks Unlimited.

The first key area is Increase Membership. This key area aligns well with one of the objectives of the newly released DU National 2017—2024 Strategic Plan. See more at: (<http://www.ducks.org/resources/media/About%20DU/DUStrategicPlan2017-2024.pdf>). The objective is to increase National DU membership to 770,000 by 2020.



Minnesota
Ducks Unlimited
2016 Strategic Plan

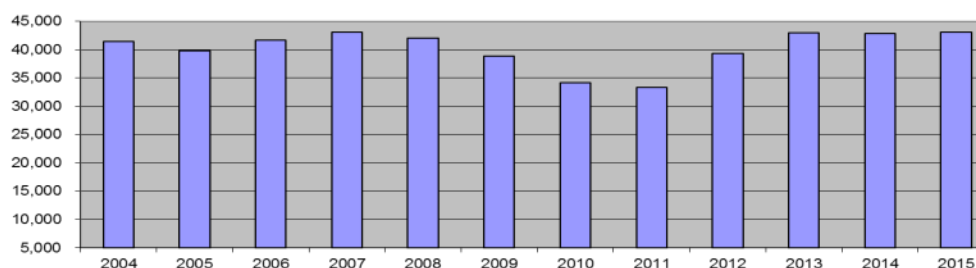
For MN DU, we looked at the history of membership over the last twelve years and saw a steady to slightly increasing membership up to the recession in 2009 (see graph below), where memberships took a dip. After the recession and with the Strategic Plan put together under Former State Chair Dave Flink's leadership, the membership rebounded and increased to above pre-recession levels. In recent years, the membership ranks have held steady, but are stagnant. The goal of

the membership drive is to move us to a new level and increase membership by 7,000 over the next three years.

Unity – Team DU



MN Memberships



**The Strategic
Plan Goal is to
increase
membership in
MN to 50,000
by 2019**

The MN DU Strategic Plan Committee came up with three strategies to increase membership and these are listed below;

1. Initiate Membership Drive
2. Start or Restart Two Chapters per Region
3. Increase Calendar Sales

The membership drive is underway with a challenge that each volunteer bring in one new member. There are many ways to get a new member including having them buy a ticket to your banquet, having them sign up online at ducks.org to win a prize, or selling them a calendar. Another important way for MNDU to increase membership is to start or restart chapters. This opens new areas to bring in members and it also generates new volunteers. The third way to increase membership is to increase sales of our calendars in our Calendar Raffle. This captures waterfowl hunters who may not attend banquets and it has great prizes to boot.



Rice Lake Revitalization



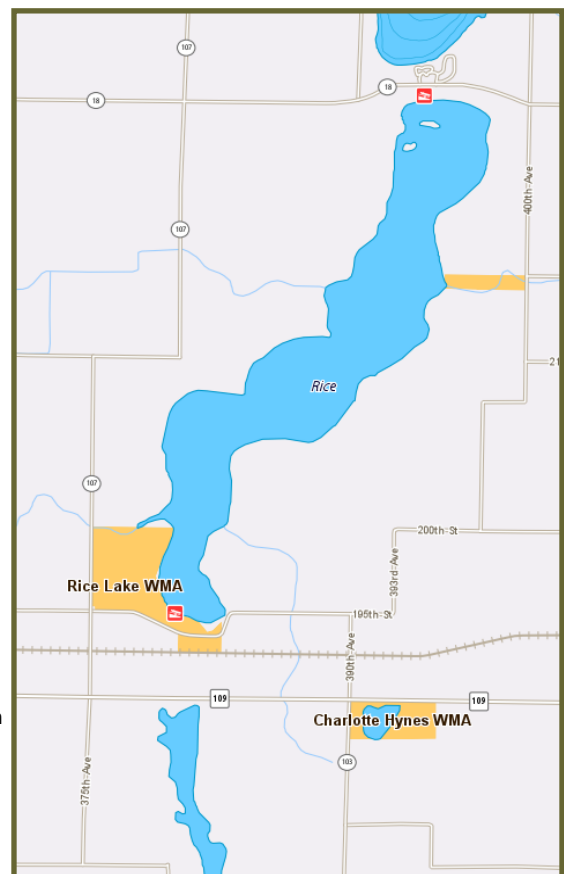
(Editors Note: OK, so I was wrong; second time this year, but don't tell Kris, my wife. I always thought DU's Rice Lake project was at Rice Lake State Park near Faribault, but when I started to research the project, Jon Schneider, DU's Manager of Minnesota Conservation Programs told me the project was the Rice Lake in Faribault County south of Mankato. I was glad he corrected me because my plan was to visit the lake this Spring on my work trips to southern Minnesota).

The Rice Lake project was a DU Living Lakes project completed in 2010. The 875-acre lake is not far from the town of Winnebago, in far southern Minnesota. The lake has two public accesses, one at the north end and one at the south end. There are also two MNDNR wildlife management areas located

on the lake as well (see map to the right).

Minnesota DNR had requested that Ducks Unlimited look at the water control structure on Rice Lake to determine what could be done to provide a more effective fish barrier and manageable structure. They stated that large floating cattail mats would get caught in the stoplog bay and fish barrier. When this happened, due to the catwalk configuration, removing the cattails was very difficult and potentially dangerous. The fish barrier was also ineffective during these times as the fingers allowed fish to freely pass upstream into the lake.

To help alleviate these problems, the following modifications were completed. The old catwalk was removed from the upstream side of the structure and a new one constructed above the weir, which is safer and more easily allows cattails mats to pass (see photograph below). The old fish barrier was also removed and replaced with a two-stage fish barrier system. A drop structure with horizontal fingers was installed below the stoplog to prevent fish passage during low flow periods or during draw-down. An existing downstream crossing was removed and replaced with two 60" diameter reinforced concrete high velocity culverts for higher flow periods. The downstream channel was cleaned out to provide enough grade for the velocity culverts and lower tailwater flow out.



The Cattails' editor visited the lake in early May of this year and found the lake to be revitalized, with clear water flowing over the weir of the new structure. Much of the lake had large beds of flooded cattails which provided great habitat for over-water nesters, such as diving ducks, grebes, and coots. The lake was being used by several species of diving ducks including ringbills (ringed-necked

Left: The new control structure in operation during the high flow time of the year of spring.



Rice Lake Revitalization (Continued)

ducks) and bluebills (lesser scaup). Another diving duck was a lone drake canvasback, which is surprising because canvasbacks generally don't nest this far south (see photograph below). Redheads are a more common nester in southern Minnesota and, sure enough, a redhead hen swam out of the cattails when the shore was approached (see photograph below). A pair of trumpeter swans were also using the lake and they flew over the structure upon arrival, indicating the conditions were favorable to them for nesting on the lake.

The only location with any commorants and fish was downstream from the outlet, indicating the structure is keeping out the carp that had infested the lake in the past. Rice Lake truly looked very revitalized and should provide good habitat for hunters this fall. Check out the Rice Lake revitalization when you are in the area.



Above: The cattails were greening up and sprouting across the basin.

Left: The south end of the lake shows the good hemi-marsh habitat for future broods.

Below: A lone drake canvasback was resting in the south portion of the lake waiting for his mate, who was likely on the nest laying an egg. Drakes will wait and attend to the hen until she is done laying eggs.



Above: A lone hen redhead swam out of the cattails on the margin of the lake indicating nesting activity was occurring because of the time of year.



Capital Banquet Approaches 25 Years



Mike Dvorak (above) showing his ability to hold a beer even with his arm in a sling.

Attendees included several legislators, the Commissioner of DNR, and the Executive Director of BWSR

The Capital Banquet is approaching 25 years in existence. It was started in the early 1990s by Senator Pat Pariseau, a long time legislator from Farmington, who retired in 2010. The Capital Banquet is arguably the most important banquet in Minnesota, not because of all the money it makes, but because of the Minnesota legislators and agency leaders in attendance. It gives MN DU a chance to show off our major donor companies and our fundraising acumen.

The Master of Ceremonies for this years Capital Banquet was none other than DU's own Mike Dvorak. Mike helped coordinate the banquet for many years as a Regional Director, but this year came as a volunteer! He also helped set up the event even though his arm was in a sling from elbow surgery. The arm was still sore, but Mike was his cheerful self and his characteristic wit was as sharp as ever.

The Capital City banquet was held at a new venue this year because the usual venue, the Best Western Kelly Inn (now renamed the Best Western Capital Ridge), was undergoing renovations. The new venue was the Embassy Suites Hilton, just south of the State Capital complex. Another complication was the Capital was still undergoing renovation as well, and many legislators were not in their usual offices or in new offices. Even with these renovation complications, there were nearly 100 folks in attendance, including many senators and representatives, some of who serve on the banquet committee. Attendees also included DNR and Minnesota Board of Water and Soils (BWSR) leadership and representatives of our funding partners, including representatives from Flint Hills Resources, Unimin Corporation, and Polymet Mining Corporation. For our funding partners, it gives MN DU the opportunity to recognize them for the support of the Ducks Unlimited Living Lakes Initiative. DU's Minnesota Senior Director of Development, Adam Dehaan, presented our funding partners with major donor plaques. The Capital Banquet also gave MN DU an opportunity to present awards to the committee volunteers (see photographs below).



Commissioner Landwehr emphasizes a point during his address to the attendees about the long DNR and DU partnership.

The keynote speaker was Tom Landwehr, Commissioner of the DNR and former DU employee. The Commissioner talked about the long partnership between DNR and DU. He noted several recent DU projects in Minnesota, including Eagle Lake in McLeod County and the many projects in Freeborn County that are restoring lakes and changing the landscape (see Winter 2016 Cattails newsletter for more about the Freeborn County projects). The attendance of Commissioner Landwehr highlights the importance of the Capital Banquet event to MN DU.



DU Regional Director John Marks (right) presents the Area Chair of the Year Award to Kevin Thoma for his past work as chair for the Capital Chapter committee.

Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen (left) a great DU supporter, accepted the Gold Award on behalf of the Capital Chapter committee. The Gold Award is MN DU's top chapter award for a chapter's fundraising efforts.



Minnesota Artists' Corner—James Hautman

Winner of several Federal Duck Stamp competitions, Minnesota artist James Hautman has established himself as one of the most dynamic and exciting talents to emerge from today's generation of wildlife artists.

Accuracy, attention to detail and dramatic impact are what set Hautman's work apart from others. These skills have propelled him along an award-winning career path.

In 1990, he became the youngest artist ever to win the prestigious Federal Duck Stamp Competition. Jim just won the Federal Duck Stamp contest for the 2017-2018 stamp - his *fifth* win with a painting of trio Canada Geese. He was named the Ducks Unlimited 2011 Artist of the Year.

Artwork provided courtesy of Jim Hautman and Wild Wings, LLC, Lake City, Minnesota.
800-445-4833 www.wildwings.com

Below: "Spring Thaw—Swan" shows Jim's attention to detail of not only the bird, but also the habitat and surroundings.



Above: Jim combines deer and ducks with a great abandoned farm scene in this painting "Our Side of the River—Whitetail Deer".



Above: Jim is not just limited to wildlife, but takes on other subjects as seen in this work titled "Cheyenne Village".



Project Hall of Fame—Bisson Lake

Ducks Unlimited has been conserving habitat in Minnesota since 1985. There are literally hundreds of DU projects scattered across Minnesota. In fact, many of the water control structures on waterfowl production areas (WPAs), national wildlife refuges (NWRs), and state wildlife management areas (WMAs) were designed and built as DU projects. This column is a regular feature devoted to describing some of these older projects.

The Bisson Lake project was constructed in 2000 and is located in Becker County, nine miles north of Audubon. The project is on the Hampden Slough National Wildlife Refuge and was completed in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). It was

This photo taken to the south from CSAH 14 shows the great habitat conditions.



Right: The Bisson Lake project was dedicated to major donors in the early 1990s. The cairn is just west of the lake.



Left: This photograph of Bisson Lake was taken September 10, 2016, shows tens of mallards, gadwall, and teal jumping up from the lake basin.



an expensive project because, not only was a large water control structure needed, a county highway had to be widened, raised, and new culverts installed. Total construction costs were \$250,000 with half of the cost picked up by DU. The construction involved hauling approximately 12,000 cubic yards to build up the road and included constructing the four-bay, steel-weir, stoplog structure on a Judicial Ditch. The lake covers 100 surface acres at full service level (FSL) and has 110 acre-feet capacity at FSL. The contractor was Hough, Inc. out of Detroit Lakes.

The presence of the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 14 in the basin limited the height the lake could be restored to, but it is still a successful project. The lake is intensively managed by the USFWS, with several drawdowns over the years. The editor has seen great duck use in late summer on his work trips through the area (see photograph at bottom of page). The drawdowns maintain the hemi-marsh conditions and the shallow water favors puddle ducks in late summer, but canvasbacks and redheads are often present in the spring with some of them staying to nest. The project could not be completed without DU major donors and a dedication for the project was held soon after construction (see photo of dedication cairn below).



Northwest Sportshow Gives MN DU Great Exposure

One of MN DU's most important special events is our "Ducks Unlimited Room" at the Northwest Sportshow. The Northwest Sportshow is held each year in March at the Minneapolis Auditorium and MN DU has been invited for the last several years to use a large room to highlight our mission and provide merchandise and raffles. The Ducks Unlimited Room is one of the stops on the Sportshow's Adventure Trail (see photograph to right), which is a group of locations for kids activities.

The Ducks Unlimited Adventure Trail stop is one of the most popular stops for both the kids, their parents, and other adults. This is because we provide decoys for the children to paint, which keeps them busy for several minutes. The room allows us to have a large area that has several painting locations and a few tables for drying the decoys (see photographs below). The children and their parents can then return later to pick up their decoys.

The parents also love the Ducks Unlimited Room because we provide lots of raffles for them to enter and silent auctions items for them to bid on. We also provide a lot of DU clothing and merchandise at very reasonable prices. The result is thousands of folks become more familiar with Ducks Unlimited.

The event has become a great fundraising event for MN DU as well with over \$20,000 raised each year. RD John Marks has been coordinating the event for several years assisted by the current Special Events Chair(s).



This large sign was at the entrance to the Ducks Unlimited room highlighting the Adventure Trail site.



The photo above shows the painting area for the children, with a wall of merchandise on the other side of the partition.



A bunch of newly painted decoys on the drying table.



Gun raffles on the main table with silent auction items in the back.



The MN DU Special Events team, Jennelle Anacker and Jason Fairchild, run the DU Room.



MN DU's First Pull Tab Outlet Opens



Above: State Chair Brian Ross buys the first DU pull tab in Minnesota. Below, he proudly shows his losing pull tab.



Right: State Chair Ross congratulates MN DU Gambling Manager Greg Erickson on getting the first pull tab operation going.

MN DU opened its first pull-tab outlet this past May at the Lonesome Pine Restaurant on Bay Lake, near Garrison, MN. The restaurant has a long association with the Garrison DU Chapter, who have their annual Sponsor Dinner there. In addition, MN DU State Gambling Manager Greg Erickson lives nearby and, being MN DU now has our state gambling license, felt it would be a good place to start a pull-tab operation.

To inaugurate the pull-tab operation, Greg invited State Chair Brian Ross to pull the first pull-tabs. Brian was up to the task and he and his wife Kris met Greg at the Lonesome Pine on Sunday, May 1st, the first day we could legally run a pull-tab site. Brian bought \$20.00 in tickets (see pictures) and didn't have a winner in the bunch, not even \$2.00! Kris had better luck, with a few winners to keep her pulling for a few minutes. Luckily, the martinis and food were fabulous. The Lonesome Pine is a great place to eat, so if you are in the neighborhood, be sure to stop in, and buy some pull-tabs when you are there.

Greg is interested in finding new locations for additional pull-tab operations and will work with chapters to get a pull-tab location started. So if you or your chapter is interested, call or text Greg at 218-820-0776 or email him at mnducalendar@ducks.org.



The Ducks Unlimited neon sign highlights the Lonesome Pine's décor.

Volunteer Spotlight—Andrew Onken

Andrew grew up in Inver Grove Heights and started hunting early on at the age of 12. Fall hunting trips with his dad to Nobles County fueled Andrew's love of the outdoors and conservation. Nearly every trip was spent hunting public land which have since become DU projects (Bloom WPA). Throughout high school, Andrew spent many a weekend laying out in the duck blind in the Mississippi River backwaters near the Hastings, MN area chasing mallards and bluebills. Throughout his youth, Andrew became an active hunter ultimately driving him to become the conservationist he is today by joining DU as a volunteer in 2009.

While hunting the Duck Factory, attending the University of North Dakota, and pursuing his Master's Degree in Engineering, Andrew helped to start up the UND Chapter of DU. Andrew chaired the committee for 2 years and upon graduating moved back to Inver Grove Heights where he continued to support DU by restarting the South Metro Chapter and becoming a Zone Chairman. He has since moved to Duluth, MN where Andrew has continued to provide leadership and support to his Alma Mater University of Minnesota Duluth Chapter. Additionally, Andrew has aided in the revival of the St. Louis Bay and Cloquet events as well as created several second events and a DU presence within the Northland.

Andrew continues to work with several chapters within the Northeast Region as well as collaborate with volunteers and staff throughout the state. Since his days as a college chapter chair, he has since been promoted within DU to Zone Chair and now currently holds Regional Vice Chair in the Northeast. He is continually working to grow DU and seek new innovative ways to engage communities and promote conservation and DU's mission.



Andrew Onken at the State Convention being introduced as the Northeast RVC.



Brainerd Paul Bunyan Chapter Spring Trifecta Events



Sponsor Chair Brian Ross introduces Carol and Tim Osborne as new Life Sponsors, helping bring the Brainerd Dinner to a Diamond Event level.

The Brainerd Chapter had three events this spring. The first event was the Brainerd Dinner event at the Madden's Great Hall on April 19th. The next event was an Evening of Conservation at the Gull Dam Brewery on May 18th. The final event was the Gull Lake Critical Conservation Club on May 19th at the Anderson Family Boathouse.

The trifecta events resulted in two Diamond Events that raised over \$75,000 each and additional major donors pledging at other area events. The Brainerd Dinner Event netted over \$55,000 and with three life sponsor pledges became a Diamond Event. The Evening of Conservation was mainly about getting the

word out to our district volunteers about soliciting major donors for the Duck Lake Dedication (see future issues of Cattails for this story). The Gull Lake Critical Conservation Club was a huge success, with over \$100,000 in major donor money and pledges for the DU Living Lakes Initiative.



DOD Adam Dehaan exhorts the volunteers about the finding new life sponsors for the Duck Lake Dedication at the Evening of Conservation.



The Anderson Family Boathouse was a unique setting for a DU event with many classic boats, artwork, and exotic mounts.



DU Minnesota Manager of Conservation, Jon Schneider, gets ready to give his talk at the Critical Conservation Club.

**The Brainerd
Spring Event
Trifecta
resulted in two
Diamond
Events!**



Adam Dehaan presents Candy and Todd Berghuis with their Life Sponsor Plaque and accepted their Diamond Life Sponsor pledge at the Gull Lake Critical Conservation Club event.

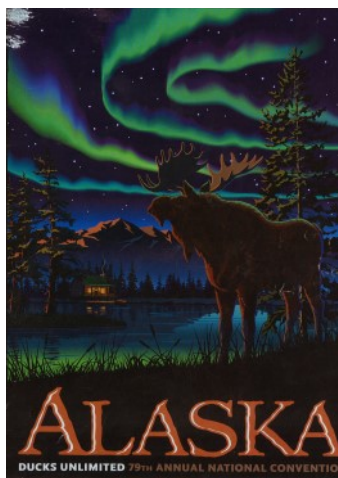


The Brainerd Chapter leadership team helping at the Critical Conservation Club event, included Treasurer Aaron Peterson (left), Area Co-Chairs, Jason Johnson and Jake Huser.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DU NATIONAL CONVENTION

The DU national convention was held in Anchorage, AK from June 1 through June 5, 2016.



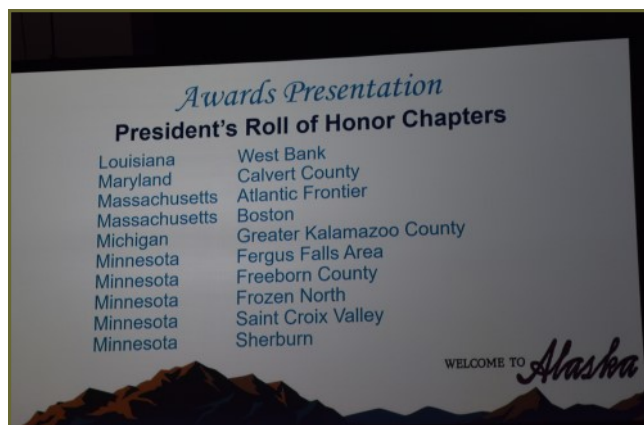
One of the interesting things about being in Alaska was the local ducks at the park are mainly lesser scaup. This pair, along with several other pairs, were in Margaret Egan Sullivan Park right off Coastal Trail bike path in Anchorage.



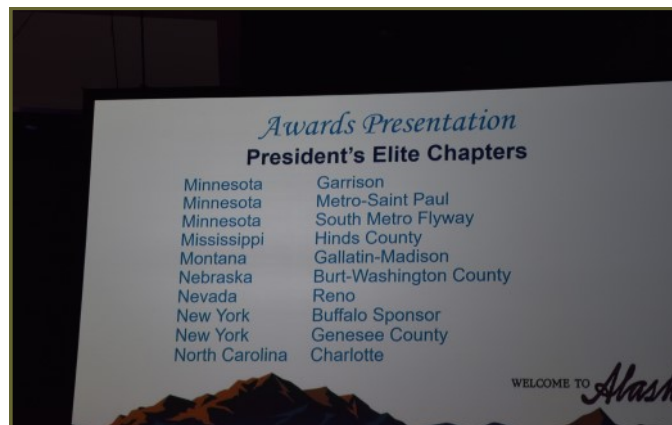
Bemidji State University made the Ducks University Sweet 16 last year as shown at the DU Annual Meeting Awards Presentation.



The Gustavus Adolphus collegiate chapter came in right behind BSU in the Ducks University Sweet 16 competition.



MN DU was also well represented in the Presidents Roll of Honor Chapters with five committees making the list.



The Presidents Elite Chapters were also well represented, with three Minnesota chapters, lead by the Garrison Chapter.



MINNESOTANS AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION



Here are all or nearly all the Minnesotans at the National Convention Gala Banquet (note the mountains with snow as the backdrop).



John and Donna Pittenger were honored at the DU Annual Meeting (above).



Flyway Vice President, Dave Flink, and his lovely wife, Shari, accept their plaque from CEO Dale Hall and President Paul Bonderson for completing their Benefactor pledge.



**Over 30
Minnesotans
Attended the
National
Convention**



State Chair, Brian Ross, couldn't resist hamming it up with caribou antlers on the DU Denali National Park tour.



MN State Chair Elect, Ruth Hoefs, and Ron Pomije try to get into the Christmas spirit at the Barry Glacier on the 26 Glaciers Tour. I am sure it was Ron's idea of course.



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Cattails



You are Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited is the world's largest non-profit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 12 million acres, thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.



Members of the state campaign committee recently celebrated Minnesota's major gift accomplishments. Jim Demgen was recently presented a hand-carved decoy at the National Convention for being named as a Top 10 State Campaign Chairman. Adam DeHaan was recognized this past year as the Director of Development of the Year for Ducks Unlimited. Left to right. Bottom Row: Bill Aldinger, Win Mitchell, Andrew Limmer, 2nd row: Adam DeHaan, Jim Demgen. Third row: Gordon Winstanley, Kyle Mommson, Don Ford, Doug Hartke. Back row: Scott Christensen, Kyle Thaemlitz, John Marks, Patrick Patterson.



Official Newsletter of Minnesota Ducks Unlimited

