

MINNESOTA

2019 STATE CONSERVATION REPORT



HUBBARD & WHEELER LAKES Kandiyohi County

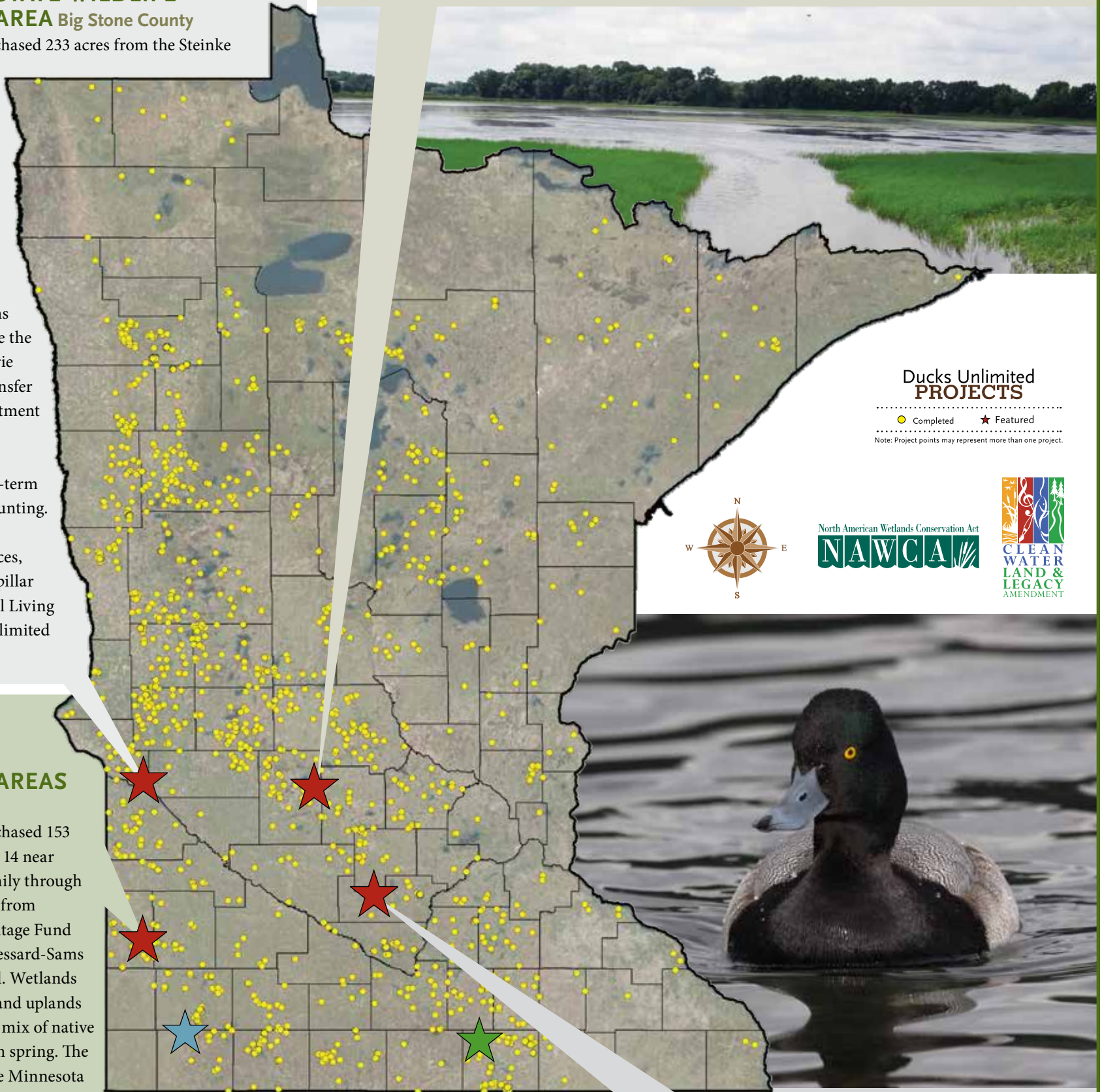
Ducks Unlimited has enhanced the 295-acre Hubbard and Wheeler Lakes east of Willmar. These shallow lakes were previously degraded by invasive carp and turbid conditions which prevented quality waterfowl habitat. Ducks Unlimited engineered and installed water-control structures which allow the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District to temporarily lower water levels to remove carp and enhance aquatic ecology. The work was funded through a 2014 state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, and a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant. Philanthropic supporters include the Strehlow Family Fund, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Flint Hills Resources, Covia Corporation, Caterpillar Foundation and individual Living Lakes Initiative Ducks Unlimited Major Sponsors.

LAC QUI PARLE STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA Big Stone County

Ducks Unlimited has purchased 233 acres from the Steinke family on the north side of Marsh Lake west of Appleton through a 2018 state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Ducks Unlimited will survey and design wetland restorations on the land in 2019, restore the land to wetlands and prairie grassland in 2020, and transfer it to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in the wildlife management area for long-term management and public hunting. Philanthropic supporters include Flint Hills Resources, Covia Corporation, Caterpillar Foundation and individual Living Lakes Initiative Ducks Unlimited Major Sponsors.

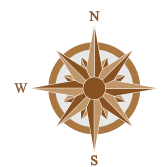
TYLER, DISCORS STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS Lincoln County

Ducks Unlimited has purchased 153 acres along State Highway 14 near Tyler from the Goehle family through a 2017 state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Wetlands were restored in fall 2018 and uplands will be seeded to a diverse mix of native prairie grasses and forbs in spring. The land was transferred to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in the Tyler and Discors State Wildlife Management Areas for long-term management and public hunting. Philanthropic supporters include Flint Hills Resources, Covia Corporation, Caterpillar Foundation and individual Living Lakes Initiative Ducks Unlimited Major Sponsors.



Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

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



INDIAN LAKE STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA Sibley County

Ducks Unlimited has purchased three parcels totaling 261 acres from willing-seller private landowners through a 2017 state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. These included the 8-acre Peterson Tract, the 62-acre Muchow II Tract and 191-acre Woods Tract. Ducks Unlimited will restore wetlands and diverse prairie grassland on each parcel by 2020 and transfer them to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in the wildlife management area for long-term management and public hunting. Philanthropic supporters include the Van Sloun Foundation, Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation, Gaylord Game Protective League, Conservation Partners of America, Flint Hills Resources, Covia Corporation, Caterpillar Foundation and individual Living Lakes Initiative Ducks Unlimited Major Sponsors.

★ MASSIVE RESTORATION COULD DOUBLE DUCKS IN NEW PUBLIC WILDLIFE AREA

Waterfowl flying over southern Minnesota have an additional square mile of prime prairie and wetland habitat to rest, feed and nest following a three-year conservation effort.

The restoration of the Swessinger Wildlife Management Area Jones Tract began in 2015, when Ducks Unlimited purchased the 640-acre section in Nobles County with a state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund, as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

Large expanses of uninterrupted habitat provide the greatest habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. Once the land was secured, Ducks Unlimited engineered solutions that made the landscape resemble prairie life before humans altered it.

"In a landscape where one percent of prairie and 10 percent of wetlands remain, we must work strategically to protect land that will provide the biggest bang for our ducks," said Kassy Dumke, Ducks Unlimited biologist in Minnesota.

This project brings the bang: 37 wetlands eventually restored or enhanced, totaling 89 acres; 25 acres of floodplain restored; 10 acres of wet meadow restored; and 3,000 feet of stream channel restored. More than 100 species of native forbs and grasses were planted on 504 acres including in restored wetlands and wetland fringe areas.

The final number is most pleasing to waterfowlers: The estimated number of breeding ducks in the area will grow between 11 and 20 duck pairs per square mile to more than 40 duck pairs per square mile. This will help meet the goals of the Minnesota's Long-range Duck Recovery Plan.



★ DU HELPS WITH REBIRTH OF FREEBORN LAKE

Fluorescent green water, choked with algae. Scarce wildlife. Little to no vegetation.

Since 1909, Freeborn Lake in southern Minnesota was struggling to survive. That was the year the outlet of this 2,222-acre shallow lake was dammed to control flooding, prevent drought-like conditions in the lake and promote farming downstream.

The dam succeeded in holding water and supporting new agriculture, but an unintended consequence was a stagnant lake with water levels unable to naturally fluctuate with wet and dry seasons. The lake lost oxygen, plants died, invasive carp took over and water quality diminished.

"Vegetation is the basis for clean water. Without it, what we had was water the color of green pea soup," said John Lindstrom, Ducks Unlimited biologist in Minnesota.

The lake has a strong hunting heritage, but one that has suffered throughout the years as water quality decreased, said Jeanine Vorland, area wildlife manager for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Owatonna Area.

Freeborn County leaders turned to Ducks Unlimited for a solution in 2014 and for the first time in more than 100 years, the lake is becoming a clean, healthy body of water for ducks and residents.

The answer was replacing the aging, failing dam with a modern water-control structure, said Jim Streifel, Ducks Unlimited's manager of engineering services and lead engineer on the project. The new structure enables the Minnesota DNR to replicate the natural flooding and drying of the shallow lake. Those cycles encourage vegetation growth while killing off invasive fish during the winter months.

The design also includes a fish barrier, which prevents invasive fish from entering the lake, destroying vegetation and resuspending bottom nutrients.

The project was funded in large part through a 2014 Minnesota state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Also funding the project are Freeborn County and a grant recommended by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council.

LOOKING AHEAD

- DU will enhance shallow Timm's Lake in Yellow Medicine County and Ward Lake in Sibley County, enhance wetlands on Redhead Slough Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) in Grant County and at Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Becker County by constructing new water control structures and fish barriers.
- DU will restore wetlands on existing public lands including Orange WPA in Douglas County, and Long Lake WPA and Cottonwood Lake WPA in Cottonwood County, Fish Lake WPA in Jackson County, Buffalo Lake WPA in Murray County, and Rooney Run Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Martin County.
- DU will continue to acquire lands with restorable wetlands adjacent to existing state WMA in the prairie pothole region of southwest Minnesota.
- DU will also begin a new partnership to purchase and restore prairie and wetland habitat conservation easements on private land and transfer them to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for perpetual protection in west-central Minnesota counties.
- DU will continue to help fund the Minnesota DNR's annual management of 100 wild rice lake outlets to keep them free-flowing and clear of beaver dams and other debris to enhance wild rice habitat.

MINNESOTA BY THE NUMBERS

2018

- 20 projects
- 23,920 acres conserved

HISTORICAL

- 246,335 acres conserved
- \$94,314,730 invested

For more information visit www.ducks.org/minnesota

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For more information visit us online at www.ducks.org/minnesota

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



GREAT LAKES & ATLANTIC REGION

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