



THE WINGBEAT

DUCKS
UNLIMITED

NEBRASKA DUCKS UNLIMITED NEWSLETTER

NEWS & INFORMATION FOR DUCKS UNLIMITED MEMBERS

EARLY SPRING 2019

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Memphis, TN 38120

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2019 Nebraska State Convention

Kyle Hildebrand

We need your help in meeting our goals for the 2019 State Convention!
Here's how you can help:

1. Attend the event. Bring your family or a friend. This is #1 on the list for a reason!
2. Encourage your chapter members and fellow chapter volunteers to attend.
3. Help us identify any companies who might wish to sponsor some or all of the event this year and next. We have many different sponsorship opportunities including venues to display merchandise and/or advertise. It doesn't need to be limited to outdoor activities related companies. It can be a win-win for everyone.
4. Donate a local outing from your chapter. It could be a guided trip like a hunt, fishing trip, airboat tour, canoeing or tubing adventure, or local lodging, sporting event, or something else. It doesn't matter if it's a one-day outing without any meals/lodging or a multi-day outing with meals/lodging/open bar, or anything in between. This is a way to put habitat on the ground and promote the uniqueness of your local area and chapter.
5. Help us in getting donated items to include in our live or silent auction. Everything is welcome.
6. Join the 2019 State Convention Committee. The planning is going on now, and I'd love for you to be a part of it. We welcome new ideas and ways to introduce others to the convention.



Please contact Kyle Hildebrand at
khilde78@gmail.com or (402) 301-6768.
Your assistance and participation is appreciated.

Check out pages 4 & 5 for more
State Convention Information and Registration form!

State Chairman Report

Rick Leth

Wow, here it is December, 2018, and I am writing my last article as the Nebraska State Chairman of Ducks Unlimited. I have thought quite often about the last year and a half and my travels around the state helping support the DU cause. As I have heard my predecessors say, it never ceases to amaze me the level of passion our local committees have in planning and executing our plan to meet the DU mission of putting habitat on the ground for future generations. I would like to thank all of our volunteers and members who serve for what you do. I know that I will treasure my time spent representing all of the volunteers of this great state. I have made many friendships during my 40 + years as a volunteer in Ducks Unlimited and will cherish them for many years to come.

Nebraska is doing well in the effort to raise funds for habitat. We are one of the leaders in the DU world and this year is no exception. We are on the way to another record fund raising year and look forward to the National Convention in Hawaii where Nebraska will stand out as a leader once again. If you want to have a great time and help represent Nebraska at the convention, please go on the website ducks.org for more information about the 82nd National Ducks Unlimited Convention to be held in Hawaii May 29th thru June 2nd 2019.

This year's State Convention will be held in Grand Island once again. This will be the last year of a three year commitment in Grand Island. The State DU Convention is a great time for both adults and the kids. The date has been changed from April to February 22nd and 23rd. This is our time to celebrate our accomplishments and learn more about the mission of Ducks Unlimited around the country and across North America. Babysitters will be provided Friday and Saturday night so mom and dad can have a little fun with the grownups.

Recruiting is a big deal for us in meeting our goals and is the reason for our success and growth in Nebraska DU, so I would encourage all of our members to consider joining your local area committee as a volunteer. You will definitely find it rewarding and will make new friendships that will last a lifetime. If you do not have a chapter in your area, contact me and I will be glad to help you get one started.

This spring is full of events all across Nebraska so I would encourage you to attend your local event and maybe even pencil in another event close by to help support the ducks. Go on ducks.org and select your state (Nebraska) for the date, location, and time of the next fundraising event near you.

Last, but not least, thank you for allowing me to represent you in this great organization. It has been a great honor and experience to serve at this level. Rest assured, one of the best volunteers I know and respect will be taking over for me in July. Mike Dudzinski, a dedicated volunteer, will take the reins and lead us to another great two years with DU.

Marsh Keepers Conservation Celebration

Clay Rogers, Senior Region 2 Vice President,
Ducks Unlimited

There is an exciting event coming to Nebraska Ducks Unlimited. On Thursday, August 29, 2019, Nebraska DU will host the Marsh Keepers Conservation Celebration. The Marsh Keepers Celebration is all about honoring and celebrating Nebraska Ducks Unlimited and those DU Volunteers who have made Nebraska Ducks Unlimited what it is today.

The Marsh Keepers Celebration will recognize those Nebraska DU Volunteers with more than twenty years of service, including special recognition of those Nebraska DU Volunteers with 25, 30, and 35 years of volunteer service to Ducks Unlimited. Each Nebraska DU Volunteer will receive a custom designed DU Volunteer Pin from DU, Inc.; and let me tell you there are a bunch

of you out there!!! In addition to recognizing the long-term service of Nebraska Volunteers to Ducks Unlimited, the Marsh Keepers Celebration will pay special tribute to its past Nebraska State DU State Chairman as well as former Nebraska Regional Directors, B. J. Rose, Joe Hyland and Jim Hurt. The Marsh Keepers Celebration will also recognize the Nebraska DU Artists that have done so much to contribute to the success of Nebraska Ducks Unlimited over the years. Finally, the Marsh Keepers Conservation Celebration will culminate with awarding the Nebraska Conservation Award to several individuals and organizations that have contributed to conservation in Nebraska. All those honored will be permanently recognized with the appropriate cairn at a Nebraska DU wetlands project at a site yet to be determined.

Here are the details on the
Marsh Keepers Conservation Celebration:

Date: Thursday, August 29, 2019

Where: Mahoney State Park Pavilion

Time: Cocktails 5:00 p.m. Dinner to Follow

If you are interested in assisting and helping organize the Marsh Keepers Celebration, please contact any of the following persons to volunteer:

Ron Thorngren, Chairman:

(ronthorngren@hotmail.com)

Steve Wilson: (swilson@ducks.org)

Pat Baughman: (pbaughman@ducks.org)

Greg Silverberg: (gregg.silverberg@gmail.com)

Clay Rogers (crogers@smithslusky.com)

HERE IS THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR ALL OF YOU NEBRASKA DU VOLUNTEERS. SAVE THE DATE because you are going to want to be there for the biggest DU Event of all. It will be an evening to remember for the ages. Be a part of Nebraska DU History!



Volunteering with Ducks Unlimited

Jeff Heidelbauer

Ducks Unlimited is as successful as it is because it is a volunteer run organization. That is how DU is able to direct over 80% of all funds raised annually to its conservation mission. The majority of the money raised for DU 's conservation work is raised by volunteers. Volunteers set the course for DU and manage it through 17 national committees and the Board of Directors. These men and women volunteers are a very diverse group but all share a passion to leave the world a better place.

Volunteering for Ducks Unlimited can be a very rewarding experience. A volunteer career with DU typically starts by volunteering to be on a local committee. The local committees plan fund raising banquets and other events. They sell tickets for the event, solicit underwriting and merchandise donations and help run the event. Local committee members typically fulfill various task leader positions culminating with Area Chairman of the local committee. Many volunteers decide to pursue more intensive and comprehensive DU volunteer duties and become Zone Chair (helping guide several local chapters) and District Chair (helping guide several Zones within the state). Some volunteers will aspire to fill State-wide roles including being a member of a committee that helps determine DU activities within the state - such as the State Public Policy or State Campaign Committees. A few volunteers will decide to pursue a two year state leadership roles such as Treasurer, State Chair-elect (manages the State Council), and State Chair. After serving as State Chair, many volunteers begin to participate in the DU National Committees. The more you are willing to invest in DU, the higher you can go in the organization, all the way to President and Chairman of the Board. DU is truly a volunteer organization.

I have been a volunteer with DU for 43 years. I have held most of the positions there are at the local chapter level and many of the State level positions, including State Chairman for three years. I am currently on three of the National Committees, the Board of Directors for DU Inc. (US) and the Board of Directors for DUMAC (Mexico). I am also one of the Regional Vice Presidents and work with four states (SD, ND, WY, and NE) to help them manage their fund-raising programs and leadership progression plans. It has been like a second career for me, one that has been much more fun than my first career. There is a saying in DU that "you join DU for the Cause and stay for the People". I can assure you that this is true. I have made many great friends all across the country who share my passion for conservation of natural resources, particularly for waterfowl. I have been able to see the very significant success of DU all across North America for the 81 years of DU existence and feel very good about having been able to do my part to help make it happen.

If you are not a DU volunteer it is never too late to start. Attend a DU banquet or a volunteer recruitment event in your area and volunteer. Find these events on the DU web site, www.ducks.org. Select your state and go to local events. If you are a DU volunteer please be aware that there is a lot more to DU than just the local chapters. After helping to make your local chapter successful, you can help your state succeed as well. It is important that the National Committees have representation from our region going forward, so check out how you can participate. It is up to us, as volunteers, to keep DU on track to conserve, restore, and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl, other wildlife, and people.

Nebraska Ducks Unlimited History Introduction

Kevin Holthaus

As a new effort a compilation of the history of Ducks Unlimited in the State of Nebraska is currently underway. A document for Kansas Ducks Unlimited is being used as a template.

The Nebraska DU History is not well documented before 1970 and reliance on the memory of older volunteers is being pursued. Unfortunately this only goes back about 50 years. The author is presently in his 40th year of service, so records before this date and reconstruction of this data is a test of his memory as well as that of that other senior volunteers. Reliance on the records from the National Organization is limited due to not having records of the earlier years. Brenda Suspenzi of the National organization has proven to be invaluable for reconstruction of the dates for State Chairmen and Nebraska members, as well as Nebraska DU volunteers who have served in DU National leadership roles.

Below is a summary of some of the efforts to date:

A brief history of the beginning of Ducks Unlimited at the National Level is being included to provide the basis for the beginning of Nebraska DU history. Nebraska DU was formed in 1938; however the exact date could not be located, other than a guess of June 23, 1938. This could not be located by National either.

A history of the State Chairmen and their dates of service has been compiled back to 1969 with the help of Paul Floresch (deceased) through Mary Lou Floresch, who had Paul's records, as well as Brenda Suspenzi at National.

Prior to 1990 their term of the State Chairmen was five years but was changed to two years in 1990. A list of State Chairmen beginning in 1969 is included below chronologically without the dates of service which shall be reported in the completed document:

John Desmond (1969)
Ray Kopecky
Jim Ernst
Gary Schubert
Mike McNair
Jerry Dolson
Joe Herrod
Charles "Doc" Blaha
Tim Root
Ron Thorngren
Don Cox
Terry Galloway
Paul Floersch
Lance Lang
Clay Rogers
Frank Wolff
Vince Urban
Kelen Fortcamp
Jason Christiansen
Gregg Silverburg
Rick Leth (present)



Any reader of this summary who has more information or knows of any corrections needing to be made may contact me either via email at greenhead90@gmail.com or at (402) 681-5089.

Future updates will include the history of:
Nebraska Volunteers serving in National Level volunteer positions
Nebraska Regional Directors, including pictures



2019 Nebraska State Convention

Friday February 22- Saturday February 23

Registration online at: www.ducks.org/nebraska/events

or

Registration

Couple Weekend Registration	\$140	Adult 1 _____
Adult Weekend Registration	\$75	Adult 2 _____
Adult Friday Evening Only	\$40	Address _____
Adult Saturday Only	\$45	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Greenwing Friday Evening (6-11pm)	\$15	Greenwing 1 _____ Age _____
Greenwing Saturday Morning	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Eve. <input type="checkbox"/> Sat Morn. <input type="checkbox"/> Sat. Eve.
Greenwing Saturday Evening	\$15	Greenwing 2 _____ Age _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Eve. <input type="checkbox"/> Sat Morn. <input type="checkbox"/> Sat. Eve.
		Greenwing 3 _____ Age _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Eve. <input type="checkbox"/> Sat Morn. <input type="checkbox"/> Sat. Eve.

Return Registration form to:
 Kyle Hildebrand
 12149 S. 218th Street
 Gretna, NE 68028
 Khilde78@gmail.com

Chapter Affiliation _____

Friday February 22nd

- 3pm Hotel Check-in Begins
- 4-8 pm Registration Opens
- 6pm-11pm Greenwing (Youth Activities)
- 6pm Cocktails, Silent Auction
- 7pm Buffet Dinner
- 8-11pm Entertainment
- 10:30pm Hospitality Room Opens

Saturday February 23rd

- 7:30AM – Noon Registration
- 8:00 – Noon Greenwing Activities
- 8:00 – 11am Bloody May Bar
- 8:30 – 11am Information Sessions
- 11:30 – 1pm Awards Buffet Luncheon
- 1:30 – 4:00pm Greenwing Activities
- 4:00 – 6:30pm Conservation Open House
- 6:00 – 11pm Greenwing Evening Activities
- 6:30 – 7:00pm Cocktail Reception
- 7:00pm Dinner
- 8:00pm Presentations & Auction
- 10:30pm hospitality Room Opens

Hotel Information

Borders Inn and Suites
 333 Ramada Road
 Grand Island, NE 68801

DU Group Rate is \$109.00 / room by February 4th. Check-in time 4pm, Check out time noon. For room availability at the Border's Inn and Suites Contact: PHONE (308) 384-5150. Reservations after February 4th are subject to availability and standard rates.



Again, this year the Saturday morning information session will follow a panel discussion format with an independent moderator and Q&A for each topic. Each panel will include 3-6 different speakers who will add their insight and personal perspective on topic discussions.



Watch for Convention updates online at www.ducks.org/nebraska/events

2019 Nebraska State Convention

Kyle Hildebrand

For me, I know how it happened. It was at the original State fairgrounds in Lincoln, Nebraska, in August 1984 or was it 1985? As I walked with my parents through the grounds, I felt like I was moving agonizingly slow. I couldn't wait until I got to the display I'd heard so much about...the one that would make this day worth it (besides the 12,000 calories of interesting treats and superfluous handouts).

As we meandered around in the 100-degree heat, we stopped by every implement dealer, home improvement display and what seemed to be about 10,000 buildings full of children's arts, crafts and show sheep on display. I filled my hand-out bag with every free trinket that I could get my hands on and remember being impressed with my day's haul of junk. (Thirty some years later, I can only imagine what my parents were thinking of my fine collection of pamphlets, handouts and trinkets.)

Finally, we made to the Game and Parks Commission's display. There it was! An aquarium, all sorts of outdoor-related literature and, most importantly, the "real" shooting gallery I'd heard about from my school pals. Somewhere before or after it was my turn to shoot, I was collecting more "stuff" to fill my bag and someone asked if I wanted to sign-up to get a magazine in the mail. You bet, I thought to myself (imagine fist pumps in excitement). I was always looking for ways to get something in the mail back then...how times have changed! I'm sure I was thinking to myself, this attraction was turning out even better than I imagined. I filled out the little green card and handed it to the attendant who handed me a stack of literature and stickers in return which I put in my "goodie" bag before moving on to the next flashy fair display. I was officially a Greenwing, whatever that was...

That free handout was my first Ducks Unlimited magazine. From the very first glance at the inside front cover, I was hooked. Month after month, I read each publication from cover to cover. I studied every picture and imagined all the great places where they must have been taken. With every read I thought about the adventures I would have someday. I envisioned how fantastic it must be to hunt real ducks over decoys. It was classy. It was rugged. It required more than just luck to be successful. It genuinely made me want to be a duck hunter.

Fast forward from that 100-degree August day to today, and my passion for ducks and duck hunting has only increased a hundredfold. I've hunted in many different countries, in over a dozen U.S. states and on several continents. There isn't a single day when I don't think about hunting waterfowl, waterfowl gear or planning my next field adventure. It's a part of who I am. The feeling I experience when afield is something I want future generations to experience. For me, conserving this resource has become a real priority and exactly why I became a DU volunteer.

I had no idea how impactful being a local DU volunteer would have on me and my life. I've met my closest friends, hunting partners and other likeminded folks through my DU volunteering. It is more than just a grassroots way to support the conservation mission I believe in, but a way to meet others across my state who shared my thoughts and passions for waterfowling. A day rarely goes by where I don't talk with or see one of the friends I met through DU. Being involved has introduced me to a network of hunters, landowners, business owners, community leaders and conservationists I would have never been fortunate enough to have met otherwise. In the end, it doesn't really matter what year it happened...what does matter is the impact it has had on my life.

One of the greatest parts of our Nebraska DU family is the camaraderie that continually grows with each chapter get together. Our annual State Convention tradition is even better. It's an opportunity to expand your network of DU friends to people all across the state. The new acquaintances become lasting ones, the stories and laughs are many, and the cocktails are plentiful. The entire event is as enjoyable for a whole family with young children as it is for a group of long-time chapter volunteers getting away for an out-of-town weekend. It's a fact that the DU members and volunteers who have attended the convention typically come back year after year.

This year's convention is February 22 and 23 in Grand Island at the Borders Inn and our last year in Grand Island before moving to Lincoln in 2020. It begins on Friday evening and concludes Saturday evening. All meals except breakfasts are included in your registration. For those who stay in the convention center hotel, breakfasts are included in your room rate, so you won't need to drive anywhere once you're there. There are kids' Greenwing activities (including child care, meals, crafts, games, free raffles and much more). There are also plenty of adult social activities in the hospitality room (aka cocktails and appetizers) after each day's events.

This is OUR convention and OUR statewide event to celebrate what Nebraska's DU family has accomplished together. I encourage you to join us for a great time. Trust me, if you attend this year and get involved, I'm confident you'll be back next year with a couple of friends in tow. So, just like my journey started by signing up for something I'd never done before, I encourage you to sign up for the State Convention if you haven't already. The impact will be lasting, and you won't be disappointed. Besides, it's February. What else do you have to do?

East Nebraska Update

Steve Wilson, Nebraska East Region Director

Fall has come and gone, and I am sitting in the warm office writing this during a winter snow storm sweeping across the state. 30-40 mph winds with a bit of snow is enough to encourage me to stay in the office. My son and his friends trudged out to see if the birds are flying, which reminded me that passion is sometimes replaced with what may be considered wisdom! There is a point in your hunting life when you realize you don't hate 'em that bad... The boys apparently believe I'm just getting soft. As you get older, the things that bring joy in outdoor pursuits seems to change focus. As our organization grows, I find myself with less time to spend in the field, so I have to make choices on what is important to me as I plan my days off.

Earlier this fall I found myself with a free afternoon I planned to spend in a tree with my bow. I find this to be a place of quiet and solitude which can heal the soul. As I arrived at my in-law's farm, the kids were getting home from school and my two nephews charged across the farm yard to find out what I was up to. They are 5 and 8-year-old boys... The age where everything is fun and worry free and your uncle in camo with a bow and sharp sticks piques your curiosity. My oldest nephew reminded me that I had promised to let him sit in a tree with me and "help" me get a big deer. I had promised him, and I am a man of my word. I told him to go ask his Dad and make sure he got his chores done first. I watched him fly into the house screaming at the top of his lungs... "DAD... Uncle Steve needs me to go hunting with him... where is my stuff!" He then flew back out of the house at mach one yelling to me that he could go. He proceeded to feed dogs, horses, chickens and finish the rest of his chores in record time. I chuckled to myself as I watched this little human tornado and remember thinking "There goes the solitude." We headed out for our great adventure after he bundled up in camo with his mom's boots on because mysteriously his hunting boots from last year no longer fit. I assured him that the deer did not care if he had on blue, fur topped boots. More important to be warm I said. On the walk out to the creek line we talked about being quiet and checking the wind, etc. I assured him

that I wanted him to love hunting, so if he got bored or cold that we would head home. This was his hunt and we would be done when he made the call. He indicated that he was tough and could handle the cold and he sure wasn't going to get bored... I got him in the stand and secured his harness to the tree and got comfortable for the sit. I must admit that I was pretty excited to get to share one of my passions with a young man that is sure to be a long-time hunting buddy. We passed the time with him pointing out every Boone and Crockett squirrel within sight. As evening approached I noticed he was kicking his feet on the stand. I asked him if his feet were cold. Nope, I'm tough. I grabbed some hand warmers and offered to put them in his boots. He indicated that that would be ok if it would make me feel better... I assured him it would make me feel better. He finally spotted a doe moving through the corn behind us across the creek. The excitement was high. He asked if I had a clean shot... No, I don't think I can make the 110-yard shot through the corn with my bow! We'll have to wait for them to move closer. Of course, the old gal headed the other way... We saw more deer of in the distance, but nothing working the creek line. I noticed he was getting cold and asked him if he was ready to go. No, I'm tough, but you seem a little cold Uncle Steve... We can leave if you want to go warm up. I took the clue and we started to pack up right at deer-thirty. As we were heading back to the house, I got an excited re-hash of how cool the hunt was. I have to say that although I was looking forward to peace and quiet, what I got that afternoon healed the soul. The sparkle in his eye and the excitement of the "great adventure" was way better than what I had planned. The reason for this story is to make the point that our rewards in the outdoors can be gained by the joy of others.



Our hunting numbers are shrinking slightly every year. It may only be one percent or less, but over the next 30-50 years that is a decline of 30 to 50% of the hunting population. Conservation has always been dependent on the hunting population so if we see a decline in hunters, we will surely see a decline in habitat across North

America. The only way we will curb this trend is to get new folks in the outdoors. Although youth activities are a great part of that solution, you may want to think about getting more adult hunters out in the field with you, as that will have an impact on that person's family or future family. Ask a buddy from work or take out your neighbor kid. Take out your niece or nephew... it doesn't matter who, just make the ask! I ask that you consider the future of our heritage and get somebody, anybody, hooked on the great outdoors and our hunting heritage.

I would like to encourage all of you to help make 2019 a year to remember as you dedicate yourself to your family and your passion for outdoor pursuits. Please remember to introduce new participants to share in your passion. This means introducing new friends to our sport, conservation and the hunting heritage. This includes youth hunts and mentoring, but also should include introducing new adults to the sport as well. Keep in mind that the fastest growing segment of the shooting sports and hunting activities is ladies! This could also include some folks you know that used to hunt, but for whatever reason has not been able to be in the outdoors. We all need to realize that we need to actively recruit new folks to outdoor related activities if we want to see our wonderful heritage continue on into the future.

Please look in this issue for information on the upcoming State Convention. If you have never attended, you are missing out. Convention is a great celebration of all our members and volunteers from across the state. Convention is a family-oriented weekend, so bring the kids and enjoy time with your fellow DU family members. I look forward to seeing you in Grand Island in February.

I am really looking forward to the rest of our spring events and hope to see all of you face to face at one of our local events in your area. It is great to spend some time with like minded folks and celebrate the heritage of waterfowling and habitat conservation in the great state of Nebraska. Please bring a new member to an event this year. Whether it is a youngster, or a life long hunting buddy, recruiting new members has been the key to our success. I would also ask that you consider volunteering on your local chapter. All of our chapters need new volunteers and would welcome the help to meet our habitat mission. Thank you all for what you do for the ducks! Spread the word!

A legacy to last a lifetime - DU Major Donor Dedication, April 27th, 2019

Terry Kostinec

Wetlands provide benefits for both wildlife and people by filtering drinking water, recharging groundwater, preventing flooding, protecting coasts from hurricanes and by reconnecting people with nature. With your support the fight to preserve this precious resource will continue so that future generations - your children and grandchildren - can enjoy the benefits and recreational opportunities that wetlands provide. Conservation brings together people from all walks of life. Everyone's "why" is different, but the end goal is the same for us all - wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. You are making that possible.

As an organization, we have successfully surpassed the ambitious fundraising goal of 2 Billion dollars for our "Rescue Our Wetlands" campaign. Over the past 7 years, many passionate DU supporters all across Nebraska stepped up to make a difference by supporting our national and regional conservation efforts as a major donor.

To celebrate this exciting accomplishment, DU will be conducting a Major Donor project dedication on April 27, 2019. All Nebraska major donors making a new pledge during the campaign will be recognized on a permanent cairn erected adjacent to a DU project on the Desoto National Wildlife Refuge. New Greenwing Legacy members will also be recognized that day on a cairn at the same location.

Donors will be receiving dedication invitations in the coming weeks. For more information please contact Campaign Chairman Jason Christiansen, j_s_christiansen@hotmail.com (402) 306-3383 or Director of Development Terry Kostinec, tkostinec@ducks.org (605) 760-5791



Rainwater Basin Revolving Land Properties For Sale

John Denton

As part of DU's Revolving Lands program where we purchase a property through our sister organization, Wetlands America Trust, Inc. (WAT), restore the wetlands on the property, protect the property with a perpetual conservation easement, and then sell the property with the sale proceeds reinvested into the Revolving Lands fund for additional land purchases, DU (WAT) is selling a ¼ section Rainwater Basin property in Phelps County approximately 4 miles east of Bertrand, Nebraska. This is a grassland property set up for grazing with a recently restored wetland and is protected by a perpetual "Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Wetlands Reserve Easement with Reserved Grazing Rights". The Reserved Grazing Rights reserved make it easier to work with NRCS provisions as they relate to grazing of the WRE. It was used by a large number of teal and other ducks during the early season.

NE1/4, Section 2, Township 6 North, Range 20 West, Phelps County. Asking \$368,000, ~\$2,300/ac.

We are also selling a 113-acre grassland tract set up for grazing in Fillmore County east of the town of Ohioa that is also recently restored and is protected by a perpetual "NRCS WRE with Reserved Grazing Rights". The photo shows the wetland being used by teal shortly after restoration this September.

E1/2 NW1/4 and W1/2 W1/2 NE1/4 of Section 7, Township 5 North, Range 1 West, except for railroad ROW, Fillmore County. Asking \$260,000, ~\$2,300/ac.

Please contact John Denton with Ducks Unlimited with any inquiries at jdenton@ducks.org or (308) 384-2788.



Fillmore County Revolving Property



Phelps County Revolving Property

Nebraska Conservation Highlights

John Denton

Conservation staff have been busy completing projects and securing funding for habitat projects. We are working on two Revolving Land Acquisitions (Phelps County, Polk County) and one US. Fish and Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) Roundout acquisition (Clay County), each 160 acres. As is standard, when the one property is transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a contribution will be made into the Tax Endowment Fund held by the Nebraska Community Foundation to offset loss in county tax income.

Six Revolving Land properties are being perpetually protected via Natural Resource Conservation Services Wetland Reserve Easements. Some will be for sale in the near future (see Rainwater Basin Revolving Land Properties For Sale article in this issue of the Wingbeat).

Over one dozen private land (including DU Revolving lands) perpetual conservation easement and restoration projects were completed and are underway on the Central Platte River, North Platte River and Rainwater Basin. Public land projects on public lands we anticipate to be completed prior to July 1, 2019 include, Funk WPA surface water delivery infrastructure in Phelps County, 3 Wildlife Management Area wetland projects in Howard County (Harold W. Anderson WMA, Leonard Koziol WMA, Marsh Wren WPA), Wood Duck WMA wetland restoration and enhancement in Stanton County, Peru Bottoms WMA well and pump in Nemaha County, Arcadia Diversion Dam WMA wetland restoration in Custer County, Valentine National Wildlife Refuge carp control wetland restoration in Cherry County, and Memphis Lake State Recreation Area wetland restoration in Saunders County to name a few.

We currently administer nine North American Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants (\$8.6 Million), four Small NAWCA (\$390k), nine Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) grants (\$1.1 million) and numerous partner agreements for additional funding for our conservation work in Nebraska. We plan to write an additional three Standard NAWCA grant proposals prior to August 2019 as other NAWCA grants are closed, and we recently submitted four NET proposals for nearly \$1 million that we hope to receive project funding in April pending scoring. It is very helpful when you as constituents relay the importance of NAWCA to your federal representatives and NET to your state representatives. They are crucial to DU's conservation mission in Nebraska.

Overall, your conservation staff is in on pace to blow past our acreage and grant fund-raising goals for the year once again thanks to hard work and dedication. In addition to our passion for the resource, that extra effort is driven by a feeling of gratitude and debt to our volunteers, sponsors, members, and donors that support our Nebraska wetland conservation cause with their hard-earned money and time. Thank you for your support and conservation passion.

Dan and Patty Kreitman Pay it Forward



UNL Chapter volunteer presenting a Major Donor plaque and group picture from the Third Term leadership conference to Dan Kreitman (C).

Terry Kostinec

Dan Kreitman was introduced to Ducks Unlimited by his high school English teacher who took him to a DU banquet in the 1970s. Now he and his wife, Patty, are doing the same for other youth.

"In today's world, we need to embrace our youth and introduce them to the outdoors. We must recruit them and retain them, otherwise we are going to lose our outdoors heritage," Dan said.

The Nebraska couple were recently honored by the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) DU chapter for annually sponsoring six UNL students to go to DU's "Third Term" leadership conference for young people. They also have dedicated a major gift to underwrite the conference.

Dan's commitment to youth was strengthened when he went to the UNL chapter banquet.

"I saw more energy at that banquet than I have seen in years. These college students are amazing. I knew our gift was well-invested," Dan said. "Some of them did not grow up in a hunting family. One such student started a chapter for another conservation organization. The same thing happens in DU."

He says he may have never gotten involved in DU without his teacher, Paul Pack's, involvement. The two started a DU chapter in Ceresco, Nebraska, in 1983. His mentor, who passed away four years ago, became his best friend. Dan has also gotten to know some of the students he has sponsored.

"One of their fathers invited me to come out and sit in a duck blind with them. I don't know of a better place to learn about people than sitting together in a blind," he said.

Patty and Dan also made a challenge gift to sponsor the Green Wings Puddler magazine that was matched by a California foundation.

Dan is now a Nebraska Game and Parks commissioner. The Kreitman's gifts will give the next generation the opportunity to learn about and embrace the challenge of conserving the great outdoors.



DU Working to Ensure Water Availability in the Rainwater Basin

Terry Kostinec

Historically, the Rainwater Basin comprised 200,000 acres of wetlands with roughly 90,000 acres (45%) filled with water in any given year. These are mostly shallow wetlands or “playas” that hold water for only part of the year. Unfortunately, only about 20 percent of the Rainwater Basin wetlands remain today. And of these 40,000 acres left, only about 8,500 acres of these wetlands (<10% of historic conditions) are flooded annually.

DU and our partners have developed a long-range strategic habitat protection, restoration and water plan for the Rainwater Basin. To date, DU and our partners have invested tens of millions of dollars in this plan for wetland protection, restoration, and pumping infrastructure. The plan focuses on four primary strategies on both public (state and federally-owned) and private wetlands: 1. Fee-title acquisition (public lands) or enrollment in voluntary conservation programs (private lands) 2. Wetland restoration of acquired/enrolled acres 3. Watershed restoration to maximize run-off into the wetlands and 4. Annual management and maintenance of high quality wetlands through supplemental pumping.

The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partnership has determined that almost 18,000 acres of Rainwater Basin wetlands need to have water in them annually to meet these habitat objectives. Therefore, we need to restore an additional 23,000 acres of which 5,000 acres will be wet annually and pump another 4,500 acres of existing wetlands each year to reach our ultimate goals for this vital landscape. At their current funding levels, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which own the majority of the remaining functional Rainwater Basin wetlands, are unable to ensure this level of water delivery on an annual basis to their wetlands. To close this water deficit, DU and our partners have established a dedicated, interest-accruing Rainwater Basin Water Development Fund with a goal of raising \$7 million, which based on our calculations would be sufficient to meet the needs of migratory waterfowl in perpetuity. Interest generated from the Rainwater Basin Water Development Fund will immediately fund the important pumping of water and the development of new wells, and infrastructure to distribute the water to wetlands in the Rainwater Basin. Roughly 85 to 90% of all pumping will occur on lands open to the public (i.e. Nebraska Game and Parks Wildlife Management Areas and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Areas), which will provide significant public benefits and positive local economic impacts.

This is truly a ground-breaking and monumental endeavor to ensure sufficient habitat is available for the millions of birds that migrate through the Rainwater Basin of Nebraska each year. Please contact Terry Kostinec at (605) 760-5791 or tkostinec@ducks.org to inquire about how you can support this great Nebraska conservation effort.



WESTERN NEBRASKA SPRING 2019

Pat Baughman - Senior Regional Director
December 2018

We’re getting down to the last days of the Low Plains duck season. With all of the ice and snow, it’s probably all over except the shouting. It was another dry summer with not much water in the Rainwater Basins until we had those storms Labor Day weekend, and a really weird October with cold and snow. It sure sent the early migrants through in a hurry. Seems like we have had some strange migrations over the past few years. A push of birds, then they sit when mild weather sets in. Everyone loves those stale birds. Remarkable birds those Canadas and mallards. Give them open water and a food source, and they’ll stay as far north as possible. Reports from acquaintances in the Dakotas were that they had some of the best hunting in years. What’s great for some is not good for others. Things have a way of working themselves out in the long run though. Think of all of the years that the north has frozen up before they even got started with their waterfowl season.

Let’s be prepared for when the birds come through. Habitat is the key. We have to provide for the needs of the birds for the entire year. The critical nesting habitat that you as a DU member are helping secure in the Missouri Coteau is just the beginning. The best of the best breeding habitat won’t last forever unless we as DU members make sure that the grasslands remain. With your help DU is actively securing those critical regions. Your money goes North, and ducks come South.

Once the ducks come south DU also provides for the birds. DU is well into a plan that will see over \$17 million spent in Nebraska during the next 10 years. The conservation plan identifies 3 critical regions; the entire Platte River including those portions in Colorado and Wyoming; the Rainwater Basins, and the Sandhills. Our banquet fundraising system will provide the much needed seed money to begin securing this habitat. DU will use the capital that is raised and leverage it with other partners such as NRCS, Nebraska Environmental Trust, FWS, Nebraska Game and Parks to name a few. This restoration work also greatly benefits the birds during their spring migration. The Nebraska habitat is important to those hens in spring. A great habitat base allows the birds to rebuild body fat and reserves to continue northward to the breeding grounds, and lay large clutches of eggs. And so the cycle begins anew.

DU members should be very proud of our accomplishments and what we do both as individuals and as a group. Fall dinner committees in the Western Region truly heard the call and stepped up to raise the seed money for DU programs. A wrap-up on the fall events shows that many local committees raised more funds this year than at any of their other previous events. That’s truly remarkable in a time of really tough economic times. Good work by all, but this is no time to sit back on our laurels. 2019 brings more needs and challenges to Ducks Unlimited. Your support and volunteerism are important to our mission, and meeting our conservation goals. Attend your local event and one in another town this spring. If you’re not already serving on a local committee, please think about becoming a committee member. Thank you for your past and future support of DU. We’re making a difference that future generations will enjoy. I want my personal legacy to be that I helped keep waterfowl winging the flyway twice a year. Won’t you please join me in this endeavor?