



DUCKS  
UNLIMITED

# THE WINGBEAT

NEBRASKA DUCKS UNLIMITED NEWSLETTER

NEWS & INFORMATION FOR DUCKS UNLIMITED MEMBERS

WINTER 2019



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## 2020 Nebraska State DU Convention

Kyle Hildebrand

It's that time of year again... fall hunting is over, football is wrapped up, the weather isn't ideal for much of anything, and spring won't be here for a while. If you're like most of us, this time of year is a bit boring. The great thing our DU family has to bridge the gap between the seasons is that it's convention time – a time for DU volunteers and members to come together and celebrate our many accomplishments and have fun together. If you've attended before, you know how much fun it is. If you haven't attended before, you owe it to yourself and family to break up the monotony of the season. It will be a homecoming for all DU members and volunteers throughout the state and a celebration of the 82nd anniversary of Ducks Unlimited working hard in Nebraska.

Our convention has a big change this year, as it is moving to Lincoln. We are holding it this year at the Graduate Hotel downtown on February 21-22. This is one of the coolest venues in Lincoln and our state convention team has been working very hard to come up with many fun activities to take part in. If you have never been to a convention before this is one you do not want to miss. The weekend will be full of fun and exciting events and

activities. Friday night will start off with dinner and entertainment activities, and Saturday morning will have information sessions and guest speakers to learn about Nebraska DU's conservation updates. During the Saturday awards luncheon, past and present leaders will be recognized for their leadership and continually taking Nebraska to one of the top states in the country. Local Chapters and volunteers will be recognized for their outstanding contributions in 2019. Saturday afternoon will have a poker run to several local breweries, and finally culminating in the Saturday evening conservation reception, dinner and auction. The much-improved hospitality suites will be hosted by individual chapters on Friday and Saturday nights. The event is perfect for families, and there is a fantastic program for children of all ages, including complimentary childcare. Every child who attends will win a prize and go home with a smile.

Make plans to attend this year's event and renew acquaintances, meet new friends, and enjoy the celebration of the success of Ducks Unlimited! Additional information on the convention with a full description of the weekend plans, activities, and highlights is included in this newsletter. Make plans to attend and enjoy the fun and celebration.

Mail in your registration form on page 5 today!

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# East Nebraska Update



**Steve Wilson**  
Nebraska East Region Director

Another year has come to a close... 2019 is put to bed! Every year when writing for the spring edition of the Wingbeat, I find myself reflecting on the year gone past. 2019 was full of struggles for most communities in Nebraska. The year began with heavy wet late spring snows and moved into non-stop rain through the spring resulting in some of the worst flooding we have seen in the past 100 years, resulting in damage across the state. In working across the eastern part of the state, I got to witness the strength of our local communities and the resolve of Nebraskans as the rebuilding began and continued through the summer months and continues to this day. As I look back, I am still amazed that all of our chapters held their scheduled events through the spring and continuing into the fall event season. This is truly a testament to the strength of our communities. In total we only had

one event that was pushed back into June to give our chapters time to take care of their neighbors.

As I travelled this fall going to committee meetings and dinner events, I could still see signs of damage that have yet to be fixed and fields that were left unplanted this year. Please take the time to love your neighbors and help when you can... that is Nebraska. Through all of our challenges, our chapters and members banded together and had another record year of fundraising at our fall events. Truly an amazing feat. Thank you all for being good stewards of an amazing State and its natural treasures.

As we move into 2020, 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 2020 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 have not been able to be in the outdoors. We all need to realize that we must actively recruit new folks to outdoor related activities

if we want to see our wonderful heritage continue into the future. Check out the Take'em Hunting campaign from Nebraska Game & Parks for a fun way to introduce a new person to the outdoors.

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 Lincoln, February 21-22, at the Graduate Hotel. See the registration page in this issue of the Wingbeat for more details.

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!

## Platte River Conservation Easement Program Continues Going Strong

**John Denton, Manager of Conservation Programs**

The Platte River is one of the most important spring stopover locations for migratory waterbirds in the world. The vast majority of the continental Sandhill Crane population utilizes the river and its associated habitats during spring migration and is a boon to the economy via tourism for many communities in Nebraska. Additionally, ducks and geese, primarily Canada geese, thrive year-round on the river and especially during fall and spring migration with many now spending their entire winter here. Ducks Unlimited has long recognized the importance of this river to waterfowl and other species. Given that over 97% of land in Nebraska is privately-owned, conservation easements allow us to work with private landowners to ensure that there will continue to be habitat in perpetuity since public lands alone

cannot sustain migrating waterfowl populations. These conservation easements are willingly donated or partially donated by private landowners, and we utilize those donations as required match to complete wetland restoration projects on their land and also public properties via the North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant Program and the Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant Program. For donating their conservation rights to the land, the landowner also has the potential of a tax deduction using their donated or partially donated conservation easement amount. In rare cases, where the habitat is deemed especially critical such as some areas of the Central Platte River, we will secure funding to purchase the conservation easement at full price. In all cases, the landowner maintains their hunting rights and, in many cases, their agricultural rights on the property

so long as the agricultural habitat is not a detriment to waterfowl habitat and the wetlands are maintained as is. While working on public lands alone is very beneficial, it would just not accomplish nearly as much conservation without also working on private lands. Via conservation easements, we strive to protect river frontage and restore off-channel sloughs for waterfowl and other waterbirds for their crucial spring migration. In December, 2019 we acquired 4 partially donated easements in Lincoln and Scotts Bluff Counties securing 603 acres of additional habitat along the Platte River. This brings the total we have directly secured via DU-held or other entity held conservation easements in the state to over 15,000 acres across over 60 tracts. Please contact John Denton at [jdenton@ducks.org](mailto:jdenton@ducks.org) or (308)258-4682 if you would like more information on conservation easements.



# Western Nebraska



**Pat Baughman - Senior Regional Director**

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 a very wet 2019 with abundant water in the Rainwater Basins, and a weird October with cold and snow. It sure sent the early migrants through in a hurry. As you all know,

cold weather in the Dakotas and Canada sent a lot of geese and ducks south in a much timelier manner. Remarkable birds those Canadas and mallards. Give them open water and a food source, and they'll stay as far north as possible. Cover that food source with snow and the birds head south in a hurry. 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 been warm, and we further south have no birds until the season has closed.

Let's always be prepared for when the birds come through. Habitat is the key. We must 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 has just completed a plan that saw over \$17 million spent in Nebraska during the past 10 years. The conservation plan identified 3 critical regions. The entire Platte River; including those portions in Colorado and Wyoming; the Rainwater Basins, and the Sandhills. Our banquet fundraising system provided the much-needed seed money to begin securing this habitat. DU used the capital that is raised and leveraged it with other partners such as NRCS,

Nebraska Environmental Trust, FWS, and 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 rest on our laurels. 2020 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?



DU's only member in Greece is a dedicated waterfowler, but even he was surprised by this greylag goose. Pictured is Vagelis Lazarou and his buddy hunting in the beautiful scenery of Greece, along with Vagelis' well-trained Chesapeake Bay retriever Thor. Vagelis serves with the Athens police force and has been a Ducks Unlimited member for several years.





# DU Field Experiences: Learning and Engagement Opportunities



## Terry Kostinec, Director of Development

Connecting your passion and dreams, that is what DU field experiences can provide DU supporters. Each year DU major donors engage in learning experiences that provide more meaning to their philanthropic sup-

port of DU mission. These field experiences might include a walk in the marsh, a stroll across the prairie or joining other kindred spirits in a hunting blind on a frosty morning.

“Our supporters want to learn how they can connect their passion for the outdoors and healthy landscapes

to their dreams of passing on a conservation legacy to the next generation” said Terry Kostinec, Director of Development for Nebraska “DU field experiences provides our most passionate supporters educational opportunities that enhances their conservation support”.



Following a morning teal hunt, DU supporters Nick Cusick and Mark Pinkerton join DU biologist Tim Horst on a tour of the Rainwater Basin region in central Nebraska.





## 2020 Nebraska State Convention

Friday February 21- Saturday February 22

Registration online at: [www.ducks.org/nebraska/events](http://www.ducks.org/nebraska/events)

or

### Registration

2020 Registration Type	Before 1/31/2020	After 2/1/2020
Couple Weekend	\$160	\$190
Individual Weekend	\$85	\$100
Individual Friday	\$45	\$56
Individual Saturday	\$45	\$56
Greenwing age 12 and under Weekend	\$40	\$40
Greenwing age 13 and over Weekend	\$45	\$45
University Chapter Member Weekend	\$50	\$50

Adult 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Adult 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Greenwing(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_



The Graduate Lincoln  
141 North 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508



### Hotel Information

DU Group Rate is \$104.00. **Must be booked by January 31<sup>st</sup>** to get this rate. Rooms booked after 1/31/20 are \$132.00 per night and subject to availability. Check in 4pm, check out 11am. For reservations, please call

(402) 475-4011 and mention the DU group rate. More information at [www.graduatehotels.com/lincoln](http://www.graduatehotels.com/lincoln)

### Friday February 21<sup>st</sup>

**4pm** Hotel Check-in Begins

**4-8pm** Registration is open

**6-11pm** Greenwing Room (youth activities)

**7pm** Dinner

**8-10:30pm** Entertainment Activities

**10:30** Hospitality Suites Open

### Saturday February 22<sup>nd</sup>

**7:30am** Registration Opens

**8:00am-4:00pm** Greenwing Activities

**8:30-11:30am** Information Session

**8:00-noon** Chapter Training (select)

**11:30-1:00pm** Awards Luncheon

**4:00-6:30pm** Conservation Open House

**4:00-11:00pm** Greenwing Room Open

**6:30-7:00pm** Cocktail Reception

**7:00pm** Dinner

**8:00pm** Presentation and Auction

**10:30** Hospitality Suites Open

We need your help in helping meet our goals for the 2020 State Convention! Here's how you can help:

1. Attend the event. Bring your family or a friend. This in #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 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.

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

*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](http://www.ducks.org/nebraska/events)

# Ten Performance Tips for Retrievers

Follow this expert advice to help your duck dog reach his full potential in the field

By Tom Davis, DU Magazine Retrievers Columnist



World-class athletes need top-flight conditioning, training, and nutrition in order to compete at the highest levels. The same is true of sporting dogs. This was the message heard last July by many of the nation's top breeders, trainers,

and dog writers who attended Purina's Sporting Dog Summit at Purina Farms near St. Louis, Missouri.

Titled "Achieving a Performance Edge," the two-day program featured tutorials on canine conditioning, training, nutrition, and sports medicine from some of the leading experts in these fields. Much of what these professionals had to say applies not only to elite field-trialing dogs but also to everyday hunting retrievers.

Here are 10 expert tips that will help your duck dog achieve peak performance during the hunting season.

## 1. Check Bloodlines When Selecting a Puppy

Dogs are not all created equal. For this reason, it's important to make a good choice when selecting a puppy. Dr. James L. Cook, a canine orthopedic surgeon from Missouri, recommends studying a pup's bloodlines for clues about what his health and personality will be like as he matures.

"Always check for orthopedic issues and inherited traits such as intelligence, motivation, behavior, and others," Cook says. "In general, if you can trace characteristics back three generations, there's a very high chance of those same qualities appearing in your puppy. If they're present two generations back, you still have a good chance. That's why it's important to research the pup's ancestral history. If his bloodline has any history of orthopedic problems or behavioral issues, you should probably look for a pup from another line."

## 2. Exercise Caution with Young Retrievers

Conditioning should start early, but Cook cautions retriever owners against overtraining a young dog. "You don't want to do too much too soon, because the musculoskeletal system is not mature until the dog is 10 to 18 months old, depending on the breed," he says. "If you push a dog too quickly, you risk negatively affecting the development of soft tissues such as muscles, tendons, ligaments, and joint capsules. When this happens, the soft tissues cannot keep up with bone growth, and developmental problems occur. Because the growth plates are 'open' in young dogs, they are susceptible to fractures and other damage that can cause abnormal development, pain, and lameness."

As an extra precaution, Cook recommends exercising a younger dog on grass or sand whenever possible to cushion his paws and pads. Try to avoid training on hard surfaces, especially concrete. And if you see any sign that your retriever's energy and enthusiasm are waning,

stop your training for the day. Most training injuries occur when a dog is fatigued.

## 3. Use Swimming for Early Conditioning

Early conditioning exercises should focus on building a puppy's core strength and body awareness. The best way to do this is with swimming, says Dr. Jennell Appel, a Florida veterinarian who specializes in treating soft-tissue injuries in sporting dogs.

"Try to take a pup swimming two or three times per week," Appel says. "Make sure the weather is warm, and let the dog swim for two- to three- minute intervals- no more than 10 minutes total per outing. Put a life vest on him to take away the fear of sinking. This will also help him learn proper swimming technique. Swimming is great for building core strength with minimal impact on the pup's joints."

Appel recommends starting endurance training after your pup's first birthday. Begin with 10-minute slow trots or endurance swims (beside a small boat like a canoe or kayak). Gradually increase training time to 30-minute sessions, once or twice per week.

This is also a good time to include some water sprints in your retriever's training regimen. "Throw a bumper 50 yards away and have the dog swim for it," Appel says. "Do this four to six times per session with one-minute rest intervals in between. You can also have the dog run a few all-out sprints up a hill."

## 4. Feed High-Performance Dog Food Year-Round

When it comes to nutrition, puppies should be fed puppy food that's specially formulated to ensure proper bone and muscle growth. Adult dogs, however, need a high-performance dry dog food with enough protein to build strength and endurance, and not just during hunting season.

"Research with exercising canines has shown it's best to keep a hunting dog on a high-performance food year-round," says Dr. Brian Zanghi, a nutrition researcher for Purina. "Purina Pro Plan Sport formulas with 30/20 and 28/18 ratios of protein and fat are good examples. They keep a dog in better metabolic shape through the off-season, and help get him back in peak condition at the start of the next hunting season."

Performance dog foods provide more calories per cup than regular maintenance foods, which can cause a retriever to pack on the pounds during the off-season, when he's less active. In such cases, Zanghi recommends reducing feeding portions. "If you've been feeding four cups a day during the hunting or field-trial season, you might cut back to perhaps two or two and a half cups per day during the off-season, depending on your dog's ideal weight," he says.

## 5. Offer Pre- and Post-Exercise Nutrition Bars

Feeding nutritional supplement bars to a working retriever is a good way to support exercising muscles at

the start of the day and to refuel a dog's energy reserves at the end. Purina offers two types of sport bars for working dogs. The Pro Plan Sport Prime Bar delivers enriched protein to muscles during hard exercise, and the Pro Plan Sport Refuel Bar is formulated for short-term recovery after strenuous activity.

"You feed a Prime bar 30 minutes before the start of a workout," Zanghi says. "The fast proteins in this bar help keep muscles strong and nourished during exercise. Then feed a Refuel bar, which is high in carbohydrates and protein, within 30 minutes after exercise is over for the day."

These bars can be especially beneficial to retrievers hunting several days in a row. "After a weekend of hard hunting, a dog may be down for the count on Monday. But feeding a dog supplemental nutrition bars will help him make a much faster recovery so he can continue hunting for several successive days," Zanghi adds.

## 6. Include Warmup and Cooldown Exercises

Warming up before exercising and then cooling down afterward isn't just good advice for human athletes. Retrievers also benefit from gradually easing into and out of heavy exercise, says Dr. Arleigh Reynolds, a specialist in canine conditioning and nutrition. Warming up helps a dog "get loose," which can prevent soft-tissue and joint injuries. Cooling down decreases muscle soreness and stiffness following exertion.

"Imagine how you'd feel rolling out of bed and immediately having to run a 100-yard sprint," Reynolds says. "You'd be stiff. Your muscles would be tight. You'd be primed for a muscle tear or an injury to a tendon or ligament. It's the same with hunting dogs. Warming them up before they work goes a long way toward keeping them healthy. And cooling them down helps retrievers recover faster and prevents muscle tightness and lactic acid buildup."

Warmups and cool-downs can be as simple as 10 to 15 minutes of light exercise before and after a period of physical exertion. A brisk walk or a slow run can work wonders in keeping a dog healthy.

## 7. Conduct Tailgate Exams Before and After Hunting

The physical demands of hunting can aggravate minor injuries and cause new ones to develop. As a precaution, waterfowlers should conduct a tailgate examination of their retrievers before and after each hunt, Cook says. Such exams take only two to three minutes, and if done consistently can help you notice small changes in your dog's overall health and ability to perform in the field.

"Look for pad cuts and bruises-anything different," Cook says. "A small injury may seem insignificant, but if left untreated, it might lead to other injuries that may be more difficult to heal."

In addition, Cook recommends checking for full range of motion in your retriever's legs by gently flexing





© Tyler Huettenrauch

and extending the joints to see if there's any discomfort. "If a dog shows any pain, take him to a vet for an exam," he says.

"Hopefully the problem will be insignificant and easily treated, but you don't want to take any chances. If the problem is serious and you address it early, you'll come out way ahead in terms of both your dog's health and health-care costs. Tailgate exams are a good example of the old saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

## 8. Keep Your Retriever at a Healthy Weight

Overweight retrievers are susceptible to joint and soft-tissue injuries when hunting or exercising. But how do you know if your retriever can stand to lose a few pounds? "You can't just look at a dog and tell if he's overweight," Reynolds says. "You need to lay hands on him. Run your fingers over his spine. You want to feel just the tips of the vertebrae under the skin. If you have to push through an inch of fat to feel the vertebrae, the dog is overweight. Conversely, he's underweight if the vertebrae are protruding too far out and feel sharp to the touch."

Another way to check a dog for obesity is by feeling his "wing bones," or ilia, which are on either side of the backbone in the pelvic region. "If these areas are flat or mildly indented, his weight is just right. However, if they are rounded over, the dog is too fat, and his caloric intake should be reduced," Reynolds says. Keep in mind that weight should always be taken off slowly to avoid hurting your retriever's energy level and performance.

## 9. Take Precautions When Traveling

Long-distance travel takes your retriever away from his daily space and routine, which can diminish his performance in the field. "To start with, you're interrupting the dog's normal access to water, so you have to take extra measures to keep him hydrated," Reynolds says. "I typically provide 'baited water'—water with a few kibbles added to encourage the dog to drink—in the morning before starting a long drive. Then I will stop every two to four hours to offer more water and to exercise the dog and allow him to relieve himself."

According to Reynolds, traveling retrievers should be

fed only once a day, preferably at night. Single nightly feedings will help optimize a retriever's performance but are not advisable for dogs that are at high risk for stomach bloat or torsion. Always make sure the dog has cooled down completely from a hunt or workout before you feed him.

Other travel precautions include keeping your retriever protected in cold and hot weather. You can start by insulating the dog's crate when transporting him in the back of an open pickup truck in chilly conditions. Placing a pad in the bottom of the crate to help cushion the dog against bumps during travel is also a good idea.

## 10. Look Out for Signs of Injury

"Retrievers are stoic animals," Appel says. "They try to push through pain to keep working. So if you see lameness in your dog, there could be a serious problem developing. Don't put off getting your dog the help he needs."

If injured, a dog will often try to compensate by shifting his weight to other limbs and joints to protect the one that hurts. This can lead to secondary problems if the primary issue isn't treated. A retriever's orthopedic health can go downhill quickly.

For this reason, Appel advises retriever owners to be vigilant. "Signs of lameness in a retriever can be very subtle," she explains. "If you notice any difference in his gait, have him stand facing you, and watch to see if he's standing square or if he's shifting his weight to one side or the other. You can also take a video of the dog walking and trotting both toward you and away, and study the video for any gait discrepancies. If you can shoot video in slow motion, so much the better."

Should you detect lameness in your dog, Appel's recommendation is to seek treatment from your veterinarian, who can refer you to a certified canine rehabilitation specialist, orthopedic surgeon, or physical therapist if necessary.

To receive an electronic version of Purina's 52-page booklet on "Achieving a Performance Edge," send an e-mail request with your name to [purinasportingdog@purina.nestle.com](mailto:purinasportingdog@purina.nestle.com). As a proud partner of Ducks Unlimited, Purina helps support DU's conservation efforts.

# Burt/Washington Co. DU Chapter Carries on the Tradition



Terry Kostinec, Director of Development

Recognized as a DU Presidential Elite chapter in 2018, the Burt/Washington Co. chapter continued its tradition of fundraising excellence and recruiting major donors in 2019. A record crowd attended the annual fundraising event on October 1st. They also recognized several donors that completed their pledges along with new major donor pledges.

"As a chapter, we strive to raise both unrestricted funds to support our organization and major donor gifts that can greatly amplify our conservation programs on the ground," said Jason Christiansen, NE Campaign chairman. "I'm proud of my local chapter, they continue to take their fundraising efforts to new levels impacting the landscape we all enjoy"

Jason also shared that years ago our chapter recognized the importance of annual sponsor memberships and how that is the first step to becoming a major donor. For the past 12 years, our chapter has hosted a sponsor appreciation dinner to thank sponsors and continue to build a relationship and a connection to the importance of supporting conservation. The chapter has set a goal to never have a year where there is not someone pledging a life sponsorship or upgrading their major donor support.







DU donors from across the country who supported a “Cross-Border Challenge” to raise money to honor past DU President Hazard Campbell and conserve prairie habitat in both the US and Canada were on hand for the dedication east of Saska-

toon Canada on October 2nd. Nebraska donors Bruce Lauritzen (far right), Ron Thorngren (4th from right) and DU director of development Terry Kostinec (lower left) all supported the effort.

# More Wetlands = Less Flooding

## John Denton, Manager of Conservation Programs

It is hard to imagine, but the recent flooding that has caused so much hardship and destruction to Nebraskans would have been even worse without intact wetlands or those that have been protected and restored. However, if we had even more wetlands across the landscape, it would have helped greatly to reduce flooding impacts given that we have lost at least 35% of wetlands across Nebraska with some areas, such as the Rainwater Basin having lost 80% or more. Wetlands serve numerous ecosystem functions like filtering out pollutants, which improves water quality and recharges aquifers, but they also function as natural sponges that trap and slowly release surface and flood waters from precipitation events. Wetland vegetation also slows the speed of flood waters and distributes them more slowly over the floodplain. This combined water storage and braking action lowers flood heights and reduces erosion.

The effectiveness of wetlands for flood abatement may vary, depending on the size of the area, type and condition of vegetation, slope, location of the wetland in the flood path and the saturation of wetland soils before flooding, but each wetland acre conserved helps reduce flooding. Wetlands within and downstream of urban areas are particularly valuable, counteracting the greatly increased rate and volume of surface water runoff from pavement and buildings. Protecting and restoring wetlands together with other water retention can often provide the level of flood control otherwise provided by expensive dredging and levees since a one-acre wetland can typically store about three-acre feet of water, or one million gallons. The bottom-land hardwood wetlands along the Mississippi River once stored at least 60 days of floodwater. Now those wetlands only store 12 days’ worth because most have been filled or drained.

In Canada, they lose up to 80 acres of wetlands every day, which is equivalent to 26 supply towers of water going downstream each day. The Mississippi River and Canada have seen their fair share of flooding caused by tiling and draining of wet-

lands. The water must go somewhere, and the people and places at the bottom of the funnel (i.e. watershed) get all the water drained from upstream much faster than in the past, which causes devastating flooding. Their drainage that allows them to farm those wetland acres in both agriculturally-dominated landscapes is causing their neighbor downstream or lower in the watershed to lose their farm and sometimes even their home. This is not dissimilar to what is happening in Nebraska in some locations. However, we know that agriculture and wetlands can and have coexisted, and we will continue to strive for solutions that work for the producer and the wetland to make that happen to hopefully lessen the damaging impacts of flooding in the future.



Butler County Property for Sale

**DU Properties For Sale in the Rainwater Basin –**  
**Excellent Waterfowl, Upland Gamebird, and Grazing/Haying Potential**  
 Kearney County near Axtell, 118.69 acres, \$242,000  
 Fillmore County near Ohiowa, 113.7 acres, \$230,000  
 Phelps County near Bertrand, 156.48 acres, \$320,000  
 Butler County near Rising City, 86.93 acres, \$180,000

Contact Luke Wallace of Whitetail Properties for more information at (402) 340-6187 or [luke.wallace@whitetailproperties.com](mailto:luke.wallace@whitetailproperties.com)