

Great Lakes Ducks Unlimited hails Ohio projects

By John Hageman
Contributing Writer

Port Clinton, Ohio — Staff members of the National (Memphis) and Great Lakes (Ann Arbor) offices of Ducks Unlimited spent a few days in Port Clinton recently at DU's 18th annual Partnership Hunt, an assemblage of private marsh owners, agency employees, and distinguished guests celebrating their annual Ohio accomplishments.

Co-hosting the event were the Ohio Division of Wildlife and the Lake Erie Marsh Association with Mossy Oak, Zink Calls/Avian Decoys, and Community Choice Financial. The Great Lakes region is home to 29% of the U.S. population, 30% of the nation's duck

hunters, and 31% of Ducks Unlimited's members.

DNR Director Mary Mertz and Lake Erie Marsh Association President Rick Nemecek made presentations about their commitments to wetland conservation before several people were recognized for their major donations to DU's conservation efforts. Then, those who signed up to hunt ducks the following morning were given their hunt club assignments.

After many enjoyed a successful morning hunt, the participants took a bus to Toledo Metropark's Howard Marsh Metropark, where its personnel gave an overview of the activities that have occurred there since it opened,

Ohio Division of Wildlife staff summarized last year's waterfowl hunting results, and Kimberly Kaufman, director of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory, testified of the importance of the new site to birdwatchers.

Within the first 10 days of opening, more than 10,000 visitors attended the park, mainly for bird watching in conjunction with the 10th annual Biggest Week in American Birding. Several rare bird species have been sighted there, including sandhill cranes, osprey, black-necked stilts, and hosts of other shorebirds and waterfowl.

All of this and Lake Erie water quality improvements, courtesy of the filtration provided by the restored wetlands, illustrated how much of an impact contributors to Ducks Unlimited conservation efforts can make.

DU is now designing Phase II of the Toledo Metropark's Howard Marsh restoration project. This will add 219 acres of coastal wetlands and 25 acres of upland forest to the 572 acres of restored coastal wetlands that were completed in 2018 at Howard Marsh.

Other Ohio DU projects include reverting the 337-acre Stange Prairie Complex within the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge to allow lake levels to naturally pulse as they did in pre-settlement times.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife's Toussaint Wildlife Area has been the beneficiary of DU efforts since 2015 to replace water control structures and pumps to manage aquatic plants, add fish passage units, and repair exte-

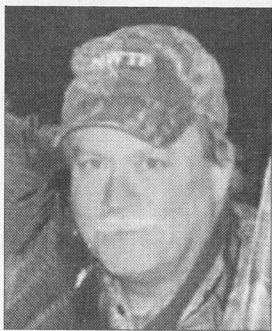


Ohio Division of Wildlife Chief Kendra Wecker, left, presents a check for \$150,000 to David Brakhage, director of operations — Ducks Unlimited Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional office, and Tim Ciine, DU Ohio state chairman.

Photo courtesy Ducks Unlimited

Sounding Board

QUESTION: "How would you rate the deer population in the area where you've hunted this fall?"



Bill Cook
Stow (Summit County)

"Seeing as many if not more deer, including several new, larger bucks in our area of hunting in Noble County."



Barry Coffing

This is an example of DU's partnership using a \$5 million donation from Energy Transfer to conserve over 3,000-acres over four years in Ohio.

At the recognition dinner:

- The MVP Hunt Award was given to the private Zetzer Marsh for its help at the 2018 event;

- Ohio Division of Wildlife Chief Kendra Wecker presented DU with a check for \$150,000 that goes to match other money from DU Inc., DU Canada, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to conserve prairie wetlands and support the North American Waterfowl

Management Plan;

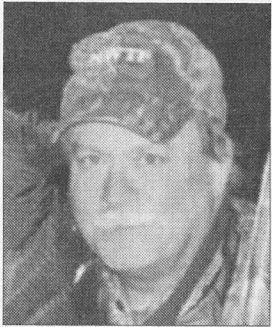
- long-time DU supporter and wetlands advocate Ex Moxley, who passed away this year, was recognized; and

- Gildo Tori, DU's senior director of regional policy, discussed the importance of strong wetlands conservation policies at the state and national levels.

The Partnership Hunt is designed to show what can be accomplished when federal and state agencies, local parks, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and private landowners unite to support wetland restoration, enhancement, and protection.

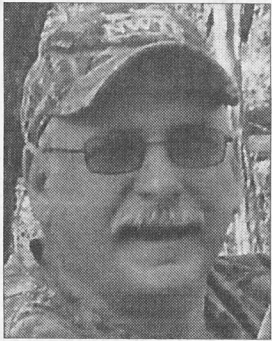


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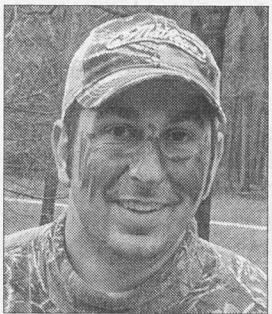
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Stow (Summit County)

"Seeing as many if not more deer, including several new, larger bucks in our area of hunting in Noble County."



Barry Coffing
Fredericktown (Knox County)

"I hunt in Knox County, and on the farms I hunt I would say the population is very good. I've only been out one time where I didn't see deer. I've gotten trail cam pics of some nice bucks, and a pile of does and young bucks."



Nick Mandilakis
Wadsworth (Medina County)

"When I've been out, it looks like the population is stable. From what we lost to car collisions and fair chase hunting, I think (the deer population) is on par or stable in Wadsworth right now."



Troy Conley
Sardinia (Brown County)

"The deer population in my area is good, although I think it was better in 2007-2008. I think coyotes are hurting the population. Trail cam pictures are showing more and more does without fawns each year."

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At Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area, 54 acres of floodplain wetlands were restored adjacent to Green Creek, with 10,000 bare root trees and 1,025 three-gallon container trees and shrubs planted with biodegradable deer-protecting wraps. This was funded by the Division of Wildlife, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and Cargill Deicing Technology/Cleveland Mine Facility.

On October 5, DU was recognized at the dedication of the Andreoff Wildlife Area in Hardin County for contributing \$275,000 toward the \$1.26 million purchase of two parcels of upland prairies, woods, and constructed wetlands totaling 720 acres.

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