

OHIO



2019 STATE CONSERVATION REPORT



OTTAWA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

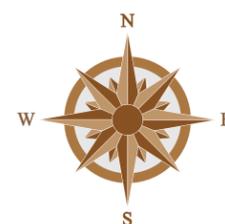
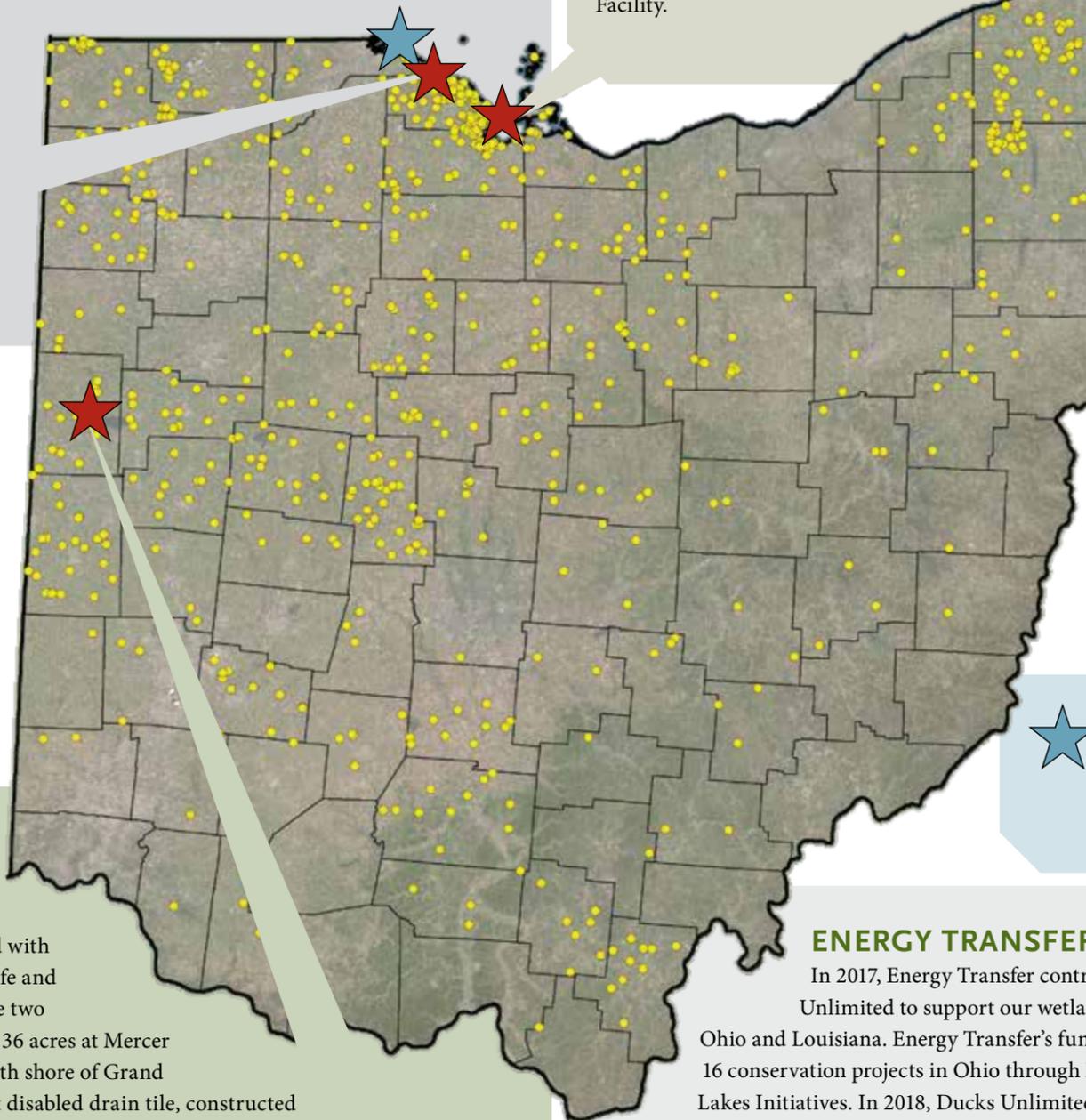
Ottawa County

Lake Erie's southwest coastal region has lost more than 95 percent of its historic wetlands to human development. Birds no longer have these

places to nest or feed during migration. In addition, western Lake Erie is plagued with algal blooms associated with nutrient runoff. To improve the Great Lakes region's ability to support waterfowl and people, Ducks Unlimited purchased two farms from willing sellers and donated them to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion into Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. The 50-acre Weber property was purchased in 2017. The second, the 78-acre Schiller property, was purchased in 2018. Ducks Unlimited will restore the former farm fields to wetlands and associated uplands in 2019. These projects are funded by a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Energy Transfer.

PICKEREL CREEK WILDLIFE AREA Sandusky County

Ducks Unlimited and the Ohio Division of Wildlife (ODOW) restored 54 acres of floodplain wetlands adjacent to Green Creek at Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area. The project included planting 1,025 three-gallon container trees and shrubs and 10,000 bare-root trees. More than twenty species of wildlife-friendly trees and shrubs were planted. The restored property will provide excellent foraging habitat for waterfowl when it floods during migration, particularly in spring. Each of the planted trees and shrubs is protected from browsing by deer and other animals by a biodegradable shelter. Funding came from the ODOW, North American Wetlands Conservation Act and Cargill Deicing Technology - Cleveland Mine Facility.



Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

● Completed ★ Featured

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.

★ CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT
Howard Marsh Metropark
(see back page for full article)

MERCER WILDLIFE AREA

Mercer County

Ducks Unlimited partnered with the Ohio Division of Wildlife and Pheasants Forever to restore two emergent wetlands totaling 36 acres at Mercer Wildlife Area along the south shore of Grand Lake St. Mary's. The project disabled drain tile, constructed earthen levees and installed water-control structures and a pump to restore an agricultural field to wetlands. The new infrastructure provides a reliable source of water and the capacity to manage water levels and vegetation to meet the needs of breeding and migrating waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife. The

restored wetlands also contribute to improved water quality in the adjacent lake which has been plagued by toxic algal blooms. This is the first Ducks Unlimited project at the 1,408-acre Mercer Wildlife Area.



ENERGY TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP

In 2017, Energy Transfer contributed \$5 million to Ducks Unlimited to support our wetland conservation mission in Ohio and Louisiana. Energy Transfer's funding has already supported 16 conservation projects in Ohio through DU's Big Rivers and Great Lakes Initiatives. In 2018, Ducks Unlimited and Energy Transfer made significant progress on several projects, including enhancing a 56-acre wetland at Delaware Wildlife Area, purchasing and transferring two properties to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and completing the first of three phases of restoration at Toussaint Wildlife Area. 2019 will see the completion of several of these projects resulting in more than 1,000 acres of conserved waterfowl habitat.



Toussaint Wildlife Area

★ **Conservation Spotlight:**
HOWARD MARSH METROPARK

Howard Marsh Metropark, a major conservation project designed to immerse people and ducks in Great Lakes wetlands, opened in 2018 in northwest Ohio. The park drew huge crowds in its first few months of operation and new waterfowling opportunities last fall.

Ducks Unlimited, Metroparks of the Toledo Area (MTA), Ohio Division of Wildlife (ODOW) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) created Howard Marsh, MTA's newest Metropark. Since 2013, the partners have worked to restore the 1,000-acre former agricultural land back to wetlands and other habitat to benefit ducks, other fish and wildlife, and provide recreational opportunities. Ducks Unlimited engineered the project.

Visitors can enjoy six miles of dike-top walking trails around the marsh units and a quarter mile of boardwalk through the wetlands. About seven miles of navigable water and two kayak launch docks provide a unique experience for paddlers.

MTA conservatively estimates that 10,000 people visited Howard Marsh in the first 10 days it was open during the Biggest Week in American Birding festival. And for the first time at an MTA-managed Metropark, waterfowl hunting was allowed. Eric Zgodzinski of Port Clinton, Ohio is a volunteer of the Ottawa County Ducks Unlimited chapter.

"Anytime we get the ability to have additional land where people can do some public hunting, the better off we are," he said. "And it goes beyond hunting. We are restoring the land to its natural usage, which is helpful for a multitude of reasons including clean water. Without clean water, we're all going to have issues."

Howard Marsh filters rainwater runoff from surrounding farms and neighborhoods before it reaches Lake Erie, removing nutrients which contribute to algae blooms. The marsh also provides important spawning habitat for fish and breeding & migration stopover habitat for a variety of birds.

Howard Marsh is the largest ever Ducks Unlimited engineering effort in the Great Lakes. The engineering design allows the marsh to withstand 26" of rain in 24 hours. The project was funded by a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant awarded to DU by NOAA, ODOW and MTA.



LOOKING AHEAD

Toussaint Wildlife Area

Ducks Unlimited will continue Phases II and III to restore the entire 125-acre Toussaint Wildlife Area in Ottawa County. Ducks Unlimited, Ohio Division of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act and Energy Transfer are partners and funders. Phase I was completed in 2018.

Land protection

DU has signed purchase agreements with willing sellers to acquire two more Ottawa County farms totaling 75 acres. Once acquired, DU will restore wetlands and uplands and donate the properties to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to become part of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge.

Little Portage Wildlife Area design

DU received a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide engineering design services to upgrade the entire wetland management infrastructure at Little Portage Wildlife Area in Ottawa County.

Private lands wetland restorations

DU continues to partner with Ohio Division of Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish and Wildlife and others to restore wetlands on private land in Ohio. More than 400 acres are projected to be restored during the next two years.

Lake Erie Coastal Wetlands

In 2018, DU received a \$900,000 North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant to work with Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Cleveland Museum of Natural History and other partners in northeast Ohio to protect 450 acres of wetlands. All projects should be completed in 2019.



OHIO BY THE NUMBERS

2018

- 17 projects
- 1,509 acres conserved
- \$3.75 million invested

HISTORICAL

- 90,793 acres conserved
- \$34.8 million invested

For more information visit www.ducks.org/ohio



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

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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