



CONSERVATION GOALS

Looking ahead in 2020 for South Dakota

Conservation fundraising goals in 2020

Ducks Unlimited is a major contributor to the South Dakota State Tactical Plan that was developed by the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture. This plan aims to restore 92,000 acres of grassland and wetland habitats and enhance more than 200,000 acres of cropland per year during a 5-year period. For fiscal year 2020, DU has defined projects in South Dakota that will contribute to these goals.

Wetland restoration and enhancement

DU will restore or enhance 24 wetlands totaling 152 acres on seven different tracts in Aurora, Beadle, Faulk, Hanson and Yankton counties. The cost of these projects is \$335,924 with DU contributing \$94,704 through leveraged philanthropic gifts and grant funding.

Grasslands habitat

Ducks and livestock have similar needs, and improving rangeland is compatible with improving habitat for waterfowl. DU is working with ranchers to restore grassland, providing cost-sharing grazing infrastructure installation and technical assistance. The goal is to convert 200 acres of marginal cropland soils to grassland and enhance 2,500 acres of grassland and wetland habitat. Total cost of this effort is \$150,000. DU will raise \$75,000 in new gifts to match \$75,000 from public grants and private grants.

Regenerative agricultural practices

Incorporating agriculture practices and producers' interests into habitat conservation programs is integral to achieving conservation goals in 2020. DU aims to provide cover crop cost-share, technical assistance and soil health monitoring for producers on 10,000 acres of farmland. Total cost of this effort is \$150,000. DU will raise \$100,000 in donor contributions to complete this effort and match the remainder with public and private funding sources.

Revolving Habitat Program

Financing to transfer the 310-acre Baum property from Wetlands America Trust to Beadle County Conservation District is still needed. The property will be turned into a demonstration farm showcasing restorative agriculture practices that conserve habitat and promote soil health. Ducks Unlimited needs to raise \$550,000 of philanthropic dollars to facilitate this transition.

Habitat protection programs

The need to protect 50,000 acres of grassland and wetland habitat with conservation easements is a goal for DU in South Dakota. The cost of establishing these conservation easements is \$50 million. DU will leverage \$3 million from gifts towards the total cost, combined with \$47 million from partner funds to make this project happen.

CELEBRATING PHILANTHROPY

Former South Dakota state chair uses company match to become a major sponsor

Don Aarstad (pictured right), was one of those lucky kids whose dad had no problem with pulling him out of school when the ducks were flying.

Today, the Watertown, South Dakota man is giving back to the resource just like his father who first took him to Ducks Unlimited events in the early 70s. Don has something his father didn't, a supportive employer to match his contributions.

"I became a Major Sponsor to further a cause I believe in, and it's nice to be with a company that has a charitable heart and helps you to do that kind of thing," he said.

Don's employer, Grainger Inc., is a Fortune 500 industrial supply company that provides staff an exceptional three-to-one match for charitable contributions.

"Many companies want their employees to participate in community and organizational activities," said Terry Kostinec, director of development for South Dakota and Nebraska. "Take a look at what your employer offers. It's a great way to support conservation and accelerate your giving."

Don, a past state chair, says he's impressed that the volunteer DU leadership are all major donors.

While attending a Ducks Unlimited national meeting, he and the man seated next to him struck up a conversation about hunting and fishing, not an unusual happening at a DU event.

What was unusual was when the presenter called out the name of a man who just contributed a million dollars, Aarstad's new buddy paused, stood up and gave a wave. He then sat down and resumed his conversation with Don as if nothing had happened.

"Also, look at what Ducks Unlimited is doing with the money. With DU's efficiency, more than 80 percent is going to conservation work," he said. "That says a lot for the company."



Donor experiences unite DU supporters and landowners



Jim Faulstich taking a break during the hunt to explain the benefits of cover crop rotations and how it benefits both cows and wildlife.

South Dakota Rancher Jim Faulstich hosts an annual pheasant hunt for DU supporters from around the country. Jim provides the hunt for DU major donors who want to learn how their gifts enhance DU's impact on the landscape.

"Ducks Unlimited cannot develop effective conservation programs in South Dakota without working with the landowners on the prairies," said Terry Kostinec, DU director of development for South Dakota. "Our donors want to meet ranchers like Mr. Faulstich so they can understand the needs of the producers and how conservation can complement ranching and farming interests."

DU partners with ranchers to conserve wetland habitats and benefit the producer's bottom line. DU programs that incorporate cattle grazing and planting cover crops to improve soil health are a current priority in South Dakota. Supporters can contribute to this effort through gifts to DU and the Protect Our Prairies Initiative.

CELEBRATING PHILANTHROPY

Diamond Life Sponsor hosts Evening of Conservation

Bryan Hammer hosted a Ducks Unlimited Evening of Conservation event last spring with 35 DU supporters attending. Guests learned about current conservation issues and how DU is addressing those issues in South Dakota. During the event, Bryan made a new Diamond Life pledge that will support conservation programs in the state.

Evening of Conservation events gather small groups of people together to have conversations about conservation needs in the state and North America. These events create awareness and foster comradery among individuals with the common interest of conserving healthy waterfowl habitats by supporting Ducks Unlimited's work.

*If you are interested in hosting an Evening of Conservation, contact:
Terry Kostinec at 605-760-5791 or tkostinec@ducks.org.*



Terry Kostinec (r) recognizes event host Bryan Hammer for his new major donor pledge.



South Dakota donors who supported a cross-border challenge to honor former DU President Hazard Campbell and conserve prairie habitat in the U.S. and Canada were on hand for the dedication east of Saskatoon, Canada on October 2nd.

Representing South Dakota: Don Aarstad, Brian Pellish, Rick Berg, Jeff Malone and Terry Kostinec.

DU is thankful for our South Dakota donors who made new pledges or gifts in 2019

Chip & Jennifer Carlson, III
John & Cheryl Dale
Matt Fenske
Sonny & Suzanne Hagseth
Jeff Heidelbauer
& Rebecca J. McGee

Jeffrey Malone
Jerry & Christine Moench
Tom & Kris Reaves
Darrel & Wendy Reinke
Jeffrey J. Scherschligt
James C. and Edward Spies

Dr. Mark E. & Paula Stotz
Doug & Julie Block
Trent Dowling
Jeffrey P. Hallem
John H. Jackson
Doug & Carol Jones

Terry J. Sutton
Bruce W. Toay
Glenda & David West, MD
Michael & Brenda Thuringer
Dan & Heidi Stoick