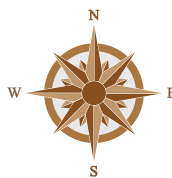
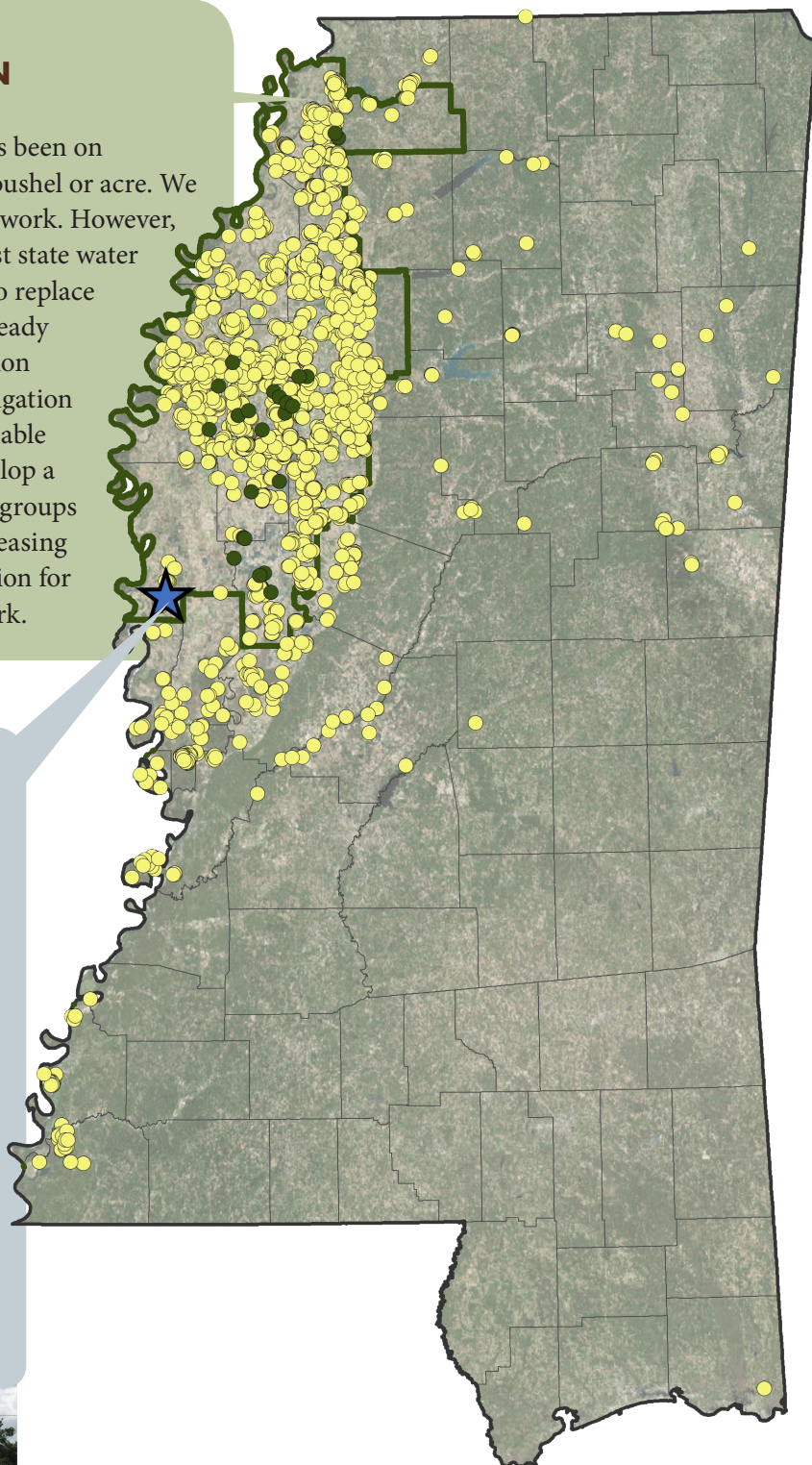


RICE STEWARDSHIP: SURFACE WATER CONSERVATION

Much of our water conservation focus to date has been on efficiencies – that is, using less irrigation water per bushel or acre. We call it “crop per drop,” and we plan to continue this work. However, the time is right to begin the second strategy in most state water plans, capturing and using available surface water to replace groundwater withdrawals. Rice Stewardship has already secured \$5 million in Natural Resources Conservation Service support to deliver our first surface water irrigation projects with plans to have additional sign-ups available in 2020. An important aspect of this work is to develop a decision support tool to evaluate potential farms or groups of farms for surface water irrigation projects of increasing size and impact. Many thanks to Walmart Foundation for support of this important on-farm conservation work.

YAZOO NWR: COX PONDS UNIT

DU worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to convert 230 acres of abandoned catfish ponds on Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge into moist-soil and flooded agricultural habitat for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species. Through the installation of 10 new water-control structures and two water wells and the removal of interior levees, DU improved water delivery capabilities to facilitate habitat management. Funding was provided in part by a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, and partners included DU, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Wetlands America Trust, Mississippi Land Trust, and conservation easement donors.



Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

- ★ Featured Projects
- Rice Projects
- Completed Projects
- Rice Stewardship Area

EVENT FUNDRAISING UPDATE & VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Volunteer fundraisers are the heartbeat of Ducks Unlimited, and Mississippi has some of the best. The Magnolia State boasts more than 10,000 members, including almost 1,100 dedicated volunteers who hosted 85 events in 2018, raising almost \$1.2 million to support DU's conservation mission.

Valerie Cameron grew up in a large family that loves to hunt, fish, and camp, so when she met some Ducks Unlimited members in 2015, she was immediately interested in becoming involved with DU and supporting their conservation efforts.

"I joined DU in the fall of 2015 and served as a committee member on the Hattiesburg Chapter, serving as Area Chair from 2016-2018," Valerie said. Through my involvement with DU, I have made lifelong friendships working with other volunteers and planning fundraisers."

Valerie is now serving as District Chairman for the South Pines District and assisting with the planning of new events for our state. Her hope is that with the conservation efforts of Ducks Unlimited and its continued partnership projects with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks that future generations will continue to enjoy the great outdoors as much as she does.

"Valerie has been a valuable volunteer for Mississippi DU, and I look forward to working with her for many years to come," said DU Regional Director Tommy Ware. "Her ability to bring new ideas and life to the event system is top notch. She definitely has what it takes to be a MS DU leader."



STATE CAMPAIGN UPDATE & SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

The Mississippi State Campaign Committee secured 11 new Life Sponsors, 11 upgrades and 4 new Feather Society commitments in 2018. They brought in more than \$285,000 in new cash. Clearly, major sponsors in Mississippi are making a difference for the future of wetlands, waterfowl and waterfowl hunting.

Bonnie and Keith Thames of Columbus are two of MSDU's dedicated sponsors. Bonnie found her way to DU in the 1980s when her brother invited she and her first husband to a couples dinner. Keith came into the DU Family after escorting Bonnie to a 2011 major sponsor function in Jackson. In addition to being Heritage, Grand Slam Life, and Gold Feather Society sponsors, the Thames are convention delegates and very active volunteers. There aren't many events in or around Mississippi where you won't find them attending and lending a helping hand.



"There are so many special people that are involved in Ducks Unlimited that we have become close to. We want to support them in their efforts to do good work in their communities," Bonnie explained. "We feel like they would do anything for us and we want them to know that we would do anything for them."

Bonnie is a prime example of the way DU can connect non-hunters to conservation, too. Bonnie went duck hunting for the first time in 2018, more than 30 years after attending her first DU event and becoming a DU supporter.

"You don't have to hunt to believe in the cause," Keith said. "We believe in conservation, in doing something positive for future generations."

MISSISSIPPI BY THE NUMBERS

2018

- **\$1.15 million raised**
- **85 events**
- **5,120 acres conserved FY18**

CUMULATIVE

- **321,615 acres conserved**
- **\$53.8 million invested**

MDWFP's cumulative contributions to DU for habitat conservation in Canada: **\$1,884,119.**

(Information through 1/1/19)

Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

Visit us online at www.ducks.org/mississippi



**SOUTHERN
REGION**