

STATE CONSERVATION REPORT

WYOMING • 2019

As seasons change in Wyoming, we see millions of waterfowl pass through the state during the spring and fall. When the ground thaws, the skies fill with waterfowl beginning their annual migration to the breeding grounds. Wyoming welcomes these long-distance travelers and we greet them with ample food resources and improved wetlands provided by Ducks Unlimited and our partners.

As I reflect on where we have been, I'm proud of our accomplishments in the state during the last four years. With help from our partners and biologists, Tom Peterson and Noelle Smith, Ducks Unlimited increased our wetland conservation footprint in Wyoming. We impacted more than 5,000 acres and invested more than \$1.5 million. DU worked on seven of nine important wetland complexes, as identified by the Wyoming State Conservation Partnership. Most of these wetland complexes overlap with DU's Peaks to Prairies Initiative (www.ducks.org/peakstoprairies).

We continued to grow the program and expand our influence in Wyoming,

and the state was awarded two large North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants that will provide \$2 million for wetland restorations in the western and southeastern parts of the state. In 2019, we will celebrate our successes in Wyoming as the Rescue Our Wetlands campaign concludes. DU, partners and volunteers will hold a dedication for the signature campaign project at Ocean Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Area this summer.

*- Martin Grenier
Manager of Conservation Programs for Wyoming*

Partners leverage strengths for Wyoming wetlands

Water is scarce in Wyoming. The state has lost more than a third of its wetlands. The loss has brought a decrease in water storage, streamflow and quality that has reduced habitat for Wyoming's birds and other wildlife.

Wildlife agencies and organizations saw a need for more capacity and technical expertise. With support from a federal grant and the Wyoming Bird Habitat Conservation Partnership, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD)



Soda Lake in Sublette County is an IWJV partnership project

and Ducks Unlimited developed a wetland program plan. The conservation partnership is leveraging DU's scientific expertise, planning, project management and engineering skills to lead this endeavor.

DU is also sponsoring a full-time employee. Noelle Smith, wetlands specialist with Ducks Unlimited, helps implement the project out of a shared office with WGFD regional staff.



“The joint nature of this effort gives it additional reach and support,” Smith said. “We bring multiple perspectives to the table, which helps guide the program in a way that is responsive to new science, concerns and ideas.”

concerns on the landscape, like drought or water quality. EPA Wetland Program Development grant funding is used to make technical expertise accessible to other agencies, as well as expanding and diversifying the partnership.

Grenier, DU manager of conservation programs in Wyoming. “This grant program is an important catalyst to accelerate the statewide goals and objectives of our individual organizations and integrating groups in the Wyoming Bird Habitat Conservation Partnership.”

“The key to this endeavor is to recognize and leverage the strengths of each organization,” said Martin

- Laurel Anders, Intermountain West Joint Venture, and Noelle Smith, Ducks Unlimited



Wetland at Ocean Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Area

Rescue Our Wetlands signature project completed

Ducks Unlimited will dedicate its Rescue Our Wetlands signature project this year. The history of the Northwest Wetlands at Ocean Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Area seems to have been lost in time. When Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) approached Ducks Unlimited in 2013 to collaborate on this unique project, everyone was excited. Prior to the restoration, the site had six non-functioning levees.

pump and levees. Each of the six wetland cells now have independent water management. Construction crews installed 12 water-control structures, more than 2,300 linear feet of pipe, and moved more than 18,000 cubic yards of dirt. They also installed an underground powerline and a high-capacity pump. The system is a recirculating shallow water wetland the WGFD will manage as a series of seasonal wetlands.

After an initial site survey, the first objective for the partnership was to develop a plan for water management that included a new water rights application and a complex pumping system. This process took more than two years. DU installed a high capacity

“Now that we have reliable water management, the site has everything it needs to produce quality wetland food resources waterfowl seek during spring and fall migration,” said Tom Peterson, DU biologist. “When we filled the wetlands, green-winged teal, mallards,

gadwall and trumpeter swans were quick to move in.”

According to Peterson, the diversity and quantity of wetland plants will increase with the improved management capabilities and provide excellent early season fall hunting opportunities and great spring habitat.

Funding partners for the project included the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Water for Wildlife, WGFD, Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust and Ducks Unlimited donors.

Cheryl Coleman is doing her part for waterfowl habitat

Cheryl Coleman and the Fremont County Ducks Unlimited chapter once promoted their dinner by getting permission to hang 40 DU flags along Riverton, Wyoming’s Main Street.

“The flags got people talking about DU and wondering what they were about. It was a great way to promote the dinner.”

Having attended her first DU event in 2015, she has already become an area chair. She likes working with a team to set and achieve goals. With her help, the Fremont County committee has grown their dinner into one of the most successful fundraising events in Wyoming.

Cheryl understands the value of giving her time to an organization like Ducks Unlimited. She supports DU because she appreciates the efficiency with which DU uses the grassroots money she helps raise. Ducks Unlimited leverages grassroots money with grant funding and partner support to do the most good for habitat conservation.

“I don’t have extra money to donate in large amounts, but I have skills with event planning and can contribute that way,” Cheryl said. “It takes everyone from sponsors who can give more, to the average person who can volunteer time and help raise money.”

Cheryl and her husband Andrew recently made separate legacy commitments to DU through a planned gift from their estates and have achieved the gold level in the Feather Society. She says they joined Ducks Unlimited’s Feather Society so their assets can benefit DU when they no longer need them.

“When I see ducks and geese flying, I know I play a part in giving them habitat,” she said.



Freemont County DU volunteer, Tiffany Shroyer, helping to hang DU flags on main street.



Cheryl Coleman hunting with her dog Ruddy.

Ducks Unlimited partners with Laramie on Monolith Ranch Meadows restoration

The Monolith Ranch was acquired by the City of Laramie in the early 1980s as a long-term investment to secure additional water. The 11,788-acre ranch is south of Laramie and contains a 2,000-acre parcel known as the Monolith Ranch Meadows, composed of irrigated meadows and pasture. In 2016, the Laramie Ranch Advisory Committee asked Ducks Unlimited to assist them with a restoration project on the Monolith Ranch Meadows that focused on repairing the delapidated Goforth Reservoir Dam.

During the past three years, DU and the City of Laramie collaborated on project planning while building a partnership to help fund the restoration work. Ducks Unlimited and partners plan to build five earthen embankments on the Goode Meadow, a section of the Monolith Ranch Meadows, that will be managed as seasonal shallow water wetlands. Repairs and upgrades to the Goforth Dam will also improve water management on the property.

“The improved water management of the meadows will support important food resources, such as seeds and aquatic invertebrates, for migratory birds,” said Tom Peterson, Ducks Unlimited biologist in Wyoming.

The Monolith Ranch Meadows partnership includes the City of Laramie, Laramie Rivers Conservation District, North

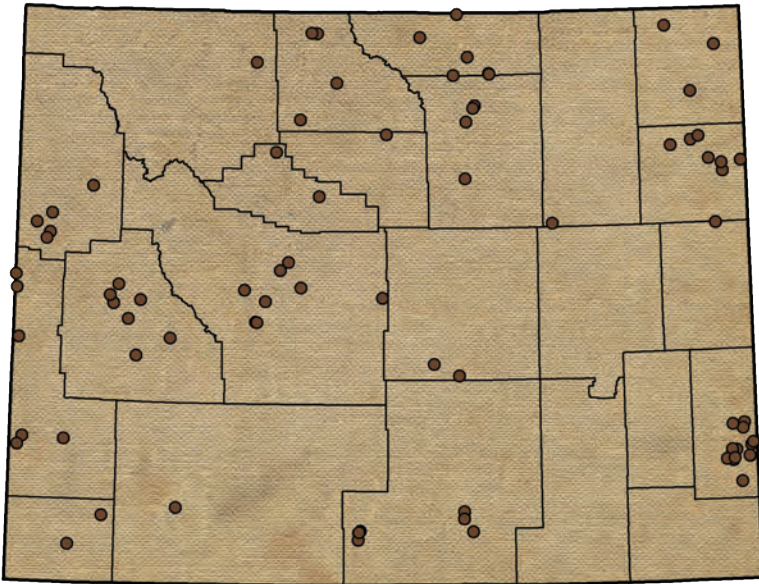
American Wetlands Conservation Act, The Nature Conservancy, Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program, WGFD, Wyoming Wildlife Foundation and Ducks Unlimited.

“This is an important project for the community, and it would not be possible without such a diverse partnership,” said Martin Grenier, manager of conservation programs for Wyoming.

The Monolith Ranch Meadows project is scheduled to be completed in early summer. Improvements will enhance more than 600 acres of wet meadow and restore the Goforth Reservoir providing approximately 18 acres of semi-permanent wetlands.

WY Projects 1986-2018

12,442 acres conserved since 1986



● Completed

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.

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GREAT PLAINS REGION

our mission

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