



DU protects waterfowl habitat and public use in Goshen County

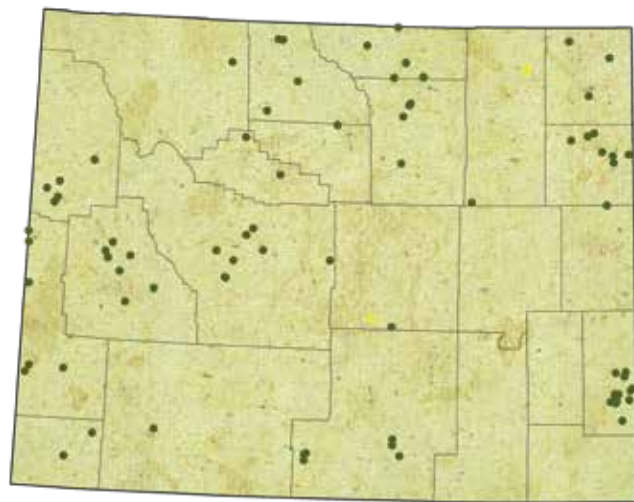
Ducks Unlimited will transfer a 344-acre tract of land in Goshen County, Wyoming to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) as part of DU's Revolving Habitat Program. The property will become part of the Springer/Bump Sullivan Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA), renowned for its waterfowl and upland game hunting. Along with increased public access, acquisition of the Goshen County property secures one third of the water rights associated with Bump Sullivan Reservoir, making wildlife habitat and recreation a high priority for water use from this reservoir.

"In Wyoming, securing water rights is a critical tool in protecting wetlands essential for waterfowl and other wildlife," said DU Regional Biologist Tom Peterson. "By acquiring the Goshen County property and the accompanying water rights, WGFD can provide waterfowl and other waterbirds essential wetland habitat even during the driest times."

The Goshen County property acquisition is part of a larger project funded by a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant with DU and partners providing a 2-to-1 match to the grant dollars. The NAWCA proposal, titled North Platte River Wetlands II, crosses the state borders of Nebraska and Wyoming to protect and restore emergent marsh, riverine wetlands, riparian habitat, and associated native grasslands and cropland along the North Platte River.

The majority of habitat along the North Platte River in Nebraska and Wyoming is privately owned. Increased demand on water resources, habitat fragmentation and development continue to compromise the wildlife habitat's value. The goal of conservation partners in this region is to protect the remaining high-priority tracts through fee-title acquisition or securing conservation easements.

"Protecting this property and transferring it to WGFD for management will support the goals of the NAWCA grant and the broader plan to ensure the North Platte River remains productive for the migratory birds that rely on these habitats each year," Peterson said.



Wyoming Projects 1989 through the end of Fiscal Year 2019

● Completed projects: 1989-2018 ▲ 2019 Completed projects

Fiscal Year 2019

- Impacted acres* - 696
- Dollars invested - \$464,842

1989 to 2019

- Impacted acres* - 18,990
- Dollars invested - \$5,097,385

*Impacted acres combine unique conservation acres with acres where DU has multiple project objectives.

State contacts:

For information on DU's conservation programs:

Martin Grenier, Manager of Conservation Programs, Wyoming
mgrenier@ducks.org, 970-775-4416

For information on Major Donor support and corporate partnerships:

Chris Hildebrandt, Dir. of Development - MT, ND, WY
childebrandt@ducks.org, 406-203-2503

For information on event fundraising:

Marty Carollo, State Chair
mcarollo@sweetwaterhsa.com, 307-870-2338

Robert Hathaway, Senior Regional Director, WY
rhathaway@ducks.org, 307-221-2061

STATE CONSERVATION REPORT

2020

Wyoming

— INSIDE —

- › Howard Johnson highlight
- › Western Wyoming Wetland Partnership
- › Laramie Leaders
- › Wet meadow workshop
- › Goshen County conservation
- › Conservation accomplishments
- › Wyoming state contacts

Work for waterfowl and community

By Martin Grenier, manager of conservation programs for Wyoming

With each passing season, DU's conservation programs in Wyoming continue to grow as we collaborate with our partners to deliver projects that benefit waterfowl and communities across the state. This past fall, we celebrated the end of DU's most successful fundraising campaign, *Rescue Our Wetlands*, with Fremont County residents by honoring the donors, partners and organizations

that made the Northwest Wetlands Project at Ocean Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Area possible. This project provides great habitat for waterfowl and new areas to bird watch and waterfowl hunt.

Great partnerships are the key to our success. During the past few years, DU has been working hard to build wetland conservation capacity in Wyoming. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), with guidance from DU, created a new wetland habitat-focused staff position. We are pleased to announce that Noelle Smith, former DU biologist, will fill this new position at the WGFD on this important mission. Noelle's expertise and knowledge combined with support from DU will ensure that wetlands remain at the forefront of the WGFD's conservation efforts.

With limited resources and rising costs, it remains important DU and our partners leverage resources to restore and conserve wetlands. In 2020, we have projects planned near the communities of Jackson, Pinedale, Riverton and Lovell. Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, County Conservation Districts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Wyoming Water Development Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Services, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust will all play an integral part in helping DU deliver successful projects in the coming years.



Martin Grenier



Howard Johnson (left) and his family enjoying time at the DU convention in Hawaii.

Howard Johnson's dedication through the decades

When a volunteer has dedicated more than 40 years to an organization you know his passion is true. Howard Johnson's Ducks Unlimited volunteer resume includes area chair, district chair, state chair, national at-large board member and regional vice president. During his time on the national board, he served on the Conservation

Programs Committee and the Development Committee. Through DU, Johnson has made lifelong friends and traveled to many of the DU national conventions.

"DU is an amazing organization. The staff and volunteers are highly dedicated, and no other organization does conservation on the scale and with the efficiency that DU does," Johnson said.

Life changes influenced his decision to return to his roots at the local level. He now helps guide the Fremont County DU chapter, working with the current area chair, Cheryl Coleman, to continue the success of the chapter.

Johnson is an engineer and adept at reading wetland engineering and restoration plans. He understands water-rights issues involved in getting plans approved and can relate to the demands on water in Wyoming for irrigation, drinking and conservation.

"We aren't the prairies, but we have a lot of good stuff in Wyoming for ducks and geese," Johnson said. "The headwaters of the Missouri River are here, and more than anywhere else, you get a sense of the importance of water and the wetlands that protect it."

Johnson is a DU major sponsor at the Benefactor Roll of Honor level and a member of DU's Feather Society at the Emerald level. He was recognized for his service and commitment at the 2019 DU National Convention in Hawaii by his friend and DU national board member Jeff Heidelbauer.

Western Wyoming Wetland Partnership to conserve 3,700 acres

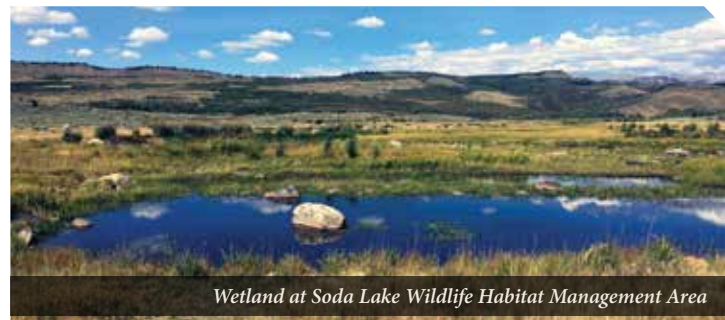
Ducks Unlimited and its partners in Wyoming were awarded a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant to restore and protect habitat important to migratory waterfowl, especially trumpeter swans. The partners formed the Western Wyoming Wetland Partnership (WWWP), a coordinated effort working in the Bear River, Salt River, Snake River and Green River basins of western Wyoming.

"The Western Wyoming Wetlands Partnership grant is working on public and private lands to restore ecological function to the wetlands," said Tom Peterson, DU regional biologist for Wyoming. "By establishing this partnership, we can better coordinate our efforts to maximize benefits to waterfowl and other migratory birds and garner more support for our conservation efforts."

The proposed projects include establishing conservation easements and restorations to wetlands, wet meadows, riparian and upland habitats. Native grass and shrub habitats in the uplands surrounding wetlands provide foraging and nesting habitat for birds and other wildlife. The uplands also provide a buffer for the wetland, protecting it from sedimentation.

The projects will impact 3,718 acres on 20 tracts, 88% of which are wetlands. Public restoration sites include South Park and Soda Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Areas. Partners are providing a 2-to-1 funding match to the NAWCA grant.

Partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jackson Hole Land Trust, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust, Wyoming Water Development Commission and private landowners. More information on activities proposed under WWWP is available via a GIS story map at: <https://arcg.is/1j9ebe>.



Wetland at Soda Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Area

Leaders grow the Laramie DU chapter



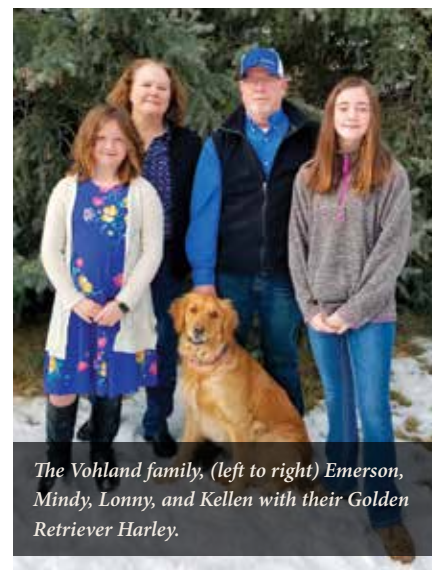
Southeast Wyoming District Chair Lonny Vohland keeps track of the DU chapters in Albany, Platte, Goshen and Laramie counties. He travels to meetings and events with his 13-year-old daughter Kellen to meet volunteers and help with planning and execution of their banquets.

Vohland previously lived in Nebraska where he volunteered for DU. Once he moved to Laramie, Regional Director Robert Hathaway quickly recruited Vohland to volunteer for DU in Wyoming. Vohland has lived in Wyoming for 12 years and has been a DU volunteer the entire time.

The Laramie DU chapter, which Vohland oversees, has seen impressive increases in fundraising over the past few years.

"They host a classy event and they get a diverse group of people to attend," he said. "The committee does a great job of providing a good range of prices for the items at the banquet, so everyone tends to go home with something."

The Laramie Chapter leaders, Jesse and Justin Ballard, Brandon Specht and Brad Poe start working on the banquet three to four months ahead of time and they get strong support from the community with donations and sponsorship. The Laramie event brings in up to 250 people and earns \$40,000 to \$45,000, which will continue to increase as the event becomes more popular.



The Vohland family, (left to right) Emerson, Mindy, Lonny, and Kellen with their Golden Retriever Harley.

Workshop promotes wet meadow restoration in Wyoming

With funding from a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) Migratory Game Bird and Wetland Habitat Biologist Noelle Smith lead a workshop at Seedskafee National Wildlife Refuge, instructing WGFD employees on restoration techniques for wet meadow habitats.

"The goal is to create awareness of wet meadow habitats and increase restoration efforts in targeted watersheds in the state," Smith said. "Wet meadow restoration techniques aren't widely known. To make an impact on the landscape we need to reach out to multiple organizations and landowners and conduct work on private and public lands."

Wet meadows are a relatively small part of the landscape in Wyoming, but they have an important function providing food and cover for a variety of wildlife species. Wet meadow restoration is relatively low cost and requires minimal engineering and construction. The NFWF grant is helping DU expand its reach.

"By providing education about wet meadow restoration we expect to increase the number of restoration projects that have a lighter touch but create a significant impact," said Matt Reddy, Ducks Unlimited regional biologist. "We don't ask for any land use change when restoring wet meadows, landowners can still use the area for livestock grazing."

More workshops are planned, and partners will expand the audience to include private landowners and other local, state and federal conservation agencies.

Partners supporting the NFWF grant and providing matching funds include the WGFD, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Colorado Open Lands.