

DU CONSERVATION REPORT

Wyoming
2018

Ducks Unlimited is finding wetland and waterfowl habitat conservation opportunities in western Wyoming. DU is discovering projects where the resources and technical expertise of the staff can help. Ducks Unlimited is part of a wetland partnership that formed under the Wyoming Bird Habitat Conservation Partnership. In western Wyoming the group includes the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Jackson Hole Land Trust, Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and many other organizations and private landowners. DU is helping advance the wetland conservation initiatives of the group.

Many Ducks Unlimited projects in Wyoming involve improvements to wetland areas that have degraded over time. Improvement projects are planned for South Park Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA), near Jackson, and Soda Lake WHMA, near Pinedale. The focus of these projects will be rebuilding and restoring water-control structures, reestablishing hydrology and removing overgrown vegetation. These steps will rejuvenate the areas and invite migrating waterfowl including trumpeter swans. DU staff members are writing a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant proposal to support these projects. Also in the planning stages are projects with the FWS on Seedskaelee and Cokeville Meadows National Wildlife Refuges.

Wetland restoration has been underrepresented in Wyoming, and DU is driven to enhance migratory habitat for waterfowl and raise awareness of the importance of the region. Projects like those completed on Table Mountain and Ocean Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Areas are seeing waterfowl use and benefiting other species including upland birds like pheasants, and providing public spaces for outdoor recreation. The Wyoming Peaks to Prairie Experience in Lander, Wyoming in September gave DU's development and conservation staff a chance to stress the significance Wyoming plays as a migration corridor to donors and other interests.





LEADERS OF DOUGLAS DU CHAPTER GET SOCIAL

Shawn and Barbara Pitman are using Facebook to connect Wyoming DU members and keep followers up-to-date on events. Shawn is the chair of the Douglas Ducks Unlimited Chapter. The couple and their two children live in Glen Rock.

“They always have big plans and big goals and do a great job of achieving them,” said Robert Hathaway, DU regional director in Wyoming.

The Pitmans use Facebook to boost ticket sales and run pre-event raffles. Before the Douglas Chapter event, Barbara posted the raffle announcement for a Henry Big Boy Rifle or \$1,000.

“We wished we hadn’t put a cap on the number of raffle tickets because we could have sold a lot more. We made a \$5,000 profit on that raffle,” Barbara said.

Barbara shares information about DU’s projects in Wyoming, but also shares the significance of conserving waterfowl habitat to the north and south by posting information from the national DU page.

“People need to understand conservation for waterfowl can’t just happen in their backyard. Conserving waterfowl habitat means going where the ducks go and that is what DU does,” Shawn said.

DU chapters around the state are using Facebook to promote the businesses that underwrite and donate auction items for the events. This way they thank their sponsors, promote the businesses that donate and give previews of auction items to entice people to attend the event and bid.

Find Wyoming Ducks Unlimited on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WYODU.



Shawn and Barbara Pitman with their daughter on a group hunt.

Peaks to Prairies event ignites passion for Wyoming habitat

Hunting greater sage-grouse along historic trails and majestic mountains was one of the experiences attendees had at the Wyoming Peaks to Prairies event in September. This major donor event near Lander, Wyoming, combined outdoor activities with a comprehensive look at DU’s flourishing habitat programs.

Snow added challenges to the upland hunting, but this unique opportunity to hunt sage-grouse is one of the main draws for DU supporters to the event. Manager of Conservation Programs for Colorado and Wyoming Martin Grenier led a tour of the wetland restoration project at Ocean Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Area. The project on Ocean Lake is the dedication site for DU’s *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign that wraps up in 2018.

Partners on the project include the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Water for Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited and DU major sponsors.

“Visiting these DU projects gave me the opportunity to see how sound science, the efforts of staff and volunteers, and the contributions of donors impact the future of our wetlands,” said Bob Riley, DU Gold Benefactor, Grand Slam Major Sponsor and Diamond Feather Society member from Pennsylvania.

DU staff presented guests with a message about the ongoing habitat work in the Great Plains and in the Cowboy State. They gained a new appreciation for DU’s efforts and learned the importance of migration habitat in Wyoming.

“We found the Wyoming Peaks to Prairies experience educational and inspirational. We had no idea how important the Rocky Mountains are for ducks during migration. This DU experience opened our eyes to the beauty of Wyoming. We fully intend to be back,” said Alan and Marcheta Jochimsen, DU Diamond Heritage Sponsors from Texas.

PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES NAWCA GRANT



With the award of a \$100,000 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant, Ducks Unlimited and partners will complete work on the Muddy Creek wetland complex in Carbon County, Wyoming. Partners worked for 30 years on this 862-acre complex that is the largest constructed wetland project in the state, creating quality wetlands for waterfowl and other wildlife.

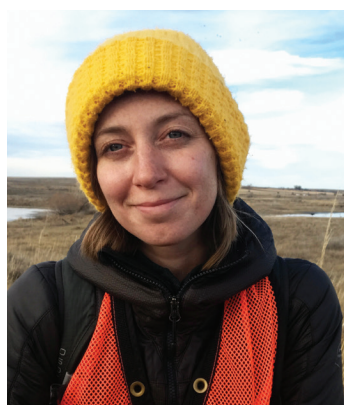
“Small NAWCA grants can be the catalyst to bring partners together and fund the final construction on projects like this one,” said Tom Peterson, DU biologist in Wyoming.

Enhancements to Muddy Creek will improve water flows through the wetlands, remove sediment from the stream and control stands of cattails in the wetlands. Once completed, managers will have nine tracts of wetland habitat with a reliable water source and improved water management capabilities. Six of the nine tracts are open to the public for hunting and other recreation.

From the start of this project, the Little Snake River Conservation District (LSRCD) worked to connect the economic concerns of their constituents with ecological needs of

fish and wildlife. Ducks Unlimited and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) staff are providing technical and financial assistance, additional survey and design, contracting and construction management.

Matching contributions came from LSRCD, Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust Fund, Wyoming Water Development Commission, the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust and DU.



COLLABORATIVE WETLAND POSITION FURTHERS CONSERVATION PRIORITIES OF PARTNERS

Noelle Smith is working in a unique collaborative venture between the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Ducks Unlimited. The position is funded in large part through a Wetland Program Development Grant from the EPA.

“This partnership is another way for Ducks Unlimited to further our conservation priorities in Wyoming while helping our partners pursue theirs,” Smith said.

Smith’s primary focus is on restoration and protection of wetlands, with attention to migratory bird habitat. In addition to improving wetland habitats on state wildlife habitat areas, Smith provides support to Wyoming’s statewide wetland partnership and is helping develop a voluntary restoration and protection program.

Contact information:
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Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Biologist Susan Patla talking to guests at
South Park WHMA.

SOUTH PARK CONSERVATION DAY FIELD EXPERIENCE

Ducks Unlimited held a special project kick-off event at South Park Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) for Jackson Hole DU supporters. This event raised nearly \$100,000 and additional fundraising events will close out DU's *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign in 2018.

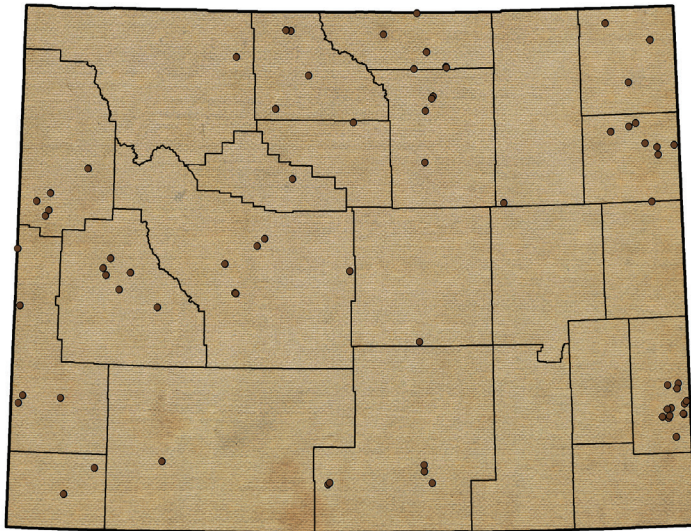
DU supporter Tony Aquila hosted the morning portion of the event at the Split Creek Ranch. The group then traveled to South Park WHMA where Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) Biologist Susan Patla discussed the importance of the WHMA in providing vital habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, breeding trumpeter swans and Rocky Mountain elk.

The field experience gave guests a look at the data and information used to design wetland restoration projects and how it translates to habitat on the ground. The group learned the importance of private match funding needed to deliver conservation projects from start to finish.

ducks unlimited WY PROJECTS 1986-2017

● Completed

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.



in 2017 | 1,032 acres conserved • \$821,580 invested

WY STATE CONTACTS

For information on DU's conservation programs:

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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.