

NORTH AMERICAN

WETLANDS

CONSERVATION ACT

# project flash

## Indiana Partnership Receives \$1,000,000 for Wetlands Project

On September 8, 2004, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, as authorized under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, approved **\$1,000,000** in funding for the **Grand Kankakee Habitat Restoration Phase IV Project** in portions of **nine Indiana counties** in **Congressional Districts 1 and 2**. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop and implement wetlands and associated uplands projects to benefit wildlife. Projects must meet certain biological criteria to be considered for funding, and partners must be able to match the grant request 1:1 with nonfederal funds. This project's partnership matched the grant request with **\$3,061,020** and added **\$924,263** more in nonmatching funds.

Partners will build upon previous phases of this project in which 18,000 acres of wetlands and associated uplands habitats within the Kankakee River watershed were acquired, restored, or enhanced. Their efforts were focused in the Grand Kankakee Marsh, one of the State's most important waterfowl breeding and migration areas.

In this phase, partners will acquire, either through fee title or conservation easement, some 819 acres of habitat. The acquisitions, along with existing protected tracts, will form a network of habitats along the river and its tributaries. Approximately 510 acres of wetlands and 245 acres of uplands will be restored by removing tiles and ditches, constructing levees, installing water-control structures and pumps, developing shallow depressions, and planting native wetland and upland vegetation. Additionally, 172 acres of wetlands and uplands will be enhanced through prescribed burning, woody-species removal in overgrown savannas, invasive species control, and waterfowl-nest-structure installation.

Over 100,000 **Mississippi Flyway** migratory waterfowl, representing species such as American wigeon, gadwall, northern pintail, and ring-necked duck, will benefit from the partners' work. Waterfowl that stay to nest include species such as mallard, wood duck, blue-winged teal, and Canada goose. This region also supports some of Indiana's largest concentrations of migratory shorebirds, which are attracted to the managed wetlands along the river.

The fee-title lands acquired for transfer to governmental agencies will be open to the public for hunting, birding, hiking, and fishing, with restrictions based on site-specific management needs. Other public benefits: the project will help to reduce flooding and enhance water quality.

Partners making all this possible include Lake Heritage Parks Foundation, Blythe's Sporting Goods, Inc., Dr. David Harvey, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Dunes-Calumet Audubon Society, Griffith Izaak Walton Conservation Lands, Indiana Department of Natural Resources' Divisions of Fish and Wildlife and Nature Preserves, Indiana Heritage Trust, JFNew, Lake County Fish and

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Game, Lake County Parks and Recreation Department, LaPorte County Conservation Trust, Inc., NiSource, The Nature Conservancy, Waterfowl USA, Wille and Stiener Associates, WYIN-TV, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Their work also advances the habitat conservation goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Upper Mississippi River & Great Lakes Joint Venture** and Upper Mississippi River & Great Lakes Region Shorebird Conservation Plan.

*For more information about this project, contact Robert Nickovich, Chief Executive Officer, Lake County Parks and Recreation Department, (209) 945-0452, [nickovic@jorsm.com](mailto:nickovic@jorsm.com), or David Buie, Standard Grants Proposal Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (301) 497-5870, [david\\_buie@fws.gov](mailto:david_buie@fws.gov).*