

NORTH AMERICAN

WETLANDS

CONSERVATION ACT

project flash

Minnesota Partnerships Receive \$2,000,000 for Wetlands Projects

On September 8, 2004, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, as authorized under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, approved **\$2,000,000** in funding for **two projects** in **Minnesota**. 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. In total, project partners are matching their grants with **\$4,068,224** and are adding another **\$2,445,657** in nonmatching funds towards their projects.

Minnesota Marshes Phase I Project

This project is located in **16 counties** in Minnesota's **Congressional Districts 6 and 7**. Nearly all of Minnesota's native prairie uplands and small wetlands have been converted to agricultural and other uses, leaving the State's large wetlands to be the cornerstone of quality habitat for **Mississippi Flyway** waterfowl and other migratory birds. Project partners used a landscape-scale "decision matrix" and map developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Habitat and Population Evaluation Team to determine where to focus their resources.

Partners will use their **\$1,000,000 grant** to affect a total of **4,530 acres** of wetlands and uplands habitats on 16 tracts of public and private lands. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Department) is acquiring a total of 768 acres of habitat on four tracts via fee-title acquisition on 702 acres and fee-title donation on 66 acres. Partners also will restore a total of 115 acres on two more tracts. By installing water-control and/or fish-exclusion structures, partners will enhance 3,647 acres of habitat in total on another 10 public and private tracts. Two enhancement areas of note include the Lake Christina-Anka wetland complex, a critical staging area particularly for migrating canvasbacks and redheads, and the Service's Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, a haven for ducks, shorebirds, and waterbirds.

The Department, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, Christina-Ina-Anka Lake Association, Ervin Rau, Ken Roos, Independence Tube Corporation, and Friends of Prairie are adding **\$2,022,649** to the project; the Service is providing **\$17,433**, nonmatch. This project supports the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Prairie Pothole Joint Venture**, Partners in Flight, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.

For more information about this project, contact Jon Schneider, Regional Biologist-Minnesota, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., (320) 762-9916, jschneider@ducks.org, or David Buie, Standard Grants Program Proposal Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (301) 497-5870, david_buie@fws.gov .

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Prairie Wetland Heritage Conservation Initiative Phase III Project

This project is located in **30 counties** across southwestern Minnesota in **Congressional Districts 1, 2, 6, and 7**. In this third phase of a 10-year initiative, partners will continue to protect, restore, and enhance two of the most endangered, natural habitat communities in Minnesota: prairies and prairie wetlands. More than 95 percent of the State's prairie wetlands have been converted to agricultural and other uses. Project partners will build on their previous efforts to slow or reverse this trend by acquiring prairie and prairie-wetland habitat, restoring drained wetlands, and buffering the habitats from further disturbance. In this phase, partners will affect a total of **9,331 acres**, benefiting the larger Northern Tallgrass Prairie ecoregion, **Mississippi Flyway** waterfowl, songbirds in the Prairie Pothole Bird Conservation Region, and other wetland- and grassland-associated migratory birds in the project area.

Project partners will acquire fee title to some 1,422 acres of habitat on 10 tracts. These lands will be protected and managed as either state wildlife management areas or federal waterfowl production areas. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will acquire and hold conservation easements on a total of 1,337 acres of privately owned lands, which will be managed in cooperation with the Board and NRCS. Project partners also will restore 4,345 acres of drained wetlands and adjacent uplands habitats, 588 acres of which occur on lands being protected via easements acquired during this phase. Restoration actions will employ the use of earthen ditch plugs, tile breaks, and water-control structures. Another 2,227 acres will be enhanced.

Partners include Pheasants Forever, Inc., Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), the Board, Russell A. Blanford Estate, and Southwest Sportsmen's Club. They are matching their **\$1,000,000 grant** with **\$2,045,575**, and the Service and NRCS are adding another **\$2,428,224** in nonmatching funds. Partners' efforts support the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Prairie Pothole Joint Venture**, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Partners in Flight, and North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.

For more information about this project, contact Aaron Kuehl, Regional Wildlife Biologist, Pheasants Forever, Inc., (507) 231-4752, akuehl@pheasantsforever.org, or David Buie, Standard Grants Program Proposal Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (301) 497-5870, david_buie@fws.gov.