



An estimated 67 percent of historic wetlands have been lost in the Big Rivers Initiative Area, and continued loss is estimated at one percent annually. You can make a difference by keeping the Big Rivers productive for waterfowl, other wildlife and people who enjoy these treasured resources.



THE BIG RIVERS NEED YOU NOW

Your gift to Ducks Unlimited is invaluable, and it is truly the greatest contribution you can make to secure the future of wetlands and waterfowl. Every dollar you give to Ducks Unlimited is leveraged multiple times to create a conservation impact far beyond your initial gift. In addition, we invest at least 80 cents of every dollar received in our conservation mission. The Big Rivers Initiative area is home to deep waterfowling roots, abundant hunters and a strong family of DU members and Major Sponsors. Start making a difference today with a gift to DU's Big Rivers Initiative. Join us in *Banding Together for Waterfowl*.

Help us *Rescue Our Wetlands* today.

Don't wait.
Call DU at **(734) 623-2000** today to speak with fundraising staff in your area.



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BIG RIVERS INITIATIVE



RESTORING FEEDING AND RESTING AREAS ALONG THE RIVERS THAT MAKE UP THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOODPLAIN AND CONSERVING HABITAT CRITICAL TO THE GRAND PASSAGE OF MIGRATORY WATERFOWL

Ducks Unlimited's Big Rivers Initiative adds a whole new meaning to "flyover states." The rivers here support millions of waterfowl between the wintering and breeding grounds. Diverse habitats impacted by this initiative include bottomland forest, shrub-scrub and emergent wetlands; mudflats; and submerged aquatic beds, as well as the rivers themselves. The quality of these habitats is critical to bird condition during migration, and the Big Rivers Initiative seeks to "set the table" for the waterfowl as they sweep north and south year after year.

The floodplains of the Mississippi River and its network of tributaries historically provided breeding, migration and wintering habitat for millions of waterfowl. However, the grand passages of waterfowl once seen in this area have been replaced by increasingly scarce numbers of most waterfowl species, and

simultaneous declines in waterfowl hunters. Recent research suggests that mallard populations breeding in the Big Rivers Initiative area are largely limited by brood survival. Therefore, the primary emphasis of breeding conservation programs has been on restoring complexes of wetlands with a mosaic of open-water and emergent vegetation on public and private lands.

Hydrologic modification associated with intense agricultural, industrial and urban development throughout the region has resulted in substantial wetland loss and degradation. An estimated 67 percent of historic wetlands have been lost and continued loss is estimated at one percent annually.

You can make a difference by keeping the Big Rivers productive for waterfowl, other wildlife, and people who enjoy these treasured resources.



BIG RIVERS INITIATIVE IMPACT

The Big Rivers Initiative is a crucial part of Ducks Unlimited's *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign, a seven-year, \$2-billion effort aimed at changing the face of conservation in North America. *Rescue our Wetlands* is the largest wetlands and waterfowl conservation campaign in history.

Located in the heart of the Mississippi River and its major tributaries, the Big Rivers Initiative focuses on the restoration, enhancement and protection of wetlands used by millions of waterfowl as they migrate between wintering and breeding grounds each year.

INITIATIVE STATES

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin

INITIATIVE GOALS:

Your contribution toward the Big Rivers Initiative is part of the *Rescue Our Wetland's* Wintering and Migration Landscapes target of **\$484 million**.

Supporting the Big Rivers Initiative is pivotal in fulfilling DU's vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. Visit www.ducks.org/rescue for details.

DU'S PLAN FOR THE BIG RIVERS

Contributions to the Big Rivers Initiative also enables DU to conduct important science, public policy and outreach efforts related to this region and the breeding habitats important to waterfowl that use this landscape. DU's research and evaluation efforts are the foundation upon which our direct conservation programs and our policy and outreach work are based.

Conservation work under the Big Rivers Initiative will focus on maximizing benefits for continental waterfowl populations by restoring, enhancing, and protecting wetland complexes on public and private lands. These wetland habitats provide critical

feeding and resting areas for waterfowl during spring and fall migration, as well as providing habitat for a number of species that breed here.

Public policy efforts will largely revolve around the generation of public funding to support DU's conservation programs from sources such as the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Farm Bill, dedicated state funding and DU license plates, as well as federal and state wetland protection efforts.

CROSS-BORDER CONSERVATION



Migratory waterfowl are a shared continental resource and know no borders. Thus, DU must work across North America to ensure a bright future for waterfowl and the people who enjoy them. By contributing to DU's Big Rivers Initiative, you will be supporting critical waterfowl habitat conservation in the Big Rivers Initiative area, as well as priority breeding grounds in the Prairie Pothole Region, Western Boreal Forest and eastern Canada, where the vast majority of waterfowl are produced prior to making their way south each fall.

MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF A DOLLAR

In many instances, your conservation investment allows DU to leverage your gift with other private, public and contractual funds, sometimes matching it as many as seven or eight times.



RESOURCES BEYOND WATERFOWL

The Big Rivers Initiative area is home to more than just waterfowl and wetlands. The region holds vast human, political and philanthropic capital, accounting for 18 percent of the U.S. population and 29 percent of Ducks Unlimited members nationwide. The waterfowling tradition is strong within the region, which is home to a quarter of America's active waterfowl hunters, as well as a quarter of DU's mission-critical Major Sponsors.

Residents of the Big Rivers Initiative area know the seasons and they know that what happens upstream affects the whole river. With your help, DU will ensure a strong future for this region and the waterfowl we all enjoy.