



Photo © Tyler Butler

**★ HOVEY LAKE'S COTTONWOOD SLOUGH ADDS HABITAT**

**F**unding generated from the sales and renewals of the Indiana Ducks Unlimited (DU) Specialty License Plate was used to

develop engineering designs to restore three new wetland units for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) at Hovey Lake Fish and Wildlife Area (FWA). In 2023, IDNR completed construction of the first two phases at the newly coined Cottonwood Slough. This project converted another 126 acres of agricultural fields near Hovey Lake back to moist-soil wetlands. Plans to restore hydrology (the natural flow of water) to an additional 41 acres of bottomland forest are underway. Completing Cottonwood Slough will provide seasonal shallow water habitat for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds and outdoor recreation opportunities for the public.

**★ ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION CONTINUES TREE PLANTING PROGRAM**

**E**ach year, DU works with partners to identify and assemble reforestation and tree planting opportunities from within its priority areas for the Arbor Day Foundation.



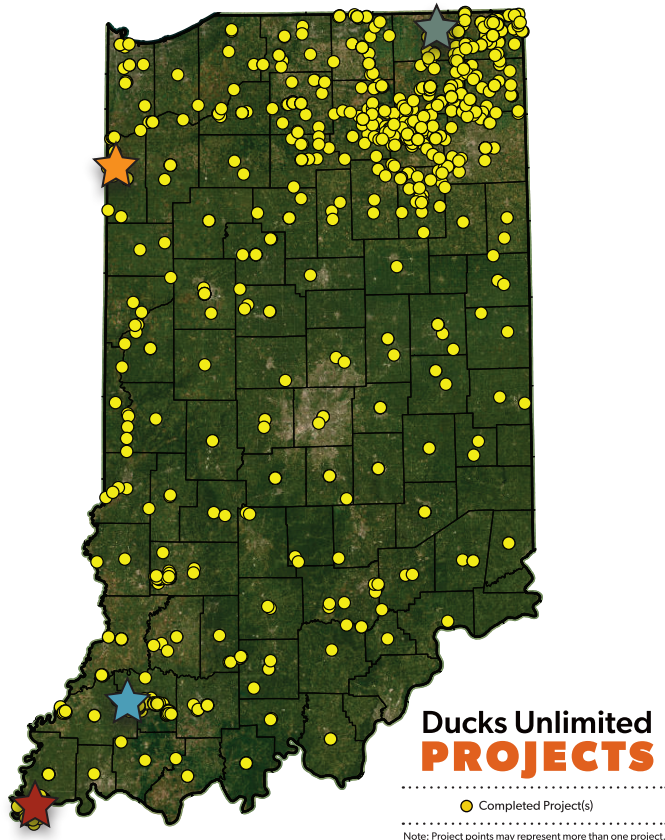
Photo © Sycamore Land Trust

In May 2023, 33 acres of bottomland trees were planted at Sycamore Land Trust's (SLT) Sam Shine Foundation Preserve. In November, Arbor Day Foundation funding was approved for plantings at SLT's Grandchildren's Woods Preserve and at Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge. Twenty-nine acres of native bottomland forest will be restored in 2024 at these two sites. Our partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation has restored 519 acres of bottomland forest, planting more than 200,000 trees across DU's Big Rivers Initiative.

**★ DU PARTNERSHIP CREATES NESTING COVER**

**A**t Pigeon River FWA, a suite of conservation projects was successfully implemented to enhance breeding habitat for the declining population of Great Lakes mallards and other wildlife. With funding secured from a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant and National Wild Turkey Federation, DU and the IDNR enhanced 169 acres of wetlands and restored 37.5 acres of upland habitat. Historical farmland was converted to native prairie, encroaching woody vegetation was removed from several wetlands and degraded water management infrastructure was replaced.

Four water control structures were implemented at the 105-acre Beaver Dam Lake, 30-acre Massasauga Marsh, 16-acre Bloody Run wetland and 9-acre Stink Pond. These upgrades will improve the IDNR's ability to manipulate water levels and create productive habitat. The diversity of habitat conserved under these projects will benefit wildlife such as nesting and migrating waterfowl, wild turkeys, and pheasants.





★ **WILLOW SLOUGH WORK BENEFITS GREAT LAKES MALLARDS**

**W**illow Slough FWA is a vast 9,956-acre public tract that includes nearly 1,200 acres of managed emergent marshes, forested wetlands, oak-savanna and mixed hardwood forests, native prairie and wildlife food plots. At its center is the 1,000-acre J.C. Murphey Lake. DU and the IDNR partnered to restore seasonal flooding to 44 acres of a hardwood forest that had been historically ditched and drained for agriculture. This work is part of a multi-year effort to conserve 330 acres of wetlands at Willow Slough to benefit the declining population of Great Lakes mallards and other waterfowl. With funding from NAWCA, ditches were filled, and water control structures were installed to facilitate better water level management, creating flooded timber and moist soil habitat for a diversity of wildlife.

**PUBLIC ACCESS THROUGH PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

**I**n northern Indiana, DU has a robust partnership with the USFWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program (PFW). This partnership is essential to DU’s private lands program, having facilitated more than 900 acres of habitat restoration and enhancements since 2016. The private lands program aims to support individual landowners interested in conserving habitat on their properties. DU and PFW also work with land trusts, non-profits and municipalities to facilitate public access. At Albion Park in Noble County, DU, PFW, Albion Parks Department, and IDNR restored 4.5 acres of wetlands on a tile drained site. Native prairie grasses were later planted to buffer a pair of wetlands to provide habitat for breeding waterfowl.



Photo © S. Fletters

**ADM SOIL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP**

**DU**, Archer-Daniels-Midland Company (ADM) and Farmers Business Network have partnered to incentivize producers in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio to plant 175,000 acres of cover crops. DU enrolled 235 producers in Indiana, totaling over 209,847 acres. Landowners receive a \$10 to \$25 per-acre incentive payment. Another 70 producers, many of which are enrolled in the cover crop program, are participating in no-till or reduced tillage practices, totaling over 33,635 acres. No-till producers receive an incentive payment of \$2 per-acre.

Cover crops help improve soil health, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and improve water resources, while providing economic benefit to participating producers. They also offer a food source for wildlife. DU biologists make on-farm visits with enrolled landowners throughout the duration of the program, learning more about their successes and failures with cover crops and other regenerative agriculture practices.



Photo © Angus Beef



**DUCKS UNLIMITED** conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America’s waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

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**INDIANA NUMBERS**

**2023**

- 166 acres conserved
- \$445,341 invested

**HISTORICAL**

- 31,537 acres conserved
- \$18,453,214 invested



GREAT LAKES / ATLANTIC REGION

7322 NEWMAN BOULEVARD  
BUILDING 2 SUITE 200  
DEXTER, MI 48130

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[WWW.DUCKS.ORG/INDIANA](http://WWW.DUCKS.ORG/INDIANA)