



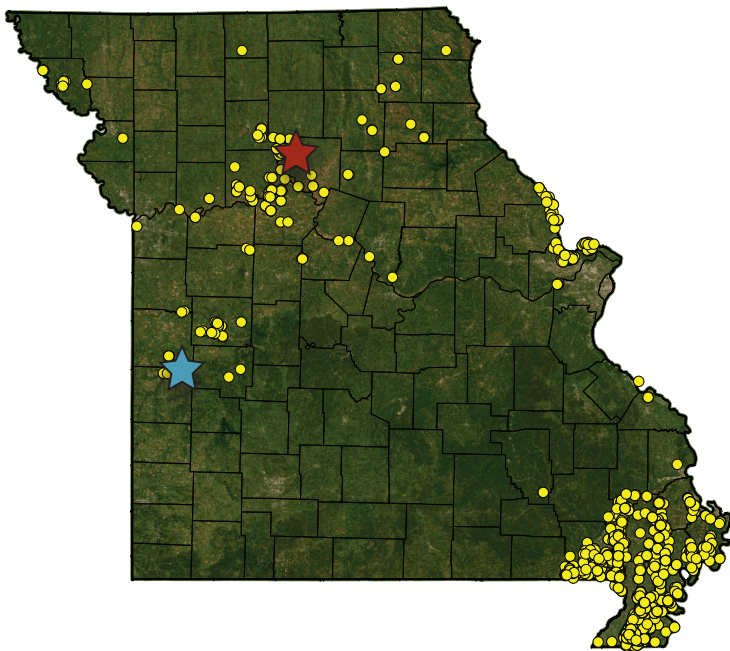
★ PUMP STATION NEARS COMPLETION AT SCHELL-OSAGE

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and Ducks Unlimited (DU) partnered to install a \$6.4 million pump station at Schell-Osage Conservation Area in northeastern Vernon County. This is the first phase of three in a long-planned wetland and lake renovation. The project will improve the area's wetlands for a variety of waterfowl, shore birds, and water birds. The changes will increase opportunities for hunters, birders, wildlife watchers, and anglers across 8,634 acres of public land. The permanent concrete pump station draws water from the Osage River. This source replaces water from Schell Lake, Atkinson Lake and Truman Lake, where inefficient portable pumps were used to move water. The station allows managers to fill wetlands during fall and spring migrations, and it will reduce water level fluctuations in Schell and Atkinson lakes. Future plans include new levees and the renovation of Schell Lake to increase water depth. An improved boat ramp and new jetties around the perimeter will give anglers more access.



★ NEW PROJECT AT SWAN LAKE NWR DEDICATED TO BABCOCK

Ken Babcock was honored in October for his commitment and passion for waterfowl and wetland conservation at Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Babcock worked for the MDC from 1970 to 1997. He was a waterfowl research biologist, assistant chief, division chief of wildlife and assistant director. After retiring from MDC, Babcock worked for DU as a senior director of conservation until 2013. He is a life member of the Conservation Federation of Missouri, a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation and The Wildlife Society. During his career, Babcock was involved with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Midwest and Southeast Associations of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Mississippi Flyway Council and Technical Section and served on the Corps of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board. The dedicated project at Swan Lake improved water management capability, restored natural water flow patterns, and allowed for better drainage to reduce levee damage during floods.



**Ducks Unlimited
PROJECTS**

● Completed Project(s)
Note: Project points may represent more than one project.

WRE PARTNERSHIP REACHES NEW LANDOWNERS

The Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) program provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners interested in the restoration, enhancement and protection of wetlands on their property. WRE is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which pays all the costs associated with enrollment. If an application is selected, landowners are offered an agreement that includes an offer price for the easement. DU's Conservation Consultants have collected five new applications since October 2023. NRCS is offering permanent and 30-year easement plans. Some of the benefits to landowners include a financial incentive to remove marginal cropland from production, keeping land in the family for future generations to enjoy, preservation of wildlife habitat, promotion of biodiversity and improved water quality.



CONFLUENCE PROGRAM CONSERVES DUCK HABITAT

In December 2023, Waterfowl Lakes and Dove Patch became the 41st and 42nd easements added to the DU Confluence Easement Program. The donated acres protect historical duck habitats from development while preserving other land uses such as agricultural production. Thanks to the support of landowners and groups like the Great Rivers Habitat Alliance, DU has protected over 12,111 acres in the Confluence (St. Louis region). Last year, DU expanded its easement focus to the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley (LMAV). Unlike the Confluence, where the primary threat to waterfowl and wetlands is development, the LMAV is being cleared and drained, eliminating much of the historical bottomland hardwood habitat. This year, the DU Conservation Easement Program will be expanded along the state's Big Rivers, prioritizing properties that expand public and private wetland complexes.



AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS PROTECT 10,000 ACRES

Throughout the Midwest, DU is working to earn the trust of farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses through partnerships based on common sustainability goals such as water retention, rotational grazing, cover crop implementation and other incentive-based, on-farm practices. Missouri's grassland and grazing biologists are impacting thousands of acres by working with landowners to improve pasture management and prevent nutrient and sediment pollution of wetlands. Biologists also work with landowners enrolled in the federal WRE program, which protects private lands from development. They already have land agreements on nearly 10,000 acres and conducted site visits and monitoring on another 5,000 acres. DU Rice Specialists are partnering with farmers to keep water on harvested ag lands to benefit the health of migrating waterfowl.



DELIVERING ON-FARM RESOURCES TO MISSOURI PRODUCERS

Building from an established partnership, which has collectively restored, enhanced, and protected over 100,000 acres of wetlands on public and private lands across the state, DU and MDC are collaborating to support Missouri's Native Forages Initiative (NFI). NFI is a program for producers who want to manage soil moisture so their farms are less susceptible to drought by converting non-native forages (row crops) to native forages for haying or grazing. These on-farm practices reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon. Other benefits include improved water quality, water quantity, community resilience, biodiversity, and public recreation. DU and MDC are attempting to increase the scale and scope of the NFI program through site visits, educational opportunities, and targeted outreach. So far, 1,207 acres have been impacted.



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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MISSOURI NUMBERS

2023

- 8,249 acres conserved
- \$958,592 invested

HISTORICAL

- 127,559 acres conserved
- \$23.4 million invested



GREAT LAKES /
ATLANTIC REGION

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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
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