

Conservation act designates \$1.2 million under Small Grants Program to bird habitat conservation

Written by Ashley Spratt

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced more than \$1.2 million in federal grants to help protect, restore and enhance wetlands and associated habitats across the Midwest Region under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Small Grants Program. The federal grants are matched by more than \$3.6 million in partner funds.

“The NAWCA Small Grants Program facilitates public-private partnerships that benefit wetlands and other vital habitats, which contribute to our water quality and overall ecological health,” said Service Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius. “The continuation of this funding source provides outdoor recreation opportunities while educating the public on the importance of wetlands and wetland-dependent species to our environment and our economy.”

NAWCA Small Grants Program approved projects in 2012 —

Iowa

Buffalo Creek Wildlife Management Area, Mangold Addition

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$125,000

This project will protect 40 acres adjacent to Buffalo Creek Wildlife Management Area in Delaware County, Iowa. The property will be converted from row-crop agriculture to native prairie and wetlands will be restored.

Iowa Prairie Pothole Upland Habitat Enhancement II

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Grantee: Pheasants Forever

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$75,000

This project will restore or enhance over 1,440 acres of wetland-associated grasslands throughout the Prairie Pothole region of Iowa. Project activities will include a combination of tree removal and seeding of native grasses and other prairie plants.

Minnesota

Minnesota Lake Waterfowl Complex Addition

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$225,000

This project will protect 78 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat adjacent to Minnesota Lake and 1,323 acres of existing habitat complex in Faribault County, Minn. The area hosts a large colony of American White Pelicans and is part of a regionally significant migratory bird stopover site.

Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge Wetland Restorations

Grantee: Rydell/Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuges

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$249,499

This project will restore or enhance 245 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat on two recently acquired tracts of refuge land. Project activities will include ditch plugging and berm construction, tree and invasive species removal, and seeding using native plants.

Fergus Falls Wetland and Grassland Restoration

Grantee: Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$50,000/\$170,000

This project will restore or enhance 381 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat on Waterfowl Production Areas in the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District. Multiple small wetland basins will be restored throughout the area, and larger existing basins will be enhanced with the replacement or installation of water control structures. Grasslands will be restored and enhanced through tree removal, herbicide and seeding.

West Central Minnesota Grasslands II

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$120,000

This project will restore 250 acres of wetland-associated grasslands on 18 Waterfowl Production Areas and protect more than 74 acres of predominantly wetland habitat via fee-title acquisition.

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Windom Area Wetlands

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$359,973

This project will enhance water quality at three large, shallow wetland basins totaling 358 acres. These basins have been degraded due to invasive species. Installation of water-control structures will provide managers with the capability to conduct periodic drawdowns, which will help rejuvenate water clarity and allow for emergent vegetation to re-establish.

Detroit Lakes Private Lands Wetland Restorations

Grantee: Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$55,000/\$175,000

This project will restore or enhance 122 acres of wetland and grassland habitat on several tracts of land that are adjacent to publicly-managed areas in northwestern Minnesota. Project activities will involve a combination of ditch plugging, sediment removal, seeding and tree removal.

Wisconsin

Marquart Addition to the Hallie Marsh Wildlife Area

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$120,000

This project will protect approximately 106 acres of habitat including a wetland basin surrounded by row-crop agriculture. This parcel is located directly adjacent to Hallie Marsh Wildlife Area. Agricultural land will subsequently be restored to grassland after acquisition, which will contribute to a larger intact habitat complex.

Meadow Valley Flowage Wetland Enhancement Project- Phase III

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$75,000

This project will enhance 350 acres of wetland habitat and improve water-level management capacity at the Meadow Valley Wildlife Area, a key wetland complex in central Wisconsin. This project will build upon the previous two phases of this initiative to better manage a 3,000 acre wetland complex on this area.

Glacial Habitat Restoration Area Wetland Restoration Project

Grantee: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$81,856

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This project will restore approximately 74 acres of row-crop agricultural land to wetland habitat and protect 140 acres of habitat.

Green Bay West Shore Preserve Acquisition

Grantee: Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust
NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$48,960/79,040

This project will protect 34 acres of predominantly wetland habitat along the west shore of Green Bay, Wis. This parcel contains high-quality wetlands and is in close proximity to other conservation-managed areas including the 570-acre Sensiba Wildlife Area.

Northern Empire Prairie Wetlands Initiative

Grantee: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$81,856

This project will protect and enhance 757 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat. Wetlands will be restored via a combination of installation of water control structures, dike renovation, chemical treatment, tree removal and seeding.

Indiana

Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge Wetlands Conservation

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$42,416/\$42,416

This project will protect 155 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat and restore approximately 63 acres of predominantly forested wetlands on four separate tracts of the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge in southern Indiana. These areas were recently acquired by the refuge and were until recently in row-crop agriculture.

Illinois

Black Crown Marsh Restoration and Protection Project

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$116,673

This project will protect 36 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat, and will restore 75 acres of former wetland habitat via a combination of earthwork, tree and invasive plant removal, and seeding. This project is part of a larger initiative to restore the 375 acre Black Crown Marsh complex.

Habitat Restoration at Hadley Valley Preserve

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Grantee: Forest Preserve District of Will County
NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$104,000

This project will restore or enhance 96 acres of former wetland and grassland habitat in Will County, Ill. Project activities will include locating and disabling drain tiles, tributary stabilization, and re-establishing native prairie and wetland plants on the area via seeding and invasive plant control/removal.

Ohio

Medina Marsh Protection Project

Grantee: Medina County Park District
NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$1,189,000

This project will protect 91 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat in Medina County, Ohio. This area will connect two adjacent conservation-managed areas along the West Branch of the Rocky River, which drains into nearby Lake Erie.

Franklin Bog Protection Project

Grantee: Portage Park District
NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$262,760

This project will protect 56 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat in Portage County, Ohio. The property includes more than 17 acres of rare wetland and supports populations of several rare plant and animal species.

For additional information on the NAWCA Small Grant Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/Small/2012.shtm>

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