



# hallowed *ground*

Conserving Canada's natural history

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the upper right, casting a warm, golden light across the sky and water. The water's surface is textured with gentle ripples. In the foreground, several tall reeds with fuzzy, seed-like heads are silhouetted against the bright background, some catching the light and appearing to glow. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Canada's landscapes have  
a wealth of stories to tell.



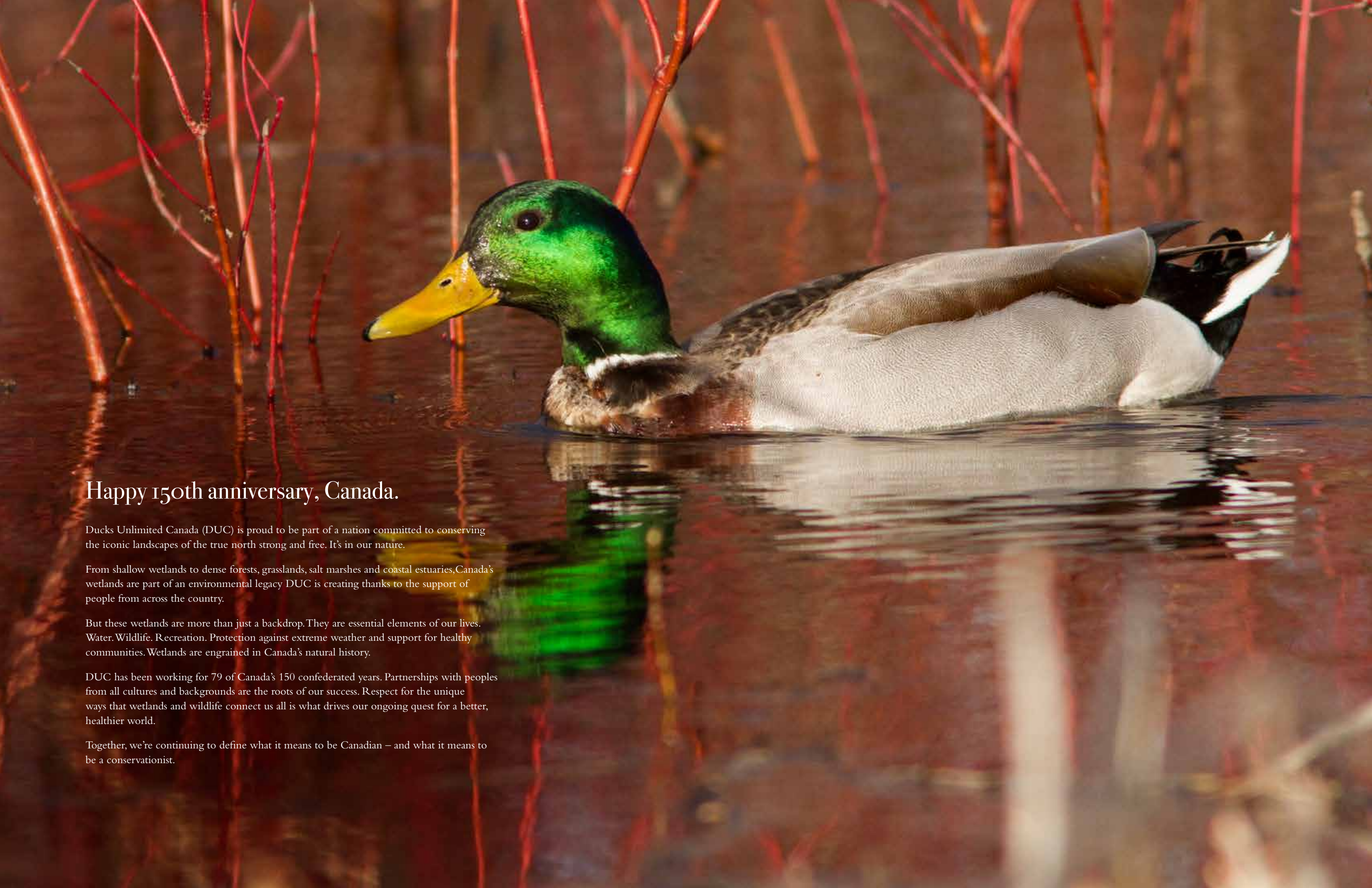
Stories of history and culture.  
Stories of sacred traditions and  
pioneering spirits.

From coast to coast to coast,  
the nation's land and water  
have inspired countless tales  
of exploration and discovery,  
progress and change.





Since 1938, Ducks Unlimited Canada has been helping conserve the hallowed ground where history is made. It's a responsibility we're committed to – now and always.



## Happy 150th anniversary, Canada.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is proud to be part of a nation committed to conserving the iconic landscapes of the true north strong and free. It's in our nature.

From shallow wetlands to dense forests, grasslands, salt marshes and coastal estuaries, Canada's wetlands are part of an environmental legacy DUC is creating thanks to the support of people from across the country.

But these wetlands are more than just a backdrop. They are essential elements of our lives. Water. Wildlife. Recreation. Protection against extreme weather and support for healthy communities. Wetlands are engrained in Canada's natural history.

DUC has been working for 79 of Canada's 150 confederated years. Partnerships with peoples from all cultures and backgrounds are the roots of our success. Respect for the unique ways that wetlands and wildlife connect us all is what drives our ongoing quest for a better, healthier world.

Together, we're continuing to define what it means to be Canadian – and what it means to be a conservationist.

# wetland *conservation*

Part of our heritage

Canada's 150-year history is rich with stories of conservation. DUC's signature greenhead is written into many of them.

## Great Bear Lake

Great Bear Lake is a part of the Yamoria legends — ancient Dene stories about giant heroes, animals and living landscapes. Thanks to the conservation vision of DUC's partners from the surrounding community of Délı̨ne, it's now a UNESCO International Biosphere Reserve.



## Saskatchewan River Delta

The fur trade responsible for opening up Canada's West rose from these sprawling boreal wetlands. DUC is working to help restore and protect the natural cycles of this vast ecosystem.



## Quatse River Estuary

Salmon continue to shape the culture and heritage of the Pacific Coast. DUC's project at the Quatse River Estuary is one of the few places that provides habitat for all seven of B.C.'s salmon species.



## Delta Marsh

On the east side of Delta Marsh is a historic hunt camp once owned by Canada's Eaton family. Eaton Lodge was gifted to DUC in 2011 for permanent protection and stewardship.



## Cap Tourmente

Remains of Samuel de Champlain's farm still exist on the Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area. DUC has been conserving habitats here since the 1970s.



## Annapolis Royal

Canada's first permanent European settlement is also the site of two DUC projects. These salt and freshwater marshes still provide welcome homes for people and wildlife.



## Frank Lake

Millions of migrating birds pass over this Important Bird Area every year. But during WWII, something else filled the skies. Frank Lake served as a relief field for aviation students of the #5 Elementary Flying Training School.



## Lake St. Clair

In 1804, the Earl of Selkirk established the Baldoon settlement on the lake's marshy north shore. Today, a DUC project marks the settlers' original landing site.





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# hallowed *ground*

Natural areas like wetlands have shaped the nation

When you think about Canada's most iconic landscapes, what comes to mind? The Bay of Fundy? The Rocky Mountains? The vast waters of the Great Lakes or the rolling panoramas of the Prairies? Everyone has a place that represents "their Canada." Each is rich with stories of culture and customs – and of conservation.

As we celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary, we're reminded that many of these iconic places in our history are linked to wetlands and to DUC.

DUC's *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign is a natural fit with Canada's sesquicentennial celebrations. It's the most significant conservation campaign in history, and its results are gifts for all Canadians. As you'll see in this report, these gifts are powerful.

Canada is renowned for its wildlife and wild places. It's a country whose heart beats to the rhythm of four distinct seasons, and whose identity is reflected in every shining lake and stream. You are part of a conservation community that's keeping it that way. You are ensuring a sustainable future for the iconic and essential natural areas that continue shaping the nation. Thank you for your support.

Yours in conservation,

*Jim Couch*  
James Couch  
President

*Mac Dunfield*  
Mac Dunfield  
Chairman of the Board



# Rescue Our Wetlands Campaign

## Writing a new chapter of conservation history

Seven years, a \$500-million fundraising goal and an opportunity to change the face of conservation. These are the ambitious building blocks that gave rise to DUC's *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign.

DUC is now six years into the campaign. But after the last dollar and the last acre are tallied, what will be different about the world we live in?

The *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign is primed to make an incredible impact on Canada's land, water and wildlife. Pothole wetlands that were once drained dry will teem with new life. Floodwater that once raced across farm families' fields will be tempered

with a new natural line of defense. Forestry companies will be equipped with the tools and knowledge to minimize their impacts on natural areas like wetlands. Our lakes and rivers will be cleaner. Our wildlife will thrive. Our communities will be better equipped to combat the effects of a changing climate.

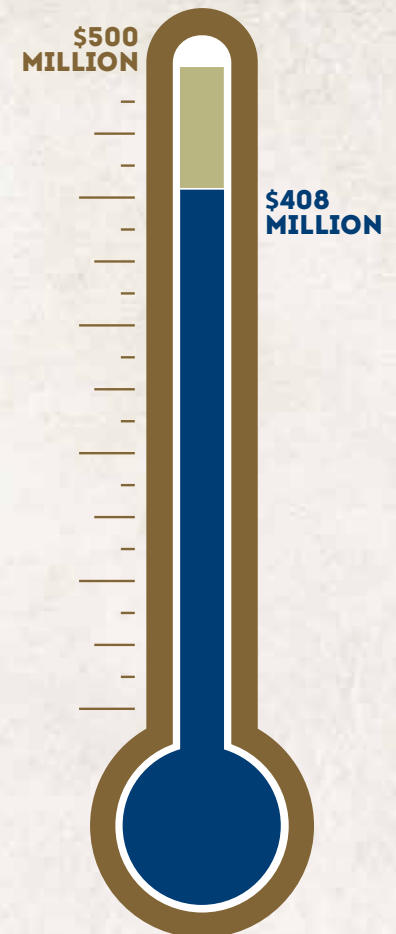
Sometimes these changes aren't obvious. But they're proof that some of the most powerful results are often the most subtle. Success is truly reflected in the lives and the landscapes touched, and the conservation legacy left in the hearts and minds of generations.



## Rising to the Challenge

We're well on our way to achieving our goal. When the campaign concludes on December 31, 2018, results will showcase the collective power of DUC's conservation community.

### Results to date\*



\*As of March 31, 2017

# National Facts

as of March 31, 2017

## Our conservation success

Results from the 2017 fiscal year:

**120,109**

acres (48,606 hectares)  
of habitat conserved<sup>1</sup>

**9.2 MILLION**

acres (3.7 million hectares)  
of habitat positively influenced<sup>2</sup>

Cumulative results to date – since 1938:

**6.4 MILLION**

acres (2.6 million hectares)  
of habitat conserved<sup>1</sup>

**152.4 MILLION**

acres (61.7 million hectares)  
of habitat positively influenced<sup>2</sup>

**10,366**

habitat  
projects

<sup>1</sup> Through land purchase, management agreements, conservation easements and leases.  
<sup>2</sup> Through retention or restoration measures of less than 10 years or policy projects.

## Our conservation community

More than

**137,000** making a difference.

A diverse mix of donors, landowners, students and teachers as well as fundraising event attendees and many others are taking action to support our conservation mission. This conservation community is championed by more than 5,900 dedicated volunteers across the country.

## Supporters of tomorrow

**141,000** gaining greater awareness

Canadians are connecting with us through new media like social networks and political advocacy websites. They're also exploring the world of conservation for themselves by visiting our interpretive centres. All are gaining greater awareness and sharing our conservation messages with others within their spheres of influence.

## Our financial commitment

In the 2017 fiscal year, DUC invested 94 per cent of available revenue in habitat conservation, research, public policy and education.

### Uses of funds (in millions)

*Does not include \$12.2 million of fundraising expenditures*

**\$80.1**

Conservation  
(Includes capitalized conservation land purchases)

**\$5.1**

Administration  
(Excludes \$2.3 million in financial system implementation costs)

## Sources of funds (in millions)

Government grants

**\$49.6**

Fundraising revenue\*

**\$26.7**

*\*Includes gift-in-kind donations*

Investment income

**\$16.0**

Program and other

**\$15.6**

Lines of credit\*\*

**\$9.5**

*\*\*Accessed for revolving land conservation program*

# Conservation

DUC's work to protect, conserve and support the life-giving elements of wetlands is patriotism in its purest form. It's ensuring these natural areas don't slip away into the pages of history.

## Building a national, natural legacy

### Natural Areas Conservation Program delivers cross-Canada results

What does it take to safeguard Canada's greatest natural areas? How can we protect our most significant and sensitive lands? The places home to diverse ecosystems, migratory bird sanctuaries and species at risk? The Government of Canada has entrusted DUC along with other leading conservation organizations and land trusts to put their collective power to work through the Natural Areas Conservation Program.

In the past four years alone, DUC has conserved 36,826 acres (14,903 hectares) of wetlands and other related habitat via the program. In addition to the tremendous environmental benefits these areas provide the country, they also generate impressive economic returns. These habitats hold water from runoff, filter excess nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen and also store carbon. The economic value of these ecological services is estimated at more than \$10.2 million.

Since its inception in 2007, Environment and Climate Change Canada has made \$277.5 million available through the Natural Areas Conservation Program. Of this, \$31.4 million has been directed to DUC. Even more impressive is how these funds are leveraged. For every dollar received through the program, DUC raises at least twice that amount in matching funds – furthering the investment and the impact. It's a partnership that's building a national, natural legacy for all Canadians.

## A leader in Canadian habitat conservation

DUC uses a diverse collection of conservation tools to benefit wetlands across the country.

- Conservation easements
- Restoration and mitigation work
- Revolving land conservation program
- Collaborations with landowners through winter wheat, forage and rangeland programs.

partner  
*spotlight*

### Nature Conservancy of Canada

The Natural Areas Conservation Program is administered by DUC's long-time partner, the Nature Conservancy of Canada. More than one million acres (404,686 hectares) have been conserved since the onset of the program. It's on track to conserve \$1-billion worth of ecologically significant land by 2020. Most of these conserved lands remain accessible to the public.



# Science

Discovering how the natural world works is a drive that's inherent in all of us. At DUC, science brings conservation to life. It's shaping the future of Canada's land, water and wildlife.

## Supporting young scientists

### New fellowships fund the future of wetland and waterfowl research

Conservation science never stops – just ask a graduate student. These young researchers rise with the sun to conduct early morning bird counts. They tramp to and from field sites in boot-sucking mud. They pore over piles of data, review hours of trail camera footage, band waterfowl and test water samples. But if you ask most, they wouldn't have it any other way.

DUC appreciates the demands of graduate research, and understands the significant financial and academic resources it requires. That's why we're committed to supporting these up-and-coming conservation leaders and the cutting-edge science they are conducting.

Through DUC's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, we provide eight annual graduate fellowships in partnership with Ducks Unlimited in the United States. This includes two new fellowships added this past year. Fellowships provide students with important funding to further their education, and are awarded to some of North America's most outstanding students.

Fellowships are funded by generous organizations and individuals who believe in supporting conservation that's based on sound science. Many of these fellowships are funded in perpetuity, which creates an inspiring legacy that unites education, science and conservation. To date, fellowships have been awarded to more than 50 students from 24 universities.

## Research, relationships, results

DUC's world-leading research uncovers the unique relationships between wetlands, waterfowl, watershed health and biodiversity. Led by the Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, our science drives conservation results by:

- Equipping us with environmental data that is meaningful to all Canadians.
- Giving us credibility and influence with governments, industries and landowners.
- Guiding our conservation programs to achieve the best outcomes for people and wildlife.



Kyla Bas is a DUC fellowship winner who studies at the University of Saskatchewan.



## partner *spotlight*

### Michael F.B. Nesbitt Family

Businessman and philanthropist Dr. Michael Nesbitt (above) believes that education opens doors. By funding a new graduate fellowship through DUC's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, he's helping open these doors for generations of young scientists.

The Nesbitt family has a long history in scientific endeavors, which is honoured by this fellowship. The Michael F.B. Nesbitt Family fellowship is awarded annually to an outstanding student whose waterfowl or wetland research work promises to advance conservation in Canada.

The 2017 fellowship recipient is Tyler Harms, a PhD student at Iowa State University. Tyler's research is focused on improving waterfowl surveys to better inform conservation decisions in an intensively farmed landscape.

# Policy

Who we are as conservationists is connected to who we are as Canadians. DUC works with all levels of government to further policies that support wetlands, wildlife and the conservation values we hold closest to us.

## Ducks land at Parliament Hill

### Lobby efforts showcase value of wetlands

Few places in the country evoke more feelings of progress and change, history, culture and traditions than Parliament Hill. This past fall, DUC staff and volunteers took to the buildings' storied hallways to connect with political decision makers about the role of wetlands in Canada's past, present and future.

Known as Day on the Hill, the event saw senior DUC staff and volunteers engage with more than 50 members of parliament from all political stripes. During one-on-one meetings, DUC presented two key recommendations.

The first was to invest in wetlands as green infrastructure. This concept uses the natural functions of wetlands in place of, or to complement, traditional man-made structures like dams

or water treatment systems. It's building with nature instead of concrete – an approach that delivers a host of additional environmental benefits.

The second recommendation was to use wetland conservation as a tool in addressing climate change. Vast networks of wetlands scattered across the country are storing carbon that, if released, would pose sizable new threats to our climate and our lives. Wetlands also help communities become more resilient against extreme weather events like floods and droughts. These powerful ecosystems are some of the best natural defences.

## Advocates and change agents

In addition to advocating for conservation policy, DUC is a trusted agent that puts it into action. We are a chosen partner that's delivering a variety of federal conservation programs, including:

- National Wetland Conservation Fund
- Natural Areas Conservation Program
- Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan



Right: DUC staff and volunteers land on Parliament Hill. Above right: Students from DUC's education programs share their learnings with political officials.



## partner spotlight

### Robert McLean, Environment and Climate Change Canada

Successful conservation requires the support of many partners. Robert McLean of Environment and Climate Change Canada has been a steady and dependable conservation force in the Canadian government for decades. Throughout his career, he has done much to advance habitat stewardship, foster effective partnerships and contribute to the betterment of waterfowl and other wildlife. In recognition of his contributions, Mr. McLean was a 2017 inductee into DUC's North American Waterfowl Conservation Honour Roll. DUC also paid tribute to him at the Day on the Hill parliamentary reception.

# Education

Canada's youth are conservation leaders. DUC nurtures their curiosity and ideas with education programs that inspire, empower and deliver real-world results.

## Meeting of the minds

### Wetland Centres of Excellence host summit of young conservationists

What do you get when you bring together excited students from 24 schools across the country on a video conference call? Despite what you might think, it's not organized chaos. In the case of these students representing DUC's Wetland Centres of Excellence, what emerged was an amazing sharing session all about conservation. It was a virtual summit of the country's brightest young conservationists.

DUC's Wetland Centres of Excellence program engages students in schools across the country to commit to the long-term care of a local wetland. Each centre is unique and delivers different kinds of projects.

Having never met before, these conservation-minded young people were eager to swap stories about constructing boardwalks, banding

owls and ducks at night, wading through cold swamps in hip waders, building nest boxes, planting and restoring wetlands, and how they share their experiences with others in their schools and their communities.

This year more than 750 Wetland Centres of Excellence students engaged in wetland studies and conservation projects. Many also helped mentor more than 5,000 younger students by taking them on field trips to local wetlands. It's a program that's garnering much praise and recognition. This spring, the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communications presented DUC's Wetland Centres of Excellence network with its Outstanding Organization Award.

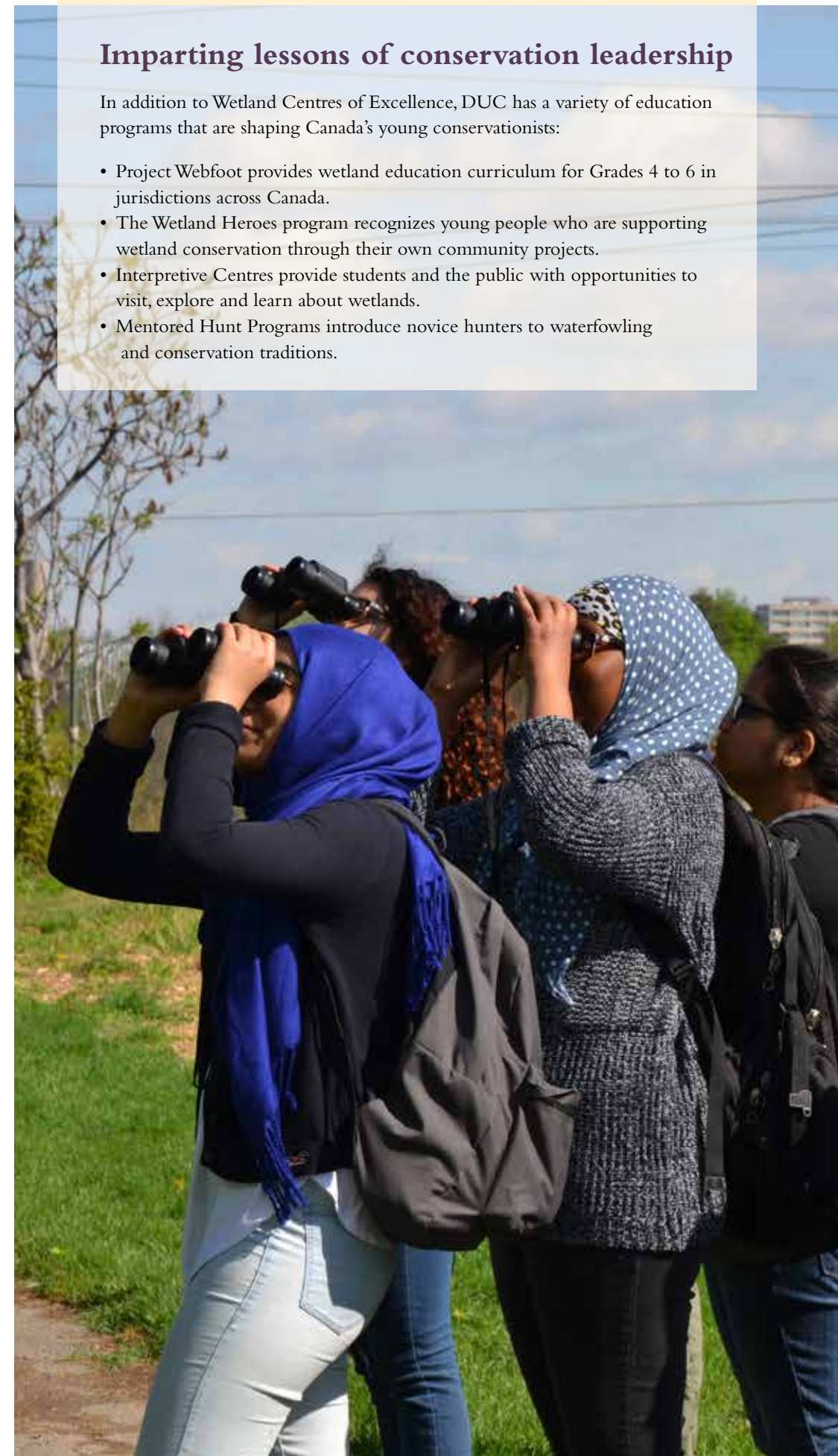


Ontario students take part in videoconference activities at Royal Botanical Gardens. Right: Students from Toronto's Marc Garneau Collegiate participate in a wetland workshop.

## Imparting lessons of conservation leadership

In addition to Wetland Centres of Excellence, DUC has a variety of education programs that are shaping Canada's young conservationists:

- Project Webfoot provides wetland education curriculum for Grades 4 to 6 in jurisdictions across Canada.
- The Wetland Heroes program recognizes young people who are supporting wetland conservation through their own community projects.
- Interpretive Centres provide students and the public with opportunities to visit, explore and learn about wetlands.
- Mentored Hunt Programs introduce novice hunters to waterfowling and conservation traditions.



©Jackson Hudecki, Royal Botanical Gardens

## partner spotlight

### Royal Botanical Gardens

Located on the border of Burlington and Hamilton in Ontario, the Royal Botanical Gardens is part of the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve. In addition to being a National Historic Site, it's also a national Important Bird Area and a national Important Area for Reptiles and Amphibians. As DUC's newest Wetland Centre of Excellence, the Royal Botanical Gardens will give students from nearby Aldershot School the opportunity to study its on-site wetland, as well as its 27-kilometre trail system and nearby Cootes Paradise Marsh.

# International Partnerships

DUC conservation efforts are part of a continental approach. International co-operation and the support of partners in many jurisdictions form the foundations of our biggest conservation accomplishments.

## Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

### Champions for continental conservation

Water flows across borders and waterfowl fly from one end of the continent to the other. As North Americans, we share these resources. This means we also share the responsibility of caring for them. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is championing this philosophy of cross-border conservation throughout the United States.

Part of the Association's mandate is encouraging state fish and wildlife agencies to contribute a portion of their conservation funding to Canada. It's a legacy of collaboration that now spans more than 50 years. Today, DUC is fortunate to have the support of 42 state partners that send nearly \$3.5 million annually to Canada.

These states have the foresight, courage and generosity to direct funds outside their political jurisdictions to support greater conservation goals. And thanks to their leadership, people who may have never been to Canada or seen the habitat that supports the migratory birds they love understand the value of conserving areas beyond their borders.

For a complete listing of U.S. state partners, view DUC's FY17 Conservation Supporters listing.

## A continental force for conservation

By partnering with our Ducks Unlimited colleagues in the United States and Mexico, DUC delivers the greatest impact by aligning our conservation efforts. We recognize each country's role in sustaining the future of wetlands across the continent. Our organizations are guided by the principles of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) that brings together international, federal, provincial, state and municipal governments committed to waterfowl conservation. DUC is the NAWMP's primary facilitator of conservation work in Canada.

partner  
*spotlight*

## Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

For more than 50 years, people in Louisiana have committed their hearts and dollars to ensuring waterfowl flights continue from one end of the flyway to the other. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries provides approximately \$325,000 USD for Canadian conservation efforts annually. It's one of the largest state grant programs in the U.S. These funds are then matched, sometimes up to four times, through other conservation partnerships.



Approximately 70 per cent of North America's ducks breed in Canada



# Philanthropic Giving

DUC's passionate donors give new meaning to philanthropy. Their gifts are an extension of their hopes and dreams for the future. Their generosity honours special people, places and traditions.

## Conservation that's personal

### Individual donors keep conservation close to heart

Every charitable act begins with a personal connection. Nowhere are these connections more powerful than within the hearts of our individual donors. These people are deeply invested in wetlands and waterfowl. Their motivations are many. It might be preserving a special piece of property, honouring family traditions in the outdoors or giving back to the wildlife they love.

Individual donors are playing a key role in the success of DUC's *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign. To date, there are more than 3,600 individual Canadian donors who have made major gifts of \$10,000 or more as part of the campaign. DUC is also fortunate to

have the support of thousands more donors who make their homes in the United States. They recognize that investing in Canadian habitat ensures a future for North America's waterfowl and the outdoor traditions they love. These individual gifts allow DUC to access important matching funds from a variety of partners, often times quadrupling the total investment.

Whatever the reason individuals choose to give to DUC, they're entrusting us to complete the work that will fulfill their vision. It's a responsibility we're humbled to uphold.

## Giving Spirits

In addition to generous individuals who make inspiring personal gifts, DUC enjoys diverse support from conservationists who represent all segments of society.

- DUC Feather Society members are leaving a conservation legacy by making a planned gift through their will.
- Environmentally focused corporations are giving back by investing in natural areas and the ecosystem services they provide.
- Foundations support important components of our work to benefit youth, communities and the future of our environment.
- Affinity partners share their brands to bring unique business offerings to customers in support of conservation.

partner  
*spotlight*

## Murray Auto Group

Brothers Doug and Dan Murray have Manitoba roots that run deep. The automotive business that bears their name was born in the rolling prairies of the province's southwest. In 1926, their grandfather set up his first dealership in Souris. It's a place where pothole wetlands dot the surrounding farm fields. It's also a place where the family seed of philanthropy and community involvement was sown. Three generations and numerous Canadian dealerships later, Doug and Dan remain committed to helping conserve habitat here at home. Together with the Murray Auto Group, they've made a \$200,000 donation to DUC that will conserve wetlands across Manitoba. Having been impacted by flooding around the Assiniboine River in recent years, the Murrays are keen to support conservation efforts that keep wetlands on the landscape. Their gift, when leveraged with the support of our partners, will result in an investment of up to \$800,000 in Manitoba's wetlands.

Oak Hammock Marsh, Manitoba

**MURRAY**  
AUTO GROUP

# Grassroots Fundraising

Across the country, ordinary people are making extraordinary contributions to conservation. They give for the good of their communities. For the love of the land. For the promise of a future ripe with possibility.

## Working on the frontlines

### Volunteers put their passion into action

Each of us has a role to play, and all of us have something to contribute. This is the essence of volunteer service. For 79 years, DUC volunteers have lived by this creed, using their collective passion and power to unite our communities and our country in support of conservation.

This year, more than 5,900 volunteers hosted 380 fundraising events across the country. These fun-filled dinners, auctions, clay shoots, golf tournaments and other activities brought together a total of 52,290 attendees. By sharing their time and talents to

raise funds for DUC's wetland conservation efforts, volunteers help make their communities healthier places for waterfowl, other wildlife and people.

Volunteers are special people who inspire others by leading, sharing and stepping up when it matters most. Their selfless actions established DUC back in 1938; today they continue driving DUC's success. Volunteers are stewards of the land, pillars of our communities and ambassadors for conservation in Canada.



Above left: Alberta volunteer Shawn O'Neill receives 20-year service award.  
 Above: Manitoba volunteers present "Duck & Run" race medals.  
 Left: Manitoba's "Boys Night Out" event attracts a crowd of 500 people.  
 Top right: DUC's Yorkton chapter hosts a Grey Cup tailgate party.  
 Middle right: Quebec celebrates 40 years of DUC history in the province with a gala dinner.  
 Bottom right: University of Manitoba Wetlanders inaugural dinner committee.

## Support from many sources

Grassroots fundraising is equal parts creativity, effort and passion. DUC provides many unique and rewarding ways to get involved.

- Nature lovers and art collectors can bid on high-quality artwork available through DUC's sealed bid auction easels.
- Shoppers looking for unique DUC-branded items can make purchases through our online store and auctions.
- Supporters can take advantage of a wide variety of special offers and discounts with conservation-minded businesses partnering with DUC.



## partner spotlight

### DUC's National Volunteers of the Year

DUC's National Volunteer of the Year award is typically presented to one individual whose profile stands out as "above and beyond." This year, however, we were again reminded how hard the selection process is when all of our volunteers shine so brightly. After two attempts at tie breaks, it was clear that two special women deserved the honour.

Candace Franke has been a DUC volunteer for 21 years. She has served the past 17 years on the Saskatoon Ladies Committee, 15 as committee chair. Described as someone who "bleeds green," Franke is a leader whose passion for the cause is second to none.



Liz Kozakowski (below) is a 28-year volunteer who has served for the past 26 years as chair of Manitoba's Thompson committee. Fellow volunteers tout her as being a top ticket seller, donation gatherer and conservation booster who puts the fun in fundraising. Kozakowski's committee achieved the most event income for Manitoba in 2016.



# British Columbia

## Making conservation history at Somenos Lake

### Donation secures essential habitat in the heart of Cowichan Valley

A historic donation from a long-time partner is leaving a lasting impact on Vancouver Island. Last fall, TimberWest Forest Corporation donated the entire 234-acre (95-hectare) Somenos lakebed to DUC. Never has an entire lakebed been legally surveyed and donated to a single non-government organization. It's now a cornerstone of conservation in the Cowichan area.

Nestled in the Cowichan Valley, Somenos Lake and its surrounding marshland sustain thousands of waterfowl, fish and other wildlife. More than 200 species of birds have been recorded on or around

the lake. This includes nearly five per cent of the world's trumpeter swans that winter on the lake – the second highest density on Vancouver Island. It's an iconic destination for outdoor enthusiasts, birdwatchers and hikers alike.

The donation is a testament to the strong 15-year partnership cultivated between TimberWest and DUC. Protecting the Somenos lakebed will make an incredible contribution to conservation on Vancouver Island and the community of North Cowichan.

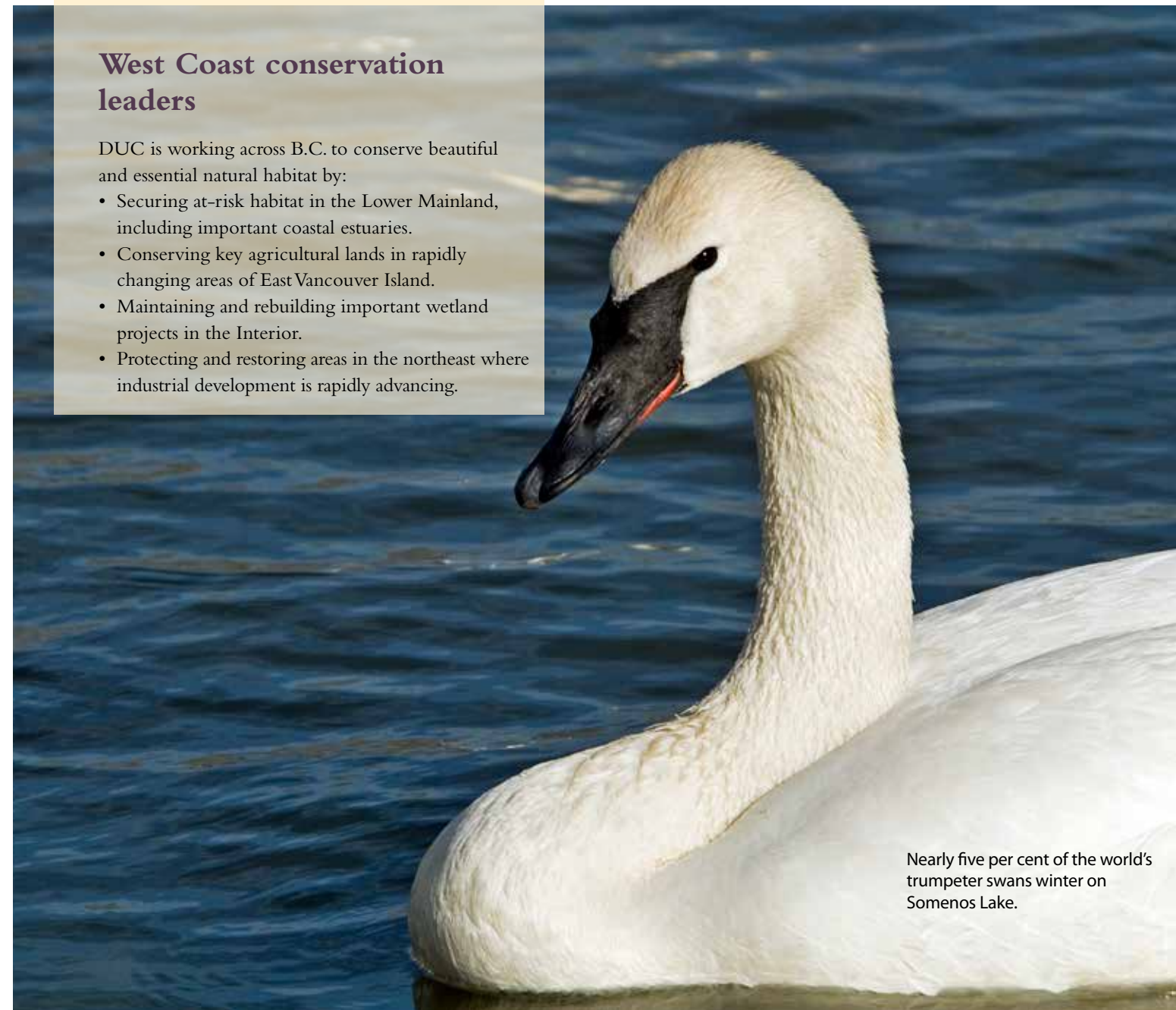


Somenos Lake was formed when glaciers receded 11,000 years ago.

## West Coast conservation leaders

DUC is working across B.C. to conserve beautiful and essential natural habitat by:

- Securing at-risk habitat in the Lower Mainland, including important coastal estuaries.
- Conserving key agricultural lands in rapidly changing areas of East Vancouver Island.
- Maintaining and rebuilding important wetland projects in the Interior.
- Protecting and restoring areas in the northeast where industrial development is rapidly advancing.



Nearly five per cent of the world's trumpeter swans winter on Somenos Lake.

## partner spotlight

### TimberWest

TimberWest has been operating on Vancouver Island and Coastal B.C. for more than 100 years. It's committed to managing lands sustainably while preserving biodiversity to ensure the working forest remains healthy and productive for future generations. TimberWest worked closely with conservation groups, government and the community over a number of years to raise the title on Somenos lakebed. The donation ensures wildlife conservation will be managed for generations to come.



11,875 supporters

925 volunteers

965 landowner partners

612 habitat projects

3,819 acres (1,545 hectares) secured in FY17

444,203 acres (179,763 hectares) secured since 1938

8,041,677 acres (3,254,351 hectares) influenced since 1938

# Alberta

## MarshKeepers make their mark

### Volunteer program leans on passionate locals to help maintain landscape

With rubber boots and clipboards, conversation-minded Albertans trek through DUC projects on foot. They're documenting the plants and wildlife they see. They're making note of any destructive activity on the land, and they're collecting any litter they find. It's all in a day's work. But most will tell you that it never feels this way. Being a MarshKeeper is simply an outlet for their passion for the outdoors.

MarshKeepers are a special group of DUC volunteers who help monitor the wetlands and uplands under our care. DUC owns more than 100,000 acres (40,468 hectares) of purchased land in Alberta. In addition to providing wildlife with critical habitat,

these areas make Alberta communities stronger and healthier by storing carbon, filtering water and mitigating against floods. But with just nine field staff, it's a challenge for DUC to regularly maintain each project. MarshKeepers and the data they supply through regular scouting reports save DUC important resources, which can then be reinvested to deliver more conservation.

There are 165 MarshKeepers active throughout the province. By the end of 2017, they will have inspected approximately 55,000 acres (22,258 hectares). This is their gift to Canada's wetlands, waterfowl and all wildlife.



DUC MarshKeepers Kevin Guenard and Christen Sweet

## Preserving Alberta's natural heritage

DUC's efforts in the province take many forms, collaborating with those who share our passion for natural lands.

- DUC delivers wetland conservation and restoration work that will help reduce the impact of flooding and drought through the Government of Alberta's Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program.
- Our landowner programs help farmers and ranchers steward wildlife habitat and maximize land use.
- Places like the John E. Poole Wetland, Frank Lake and Bow Habitat Station serve as hands-on interpretive centres for our award-winning wetland education program.



Frank Lake, Alberta

## partner spotlight

### The Heibert and Milner family



A typical weekend for this Red Deer family includes packing a picnic lunch, loading into their truck and travelling 40 minutes northeast to the White Sands area. Here, near the shores of Buffalo Lake, they inspect the wetland habitat and record their findings. Unlike in their day-to-day lives, marshkeeping is electronics-free – a rule they made for themselves. The one exception: the family camera, used to document special moments.

16,636 supporters	1,275 volunteers	4,312 landowner partners	2,132 habitat projects	25,835 acres (10,455 hectares) secured in FY17	2,330,356 acres (943,062 hectares) secured since 1938	13,763,007 acres (5,569,691 hectares) influenced since 1938
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# Saskatchewan

## Launching FlexFarm

### Landowners flex their farms' muscles with new program

High soil salinity. Flood-prone areas. Poor soil quality. Certain areas of land can prove to be unprofitable for a variety of reasons. And when land fails to deliver yields, producers suffer. But a new DUC pilot program in Saskatchewan is helping put an end to the struggle farmers face when trying to make unproductive areas profitable.

FlexFarm is DUC's innovative incentive program that pays landowners to restore grasslands and wetlands on their property. What sets FlexFarm apart from other programs is that farmers also receive subsequent payments for the environmental benefits these newly restored areas produce.

The concept unites the business of agriculture with good environmental stewardship in ways that are both profitable and sustainable. Producers get paid for the canola, wheat or corn they produce; so they should be paid for the natural commodities the land also provides. Things like flood retention, carbon sequestration and nutrient removal have real economic value.

Initially offered in the rural municipalities of Hoodoo, Three Lakes and Humboldt, the program was a huge success and filled up within months. FlexFarm is another way that agriculture and conservation are growing forward, together.



Cropland, grasslands and wetlands can co-exist. Together they help create a more sustainable and profitable farm.

13,867 supporters	664 volunteers	4,380 landowner partners	3,056 habitat projects	60,108 acres (24,325 hectares) secured in FY17	1,776,850 acres (719,066 hectares) secured since 1938	7,307,252 acres (2,957,140 hectares) influenced since 1938
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DUC education programs provide students with hands-on activities

## Conservation on the working landscape

Saskatchewan is the heart of North America's waterfowl breeding grounds. It's also one of the continent's most intensively farmed areas. DUC works to conserve and restore wetlands on this highly productive land in many ways:

- Partnering with landowners, industry and other stakeholders to promote policies that protect wetlands.
- Delivering DUC's Revolving Land Conservation Program and forage incentive programs to help conserve habitat while acknowledging the needs of the agricultural landscape.
- Providing education programs and access to sites like Chappell Marsh in Saskatoon, McKell Wascana Conservation Park in Regina and the Mossbank School Wetland Centre of Excellence where people can learn about wetlands firsthand.
- Working with industry groups like K+S Potash to deliver wetland mitigation.

## partner spotlight

DUC is part of a diverse group of industry and conservation partners who are developing a shared vision for Canadian agriculture over the next 10 years. The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops imagines a future where no new land is brought into agricultural production, and where environmental benefits, farm production and profitability increase on an existing land base. It's a vision where Canadian farmers can meet the growing demand for food while



conserving and restoring soil, water and wildlife, as well as managing climate risk for future generations.

DUC is proud to join the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, CropLife Canada, Fertilizer Canada, Grain Growers of Canada, Soil Conservation Council of Canada, and the World Wildlife Fund Canada in pursuing this vision for a sustainable future.

# Manitoba

## Agriculture and conservation growing together

### Landowner partnerships deliver record year

When Manitoba conservation staff started tallying results from the past year, a theme quickly emerged. Across the board, in almost every category and program, results were coming in at record highs.

DUC's forage program converted more cultivated land to hay or pastureland than ever before. More conservation easements were signed than ever before, which are now protecting natural features like wetlands in perpetuity. And more land was bought, restored and sold through the Revolving Land Conservation Program than ever before.

In particular, the Revolving Land Conservation Program stands out as a significant win. DUC's goal was to purchase eight quarters and secure 850 acres (344 hectares) of protected habitat across the

province. When all was said and done, DUC had purchased 19 quarters protecting 1,218 acres (493 hectares) of habitat. This total rockets up to 2,997 acres (1,213 hectares) when counting the areas also available for restoration.

Central to all of these successes is strong partnerships with landowners. Farmers and ranchers have always been our most important allies on the landscape. These hardworking people are the backbone of our agricultural community, and DUC's programs continue to evolve in response to the changing industry. As this year's record-setting results show, many Manitoba agricultural producers are working with DUC to enhance the land and their business.

DUC's Revolving Land Conservation Program protected 1,218 acres (493 hectares) of habitat in Manitoba this year.



11,532 supporters	789 volunteers	3,168 landowner partners	1,463 habitat projects	14,921 acres (6,038 hectares) secured in FY17	668,070 acres (270,358 hectares) secured since 1938	2,022,859 acres (818,622 hectares) influenced since 1938
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## Preserving our prairies

DUC's work in Manitoba takes many forms; it's possible thanks to the support of those who share our passion for conservation:

- Policy efforts urge government officials to develop effective regulations that will protect wetlands and stop drainage.
- Landowner programs help producers deliver wildlife habitat as well as implement sustainable cropping, grazing and haying practices on their land.
- Award-winning interpretive centre programs bring the wonder of wetlands into people's lives. Outreach programs and student-led Wetland Centres of Excellence are helping shape tomorrow's conservation leaders.



Observation deck at the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre



## partner *spotlight*

### Wade Unrau

Wade Unrau is a young farmer who makes his home in the Whitewater Lake area near Boissevain. Looking to expand his operation, Unrau purchased two separate parcels of land through DUC's Revolving Land Conservation Program. Under the program, DUC purchases property with significant conservation value. DUC restores its wetlands, and protects this habitat by placing a permanent conservation easement on the land. The land is then put back on the market, and new owners like Unrau put the land into production as they see fit. The wetlands will remain protected and intact under the conservation easement.

With land values on the rise, the Revolving Land Conservation Program provides opportunities for young farmers like Unrau to acquire agricultural land at an affordable price. It's also an effective way to incorporate environmental stewardship into their business.

# Ontario

## Helping habitat on Amherst Island

### Conservation projects provide TLC for special coastal wetland

At just 20 kilometres long and five kilometres wide, Amherst Island is known for its friendly people, tree-lined roads and breathtaking lakeshore views. But this petite parcel of land is also a haven for wildlife. The island's large coastal wetland represents some of North America's most important waterfowl habitat.

Protecting coastal marshes like this one along the lower Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River is one of DUC's top conservation priorities in Southern Ontario. It's an area that's experienced significant wetland loss over the years, but continues to see good numbers of waterfowl during spring and fall migrations.

Historically, the marsh was regulated by Lake Ontario. However, changing water levels caused by dam construction led to extreme overgrowth of aquatic vegetation. This had serious impact on the diversity of waterfowl and wildlife species that called the marsh home.

DUC began working in the area in 1997. Now, 20 years later, infrastructure at the Amherst Island wetland was in need of repair. DUC has spent much of the past year re-building and re-coring nearly two kilometres of dyke, cleaning out or expanding more than 1,200 metres of old interior channels and creating 6.4 acres (2.6 hectares) of open water in six different locations. The pumping system was also refurbished so future changes in water levels will emulate the natural fluctuations that historically took place on Lake Ontario.

Results are proving to be well worth the effort. Waterfowl habitat is being sustained. The local community is benefiting from increased hunting, bird watching and recreational opportunities. And this quaint island continues to be a welcome destination for both people and wildlife.



Amherst Island is located on the northeastern shore of Lake Ontario.

## Delivering diverse conservation

As the province with the most culturally diverse population in Canada, Ontario's landscape is as varied as its residents. DUC is delivering a wide range of conservation work made for every unique place and person:

- Landowner programs provide opportunities for conservation and agriculture to work in harmony.
- Collaborations with industry are bringing together the interests of all who depend on Ontario's land and water to live, work and play.
- Invasive species work is combating the threats of things like European water chestnut and phragmites.
- Policy efforts are working to support the Province of Ontario's commitment to stop wetland loss by the year 2025.
- Science and research are examining the impacts of human activity on Ontario's landscape, and are guiding continual improvements to our conservation programs.



DUC volunteers from Ontario Power Generation at Oshawa Second Marsh

## partner spotlight

### Cross-border support

DUC's wetland restoration work on Amherst Island was possible thanks to the support of several government partners on both sides of the 49th parallel. Financial assistance was received from: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; Environment Canada and Climate Change's Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk; Wildlife Habitat Canada; the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change's Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund; the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry; and our American counterpart, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Canada and the United States share the responsibility of caring for the Great Lakes and their associated ecosystems. Cross-border partnerships like these are key to advancing conservation efforts in Ontario's most populous region.



©Don Miller

20,351 supporters

1,193 volunteers

3,053 landowner partners

1,574 habitat projects

8,771 acres (3,549 hectares) secured in FY17

974,785 acres (394,481 hectares) secured since 1938

689,634 acres (279,085 hectares) influenced since 1938

# Quebec

## Building on a legacy

### Celebrating 40 years of conservation action and success

Few provinces are as rich in history and natural heritage as Quebec. Bestowed with abundant wetlands, Quebec has much to protect and much to gain from focussed, committed conservation. This year, DUC celebrated 40 years of safeguarding the land and water that's given life and meaning to the province and its people. It's a milestone marked by bold conservation action and on-the-ground success.

Our first office in Quebec opened in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu in 1976. This led to the development of the Thurso Marsh and, as time went on, the creation of hundreds of other conservation projects and partnerships. The recent introduction of Bill 132, regarding the conservation of wetlands and bodies of water, is the latest symbol of our progress. The Act incorporates many of DUC's recommendations and is the result of ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing with government.

DUC has also been at the forefront of an extensive wetland mapping program. The program is using leading-edge technology to provide industry and development groups with the information they need to avoid sensitive areas like wetlands when working on the land. The technology is recognized by the government and will ultimately map wetlands in all inhabited areas in southern Quebec.

Despite 40 years of progress, challenges remain. DUC is working to enhance the public's understanding of wetlands and the role they play in water health and the environment as a whole. Our strong historical and cultural ties to Quebec's landscapes will continue motivating our efforts well into the future. Conservation is who we are.

## Looking to the future

Quebec has an impressive diversity of wetlands that require focused care now and into the future. DUC is working to protect and conserve them in a variety of ways:

- Focused conservation efforts on priority wetlands like those in the St. Lawrence River corridor, as well as areas along the Ottawa River and the South River in the Montérégie.
- Collaborating with all levels of government to ensure the implementation of effective wetland policies.
- Supporting future conservationists through education programs like the Wetland Centres of Excellence.
- Conducting scientific research to better understand wetlands, particularly in lesser known areas of the boreal forest and northern Quebec.



Montmagny Marsh and surrounding town.



National Assembly of Quebec.

© Claude Mathien

3,034 supporters	242 volunteers	330 landowner partners	254 habitat projects	4,605 acres (1,864 hectares) secured in FY17	71,102 acres (28,774 hectares) secured since 1938	38,731,862 acres (15,674,228 hectares) influenced since 1938
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## partner spotlight

### James Madon

DUC's 40-year milestone in Quebec is a testament to the many generous donors who continue supporting our conservation efforts. James Madon, a long-time supporter and DUC board member, is a shining example of the kind of committed support that exists within the province. Mr. Madon recently joined DUC's Feather Society by making a \$100,000 planned gift. This is in addition to a remarkable \$50,000 monetary donation. Mr. Madon is leaving a lasting legacy – one that will live on in Quebec's wetlands and other wild places.



# New Brunswick

## Rewilding Charter's Pit

Compost, top soil and a lot of hard work turns an old gravel pit into a healthy wetland.

Charter's Wetland was an old, exhausted gravel pit outside of Fredericton that would collect water in its rock bowl any time it rained. Despite a lack of organic material in the pit, beavers started building dams there to keep the water from draining. But even with the water staying put, not much would grow.

In 2016, DUC staff approached Charter's Construction, which owned the property, to see if they'd be interested in doing a restoration. Turning the pit into a wetland might be tough, but with some creative thinking, staff were sure they could give the land new life.

Because the pits were large and deep, the land had to first be contoured to establish the correct water level. Staff then put a layer of compost on top of the newly contoured land as an injection of nutrients. Two beaver levelers were installed, as well as a rock spillway for overflow.

Work on the 35-acre (14-hectare) restored wetland was completed in October 2016. In early spring, sprigs of green were sprouting all over the soil. Staff and volunteers also installed nest boxes in the area, and have already witnessed the wetland being used by mallards and a kingfisher.



Spreading top soil as part of restoration efforts.

3,138 supporters

290 volunteers

612 landowner partners

444 habitat projects

875 acres (354 hectares) secured in FY17

53,888 acres (21,808 hectares) secured since 1938

940,255 acres (380,508 hectares) influenced since 1938

## Safeguarding New Brunswick's natural wonder

New Brunswick's wetlands and coastal areas are critically important to wildlife and people. DUC is working to protect, conserve and restore them in many ways:

- Teaming up with universities across Atlantic Canada to research fish migration and build better fishways, which accommodate a wider variety of fish.
- The Ducks Unlimited Conservation Centre in Fredericton provides an exciting, educational environment for the public to learn about New Brunswick's wetlands.
- The Beaubassin Research Centre perched on the Tantramar Marshes near the New Brunswick/Nova Scotia border is DUC's hub for wetland and waterfowl research in Atlantic Canada.
- DUC partners with local governments to develop effective policies that protect wetlands, setting positive examples for other provinces to follow.



Beaubassin Research Centre

## partner spotlight

### Charter's Construction

The partnership between DUC and Charter's Construction on this special restoration project illustrates the possibilities that exist for restoring unique types of wetlands. Giving back to the land in this way is something that's important to companies like Charter's. In partnership with DUC, the company was able to create a wetland that holds more than just water.



# Nova Scotia

## Taking a wetland stand

### One man's mission opens door to new wetland restoration opportunities

Several years ago, Bill Barrow purchased a property on agricultural marshland (lands protected by dyke walls) near Amherst. Here, the avid outdoorsman added a small camp; a getaway where he could enjoy nature during his retirement years. Barrow saw potential to provide more wildlife habitat by restoring a 22-acre (9-hectare) marsh on his property, but there was a problem. Since his project consisted of protected agricultural land—which is highly regulated under the Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act—he was not permitted to restore the wetland.

Barrow persevered. After several years of making applications and working with DUC through municipal and provincial approvals, his wetland restoration project got the green light. From December 2016 to February 2017, DUC worked to create the freshwater

wetland by constructing dykes to capture water that was being released by ditches. Now, the restored wetland will function as improved habitat and will also slowly release water during spring flood events, decreasing the duration of flooding downstream. Barrow has plans to invite community groups and schools to visit the wetland once it's established.

It's the first time in a decade that DUC has created a project like this on Nova Scotia dykeland, and it's a great addition to DUC's existing projects in the area. Thanks to the efforts of Bill, who fostered positive relationships along the way, there are opportunities for similar restoration projects in the province on non-productive agriculture lands.



Bill Barrow went the extra mile to restore a wetland on his property.

3,644  
supporters

231  
volunteers

713  
landowner  
partners

411  
habitat  
projects

561  
acres  
(227 hectares)  
secured in FY17

46,136  
acres  
(18,671 hectares)  
secured since 1938

962,091  
acres  
(389,344 hectares)  
influenced since 1938

## East coast conservation efforts

DUC is working across Nova Scotia to conserve beautiful and essential natural habitat by:

- Working with partners to study eider populations along the province's eastern shore.
- Teaming up with universities across Atlantic Canada to research fish migration and build better fishways, which accommodate a wider variety of fish.
- Working with landowners to increase biodiversity on agricultural lands.
- Delivering wetland education programs like Project Webfoot and working with DUC Wetland Centres of Excellence schools to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.
- Supporting strong wetland policies currently in place with local governments.



Coastal regions support colonies of sea ducks like common eider.

## partner spotlight

### Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture

The Barrow wetland project is a wonderful example of how individuals, non-profit organizations like DUC and provincial government agencies can work together to improve protection for farmland and wetlands. The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture is looking to work with DUC to tackle the many challenges associated with dykeland infrastructure maintenance moving forward. They are also working with DUC researchers to monitor fish passage through new aboiteau structures.



# Prince Edward Island

## Building Blanchard's Pond

Restoring one wetland's water control structure brought a P.E.I. community back to the marsh

Blanchard's Pond sits near the western tip of Prince Edward Island among farm fields and pockets of forest. For decades, the former mill pond has been a centre for the community outside of Tignish. Locals spend time fishing, trapping and bird watching on the marsh, which has always teemed with ducks, eagles and other wildlife.

The old mill shut down in the 1940s, and was left derelict. Eventually another water control structure was installed at the site, but was washed out in the 1970s. That's when DUC became involved at the marsh. DUC installed a new control structure as well as a fishway so that fish would swim in and out of the marsh to spawn.

More than 30 years later, in December 2014, the DUC dyke washed out again after an unusually heavy rainstorm.

In 2016, after much planning, DUC started building a new and much improved water-control structure that could handle more frequent and heavier rain events. The new structure also included an updated fish ladder that could pass a wider variety of fish, especially weaker swimming species like gaspereau. It was an ambitious undertaking. Work on the structure started in July 2016 and finished in October. Today, the community is back at Blanchard's Pond, enjoying the marsh and the wildlife again.



Restoration efforts have given Blanchard's Pond a new lease on life.

1,146 supporters	70 volunteers	586 landowner partners	373 habitat projects	521 acres (211 hectares) secured in FY17	13,516 acres (5,470 hectares) secured since 1938	81,306 acres (32,903 hectares) influenced since 1938
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## Conservation, island style

P.E.I.'s wetlands and coastal areas support waterfowl from as far south as the Caribbean to as far north as the sub-Arctic. They filter water, protect coastlines and give people a place to connect with nature.

Don't let its size fool you. P.E.I. is delivering big conservation wins:

- DUC is working to conserve precious salt water marshes on the island.
- With the help of research and funding partners, DUC is showcasing the latest in fishway design, building more naturalized and hybrid fish ladders.
- DUC's invasive species work is helping to control purple loosestrife.
- DUC staff and volunteers in P.E.I. take part in Youth Waterfowler Heritage Day, which provides kids aged 12 to 17 the chance learn outdoor and hunting skills as well as about wildlife conservation.



A hybrid fishway at Stavert's Pond.



## partner spotlight

### Community co-operation

Ambitious projects like the one at Blanchard's Pond depend on co-operation. DUC worked with the local watershed group, the Government of Prince Edward Island as well as the Government of Canada through the National Wetland Conservation Fund. The Department of Fish and Wildlife helped plan the project and the Department of Transportation helped test the concrete in the structure. Together, they've ensured Islanders will enjoy this special marsh for decades to come.

# Newfoundland & Labrador

## Hands-on community conservation

### Cavity nest box program provides duck habitat, data and local stewardship opportunities

Bits of broken egg shells, a soft bed of down, soft peeping sounds from newly-hatched ducklings: nest boxes can be a treasure trove of information and vital habitat for certain waterfowl species and other wildlife.

Goldeneyes and mergansers nest in tree cavities. But when this natural habitat is scarce, humans can come to the rescue with constructed nest boxes. Across Newfoundland and Labrador, a network of non-profit agencies, schools and community volunteers are banding together to ensure cavity-nesting ducks have safe places to nest and raise their broods.

Through DUC's Cavity Nest Box Steward Program, volunteers sign a three-year agreement to maintain and monitor a nest box installed either on their property or at key locations. DUC conducts nest box workshops in communities across the province,

partnering with groups like the Indian Bay Ecosystem Corporation and the Carmanville Habitat Committee who show local residents how to build and install the boxes. The federal government's EcoAction Community Funding Program provided financial support for the nest box program.

DUC is building strong ties with the volunteer participants through a bi-annual electronic newsletter that shares photos and program updates, and links to data collection resources.

It's a model that works. Community volunteers of all ages can play a hands-on, active role in conservation every step of the way. And the stewards know that the data they provide (species, size of brood, time of nesting) from their boxes will be used to inform conservation decisions in the future.



Community volunteers take part in nest box workshops across the province.

## Wetland conservation on The Rock

DUC's wetland conservation work in Newfoundland and Labrador impacts important coastal areas as well as inland boreal ecosystems. These efforts are as unique and diverse as the province itself:

- DUC is working to combat and remove invasive purple loosestrife across the province.
- Project Webfoot education programs introduce students to the importance of wetlands.
- By managing a complex of dams, dykes and fishways DUC is helping control water levels and provide habitat for waterfowl, fish and other wildlife.
- DUC works with local governments to put forward policy recommendations that will address the province's unique landscape, needs and economy.



DUC is working to control purple loosestrife, an invasive species.

partner  
*spotlight*

### Indian Bay Ecosystem Corporation

The Indian Bay Ecosystem Corporation (IBEC) is a non-profit community organization with a mission to protect the Indian Bay watershed. An important delivery partner of DUC's Project Webfoot education program, IBEC staff lead wetland field trips for elementary students in the area, and support the Cavity Nest Box Stewardship Program by teaching students to build the prefabricated nest boxes to be installed at key locations within the watershed.



1,719  
supporters

234  
volunteers

26  
landowner  
partners

45  
habitat  
projects

93  
acres  
(38 hectares)  
secured in FY17

9,625  
acres  
(3,895 hectares)  
secured since 1938

14,332,489  
acres  
(5,800,153 hectares)  
influenced since 1938

# Boreal Region

## Researching landscape change

### Linear features and the future of waterfowl

What happens when roads are built through the boreal backcountry? What effects do pipelines and seismic lines have on wetlands? How are waterfowl responding to these human-made features that are criss-crossing the forest and Canada's northern landscapes?

These are questions DUC is striving to answer as part of our linear feature research in the boreal forest. DUC scientists are testing the assumption that linear features, such as roads, may limit boreal duck populations. From 2013 to 2016, aerial surveys were conducted in north central Alberta and northeastern British Columbia where there is a wide range of linear feature densities. Four surveys were conducted each summer: the first two count breeding pairs, while the last two count the ducklings from the breeding pairs.

Initial results suggest that breeding success tended to decline at

higher densities and at closer distances to linear features. Final results are expected in 2018.

If final results confirm this assumption, the next question is: why? Are linear features impairing the flow of water from one wetland to the next, perhaps translating into lower quality waterfowl habitat? Do these roads, seismic lines and pipelines give predators like coyotes and ravens an easier route into habitat where eggs are laid?

Pursuing the science behind these questions guides our conservation programs, and ensures we employ the best approaches for waterfowl and wetlands.



Seismic lines in the boreal forest.

7.3 million  
acres  
(2.9 million hectares)  
influenced in FY17

135.6 million  
acres  
(54.9 million hectares)  
influenced since 1938

\*Statistics include acres from all provinces and territories within the boreal region

## A collaborative approach to conservation

Conservation work in the boreal forest is truly a collaborative effort. DUC is working closely with a variety of partners to:

- Protect critical wetlands and waterfowl habitat across the boreal.
- Provide conservation expertise to natural resource planners and decision-makers to deliver sustainable land-use strategies that conserve wetlands and waterfowl habitat.
- Conduct science-based research that examines the value boreal wetlands provide all Canadians.
- Engage indigenous peoples and northern communities to help ensure their vision for the land is realized.



The boreal forest provides essential habitat for greater scaup.



prairie habitat  
joint venture

partner  
spotlight

### Prairie Habitat Joint Venture

The Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) is a partner in DUC's linear feature research. The PHJV is one of the founding habitat conservation partnerships of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. It includes public and private agencies and organizations representing a broad range of landscape conservation interests.

The PHJV's mission is to provide leadership to achieve healthy and diverse waterfowl and other bird populations through conservation partnerships. These partnerships strive for sustainable and responsible management of the landscape, taking into account social, economic and environmental factors.

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*Vancouver, BC – 1971-72*

Roderick O.A. Hunter †  
*Winnipeg, MB – 1973-74*

Duncan M. Jessiman  
*Winnipeg, MB – 1975-76*

Hugh H. Mackay †  
*Rothsay, NB – 1977-78*

John D. McDiarmid  
*Vancouver, BC – 1979*

Douglas C. Groff †  
*Winnipeg, MB – 1980*

G. Fitzpatrick Dunn †  
*Victoria, BC – 1981*

Herbert H. Cowburn, D.D.S. †  
*Saskatoon, SK – 1982-83*

Honorable W. John McKeag †  
*Winnipeg, MB – 1984-85*

Arthur L. Irving  
*Saint John, NB – 1986-87*

Duncan W. Sinclair, M.D.  
*Aylmer, ON – 1988-89*

John C. Eaton  
*Toronto, ON – 1990-91*

Claude H. Wilson †  
*Winnipeg, MB – 1992-93*

William G. Turnbull  
*Calgary, AB – 1994-95*

George C. Reifel  
*Vancouver, BC – 1996-98*

G. Tod Wright  
*Burlington, ON – 1999-2000*

Mel F. Belich, Q.C.  
*Calgary, AB – 2001-02*

John R. Messer  
*Tisdale, SK – 2003-04*

Peter D. Carton  
*Regina, SK – 2005-07*

C. Neil Downey  
*Red Deer, AB – 2007-09*

Jack H. Hole  
*Gunn, AB – 2009-11*

Tom Worden  
*Courtice, ON – 2011-13*

Mac Dunfield  
*Riverview, NB – 2013-15*

† Deceased

## Role of the Board

- Approve the values, mission and vision, as well as the broad long-term objectives, ethical considerations and governing policies of DUC.
- Hire, establish objectives and monitor the performance of the CEO and provide for succession planning.
- Provide support to staff, where appropriate, to achieve the objectives of DUC – particularly in fundraising and policy.
- Approve the budget and the risk management approach of DUC.
- Monitor the performance of DUC, as well as its management, committees and task forces in achieving our vision, mission and broad long-term objectives.
- Recruit, orient, develop and motivate directors, officers and senior provincial directors who are willing and capable of helping DUC achieve its objectives.
- Facilitate the operations of the board through appropriate governance processes.
- Monitor management's compliance with legislative and fiduciary requirements.

## Board Committees

- Executive Committee
- Conservation Programs Committee
- Membership & Revenue Committee
- Development Committee
- Finance & Risk Committee
- Governance Committee
- Personnel Policy Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Audit Committee

# Financial Overview

## Message from the Chief Financial Officer

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) achieved excellent results in the 2017 fiscal year, with a continued focus on financial strength and sustainability. Key accomplishments include:

- Fundraising achievements and grant awards thanks to the support of generous donors and partners;
- Habitat gains that are dedicating more acres to conservation;
- Completion of the first phase of a business system transformation project;
- \$91.1 million in revenue, excluding investment income (2016 - \$82.6 million);
- 9.3 million acres secured and influenced across the country (2016 - 17.6 million);
- More than 137,000 people who are taking action as part of our conservation community;
- \$408 million secured on a goal of \$500 million as part of the ongoing, continent-wide *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign;
- \$4.7 million in pledges and donations for conservation investments in 2017 and future years (2016 - \$12.5 million). This included gifts from B.C. Hydro, Crop Production Services Canada, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, SaskPower, as well as continued support from the United States that is critical to the securement of North American Wetland Conservation Act funds;
- \$16.6 million invested in revolving and conservation lands (2016 - \$13.8 million);
- DUC placed conservation easements on 11,158 acres this year leveraged by \$9.5 million draws on loans provided by our partners at Alberta Treasury Branch (ATB) and Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) as part of the Revolving Land Conservation Program (2016 - \$9.9 million);
- \$6.1 million of the \$11.6-million grant awarded by the Government of Alberta in 2016 for the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program in support of flood mitigation measures has been delivered;
- Continued support from federal government programs including the Natural Areas Conservation Program and the National Wetland Conservation Fund; and
- Continued support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state grants and Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

For years, DUC has invested in science, engineering, adaptive management and geographic information systems (wetland mapping) to guide and deliver conservation efforts. This, combined with our investment in landowner and partner relationships and our Revolving Land Conservation Program, provides DUC with a strategic advantage in providing wetland restoration expertise and services. DUC continues to focus on diversification of land held for resale given these strategic advantages and the decline in traditional fundraising net revenues over the past years.

The board approved \$14 million of internally restricted funds to be unrestricted in 2016, allowing DUC to repay an interest-bearing loan related to the pension and to replenish unrestricted reserves used for legislated payments to the pension plan over the past several years. With positive net results from our fee-for-service projects, DUC has internally restricted funds of \$5 million (after funding the investment in financial systems) for future conservation opportunities this year. At March 31, 2017, DUC has internally restricted funds of \$124.9 million for habitat asset management and \$20.7 million for future conservation opportunities.

DUC is committed to outreach and education, communicating the importance of wetlands for water, wildlife and the environment to all Canadians. This includes important industry and government partners. The internally restricted funding for conservation opportunities provides the flexibility to act quickly when opportunities arise. DUC is also committed to and has made great strides in maintaining the foundation and efficiency of its governance structure. Investments in financial, project and grant system solutions were completed in 2017 for \$2.3 million. Our partners Avande Canada, Inc. and Microsoft assisted us in completing the first phase of our transformation. A further \$2.3 million has been committed over the next fiscal year into the second phase, land management, to allow DUC to further update technological tools and streamline processes.

With our research pedigree, strong partnerships, educational outreach and a conservation community that stands more than 137,000 strong, DUC is transforming the way conservation is both delivered and perceived. Our governance and commitment to transparency continue to make us the premier conservation organization the nation looks to for leadership. Thank you for the important role you've played in our accomplishments this past year, and we look forward to your continued support.



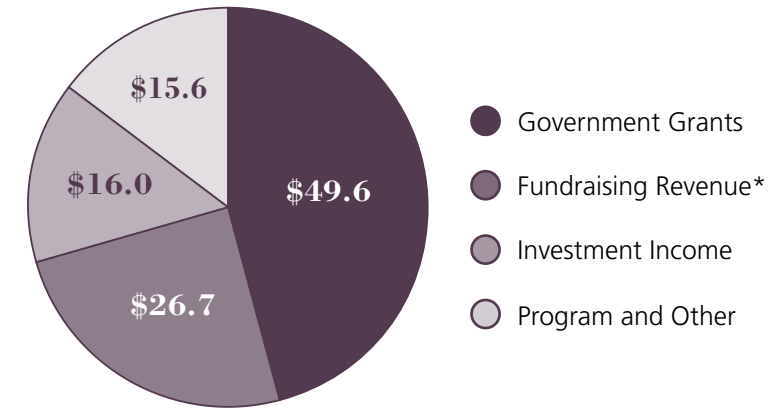
Marcy Sullivan,  
Chief Financial Officer

## Overview

### Sources of Funds (\$Millions)

DUC generates revenue from four primary sources:

- Grants from a variety of government sources including federal (both Canada and U.S.), provincial, state and municipal;
- Fundraising income, which includes philanthropic giving, grassroots fundraising and donations from other non-government organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, Inc. in the United States;
- Program and other income, which includes fee-for-service revenue and ancillary revenues from the management of owned conservation lands; and
- Investment income from short and long-term investments.



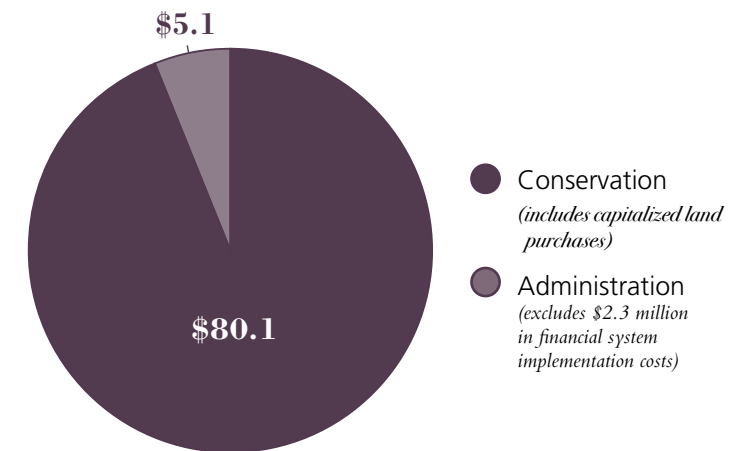
\*includes gift-in-kind donations

### Uses of Funds (\$Millions)\*\*

DUC benefits from:

- Diverse revenue sources;
- Efficient use of funds;
- Leveraging dollars raised; and
- Financial strength.

\*\* does not include \$12.2 million in fundraising and philanthropic expenses



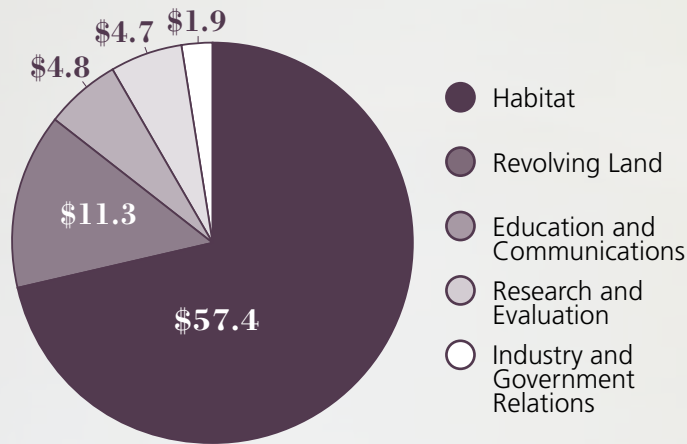
### Efficiency Ratios

DUC strives to maintain a more than 90 per cent investment in Conservation expenditures of its total Conservation and Administration expenditures. DUC achieved a 94 per cent investment in Conservation expenditures in 2017 (2016 - 93 per cent). DUC strives to maintain a more than 75 per cent investment in Conservation expenditures of total expenditures, including Fundraising. DUC achieved an 82 per cent investment in Conservation expenditures in 2017 (2016 - 80 per cent).

Due to the timing and size of some philanthropic gifts and the experience of 380 community fundraising events across Canada, the overall fundraising efficiency ratio can vary year over year. Merchandise is utilized through a variety of on-site raffles and auctions, and is included in the fundraising expenditures. The fundraising efficiency ratio was 54 per cent in 2017 (2016 - 56 per cent).

## Conservation mission priorities (\$Millions)

Expenditures on conservation mission priorities fluctuate based on revenues available in any given year, or the availability of projects to invest in.



About 85 per cent of total Conservation expenditures, including investments into revolving land, were invested directly in habitat conservation in 2017. The investment in conservation habitat includes: \$17 million (2016 - \$16 million) to secure habitats through land purchase or conservation easements (which include both conservation program expenditure and the purchase of land now capitalized on the Statement of Financial Position); \$25 million (2016 - \$25 million) to enhance or restore the habitat's functionality; and \$15.2 million (2016 - \$14.2 million) for an ongoing program of habitat management.

It is neither practical nor cost effective for DUC to secure and protect habitat exclusively through direct ownership or conservation easements. Therefore, DUC also works collaboratively with industry, landowners and various levels of government, to develop and implement conservation policies aimed at directly or indirectly conserving waterfowl habitat. In 2017, DUC invested about two per cent of its mission expenditures on public policy work. Successful policy also allows DUC to secure fee-for-service work in the environmental mitigation industry.

DUC continues to leverage its investments to increase its Revolving Land Conservation Program (RLCP) and conservation footprint. In 2017, DUC's \$5-million line of credit for the RLCP in Alberta with Alberta Treasury Branch (ATB), remains fully drawn. This includes an annual gift of up to \$100,000 from ATB to cover interest on the loan. As parcels of land are revolved out, new parcels are financed.

Total land purchases in 2017 of \$16.6 million is comprised of \$5.3 million in conservation land purchased for long-term hold in accordance with grant restrictions and \$11.3 million revolving land purchases. Land purchases are recorded as a transfer to net assets below the "excess of revenue over expenses" line. Land purchases financed by debt (\$9.5 million) are not recorded on the Statement of Revenue and Expenses. At March 31, 2017, DUC held \$22.4 million of land for resale and \$167.4 million in conservation lands.

RLCP is a strategy where land is not retained by DUC, but is purchased, restored and sold with a conservation easement on the title.

DUC's habitat conservation program is based on science. DUC's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research (IWWR) accounted for about five per cent of total conservation expenditures.

DUC also recognizes the importance of public education to achieving its conservation mission. DUC invested about eight per cent of its total conservation effort on education and communications in 2017 to promote the value and importance of wetlands and waterfowl habitat as part of a healthy environment.

DUC's education programs also include the operation of interpretive centres at Oak Hammock Marsh, Man., Shubenacadie, N.S. and Fredericton, N.B.

See pages 36-56 for a detailed review of conservation programs undertaken in 2017.





# Financial Summary

Ducks Unlimited Canada condensed statements of financial position  
(in thousands of dollars) | For the years ended March 31

	2017	2016 restated
<b>Assets</b>		
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 28,201	\$ 21,164
Other current assets	32,451	26,603
	60,652	47,767
Investments	153,012	134,123
Land held for resale	22,390	19,773
Property, plant and equipment, net	7,883	8,511
Conservation lands	167,354	162,136
	\$ 411,291	\$ 372,310

## Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts payable and current portion of borrowings	\$ 28,482	\$ 20,284
Current portion of deferred contributions and unearned revenue	31,514	27,731
Accrued pension and other post-employment benefits	16,858	17,196
Non-current deferred contributions and unearned revenue	16,450	14,102
	93,304	79,313
Net assets:		
Internally restricted	131,775	109,959
Invested in land held for resale, property, plant and equipment and conservation lands	173,231	170,488
Unrestricted	12,981	12,550
	317,987	292,997
	\$ 411,291	\$ 372,310

*These condensed financial statements do not contain all of the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on the Company's financial position, results of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows, reference should be made to the complete financial statements of Ducks Unlimited Canada as at and for the years ended March 31, 2017 and March 31, 2016, on which Ernst and Young expressed an opinion without reservation in their report dated June 26, 2017. Visit [ducks.ca/annualreport](http://ducks.ca/annualreport)*

Ducks Unlimited Canada condensed statements of revenue and expenses and changes in unrestricted net assets

(in thousands of dollars) | For the years ended March 31

	2017	2016 restated
<b>Revenue</b>		
Philanthropic fundraising	\$ 10,273	\$ 7,894
Grassroots fundraising	9,653	11,968
Non-government partnership	6,026	6,284
Government grants	49,566	41,985
Program and other	15,587	14,490
Investment income	15,986	1,924
	107,091	84,545
<b>Expenses</b>		
Conservation program	\$ 62,709	\$ 55,072
Fundraising	12,180	13,672
Administration	7,457	5,356
	82,346	74,100
<b>Excess of revenue over expenses for the year</b>	<b>24,745</b>	<b>10,445</b>
Transfers to (from) unrestricted net assets	(24,314)	7,122
<b>Change in unrestricted net assets</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>17,567</b>
Opening balance unrestricted net assets	12,550	(5,017)
<b>Closing balance unrestricted net assets</b>	<b>\$ 12,981</b>	<b>\$ 12,550</b>



Canada's natural history continues to be written. People like you are writing important stories of conservation that will shape the future.

*Thank you for your support.*



# Ducks Unlimited Canada

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