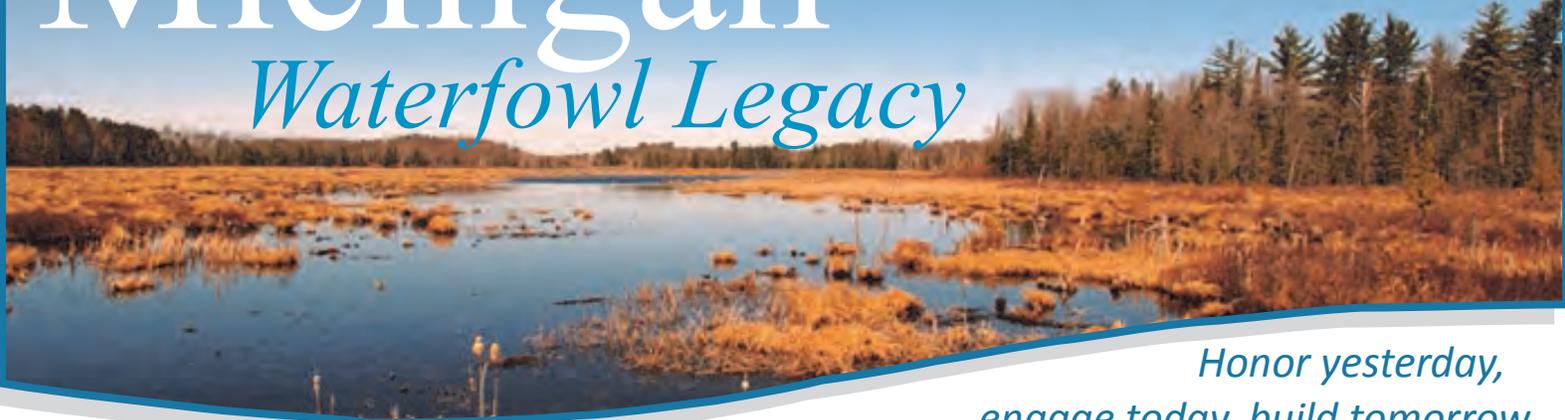


Michigan

Waterfowl Legacy



*Honor yesterday,
engage today, build tomorrow.*



This first newsletter highlights a few projects we are working on along with information regarding what MWL is about.

If you would like become an MWL member, please let us know at:

DNR-wildlife@Michigan.gov

Like us on Facebook!
Click or scan:



The Waterfowl Team

Whether you duck hunt every year, sit on the back porch to watch the annual fall waterfowl migration, or get your drinking water from a groundwater stream purified by wetlands, just about all Michigan residents - whether they know it or not - have a connection to our state's rich and diverse waterfowl and wetlands heritage.

The Michigan Waterfowl Legacy (MWL) seeks to strengthen this connection, bringing together hunters and non-hunters alike to restore, conserve and celebrate Michigan's waterfowl, wetlands and waterfowl hunting community.



The Michigan waterfowl legacy is a group of hunters, various government agencies and non-government conservation organizations, and all others who value waterfowl and the habitat they live in. The group is dedicated to:

- Improving waterfowl populations and wetland habitat;
- Increasing waterfowl hunting participation and promoting the value of waterfowl hunting; and
- Engaging citizens to take positive action to conserve the state's waterfowl and wetlands.

Michigan continues to be a national leader in wetland and waterfowl conservation thanks to folks like you.

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Maple River: Revamped!

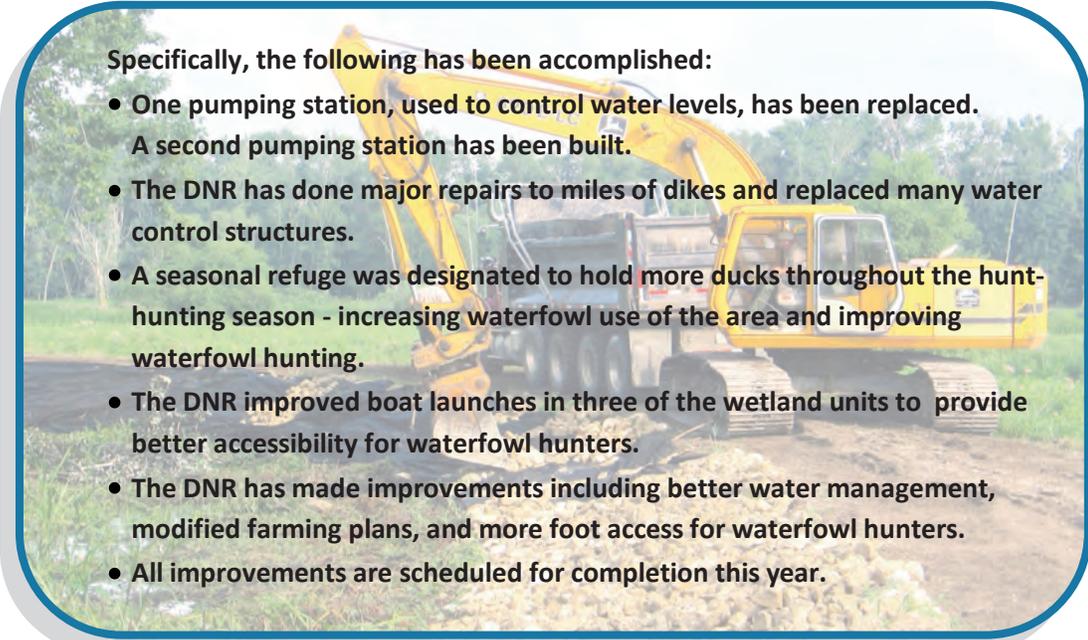
If you've ever traveled US-127 in southern Michigan, you've likely seen the Maple River State Game Area in Gratiot and Clinton Counties. The area's 928-acre wetland is managed primarily for waterfowl and other wetland dependent species. Water level management capability in the impoundments allows managers to provide high quality wetland habitat for migrating and resident waterfowl and other wildlife. The wetlands and abundance of birds also provides prime waterfowl hunting and viewing opportunities.

For many years the dikes and water control structures had been eroded and damaged by annual flood events, wave action from high water, and beaver, muskrat and wood chuck burrowing. Management of the impoundments was difficult if not impossible. The inability to manage the wetland units led to degraded wetlands and dwindling waterfowl use, which in turn, led to unsatisfied users of the area, particularly waterfowl hunters. In 2010, the DNR Wildlife

Division made the restoration of the Maple River wetland a priority and staff have been working ever since to increase user satisfaction, enhance wetland habitat, increase waterfowl use throughout migrations, and improve hunter access.

A total of over \$500,000 has been invested in the Maple River State Game Area's wetlands in the last 4 years, highlighting the commitment of DNR and partners to this important area. You can already see the positive results of this work – the wetlands are healthy and productive and are supporting larger numbers of ducks and the waterfowl hunting use of the area appears to be increasing.

This project is a great example of the Michigan Waterfowl Legacy – partners working together to provide healthy wetlands that support waterfowl and other wetland wildlife populations and provide quality opportunities for people to get out and enjoy these resources. Get out there and see it for



Specifically, the following has been accomplished:

- One pumping station, used to control water levels, has been replaced. A second pumping station has been built.
- The DNR has done major repairs to miles of dikes and replaced many water control structures.
- A seasonal refuge was designated to hold more ducks throughout the hunt-hunting season - increasing waterfowl use of the area and improving waterfowl hunting.
- The DNR improved boat launches in three of the wetland units to provide better accessibility for waterfowl hunters.
- The DNR has made improvements including better water management, modified farming plans, and more foot access for waterfowl hunters.
- All improvements are scheduled for completion this year.



Fun Facts:

- About 25 percent of mammals, 50 percent of birds, nearly all reptiles, and every amphibian in Michigan use wetlands.
- Twenty-two million dollars is generated each year in Michigan through waterfowl hunting trips.
- Wetlands make up only 5% of the area of the contiguous US, but more than 1/3 of threatened and endangered species live only in wetlands.



Each year, as winter retreats and spring explodes across Michigan, tens of thousand of birds begin their journey to their summer home. Waterfowl are some of the first birds to begin their journey. Goldeneye, canvasbacks, gadwalls, and mallards are all species of waterfowl that are already on their way to Michigan and further north. Using the sun and stars, landmarks, and magnetic fields, migratory birds will fly several thousand miles back to their breeding areas.

Expect dazzling males in their best attire, trying to attract mate. Keep your eyes to the sky to see thousands of sandhill cranes, ducks, swans, and other groups of migratory birds in flight - especially during April, the peak migration month.



Interested in watching this phenomenon? Here are a few steps to get you started:

- Buy or borrow a pair of binoculars 
- Reserve an afternoon this week to take your family bird watching
- If you need a place to visit - see the map above
- Pack an ID book, snack, and water and be on your way, the show has already started!

Birding Open Houses

The following locations around Michigan are hosting bird tours... all at no cost to you!
[Call for more information.](#)

LOCATION	DATE	TIME
Muskegon County Wastewater	April 12th	10am
Fish Point State Wildlife Area	April 12th	10am & 1pm
St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area	April 12th	9am
Pointe Mouillee State Game Area	April 12th	9am
Allegan State Game Area	April 27th	9am
Shiawassee River State Game Area	May 3rd	8am
Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area	May 10th	9am



Wetlands play a vital role in recreation, tourism, and the economy in Michigan and are a significant factor in the health of inland lakes, ground water, fisheries, waterfowl and wildlife, and the Great Lakes. Michigan wetlands provide many benefits to residents and wildlife, including:

- Flood and storm control by the absorption and storage capacity of wetlands.

- Protection of subsurface water resources and recharging ground water supplies.
- Pollution treatment and erosion control by serving as a sedimentation and filtering basin.
- Wildlife habitat by providing breeding, nesting, feeding grounds and cover for many forms of wildlife, migratory waterfowl, rare species and fish.

Most people are familiar with the cattail or lily pad wetland found in areas with standing water, but wetlands can also be grassy meadows, shrubby fields, or mature forests. Wetland areas are characterized by the presence of water for long enough in the year that distinctive soils (hydric soils) and a dominance of plants adapted to wet conditions develop. Approximately 50% of Michigan's original wetlands have been drained or filled, making the protection of remaining wetlands essential.

How You Can Help

Do you enjoy watching or hunting ducks, geese, and swans? If you are interested in improving conditions and creating habitat for waterfowl, we have a few tips to get you started. Its all about taking those first steps...big or small.



Small steps:



- Next time you are on the road- try to spot a wetland, they are more abundant than you think.
- When leaving your favorite fishing spot this spring- double check the area around you for fishing line and tackle.
- Avoid the transportation of aquatic invaders- remove plants and water from your boat, waders, and equipment when leaving the field.

Big steps:

- Clean out a duck box- these need to be cleaned annually to attract Wood Ducks.
- Help wildlife in your area by [creating habitat](#).
- Ask your legislators to support programs and legislation that conserve wetlands and waterfowl.



News

The MWL partnership was awarded a Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network grant to kick-start the MWL in the Saginaw Bay region. With this generous grant, we have distributed kids and adult membership packages and held events at the Wetland Wonders in the region. Additionally, we have had the opportunity to attend several festivals and conventions to spread the word about MWL and what people can do to support wetlands and waterfowl. Through the creation and dissemination of outreach material, we have been able to inform thousands of people of the benefits of Michigan's waterfowl and wetlands. Next fall, ten Saginaw Bay region schools will have the opportunity to use an educational lesson plan developed by the MWL team that will raise awareness of waterfowl and wetlands and highlight the wetland treasures located in Saginaw Bay.

This past year, we provided many opportunities for MWL members to join us in the great outdoors. Our favorites were the nature walks, canoe tour, Saginaw Bay and Pte. Mouillee Waterfowl Festivals. MWL partners are also in the process of restoring and enhancing thousands of acres of wetland habitat, including the Maple River project featured in this newsletter.

Events

- APRIL 9** **Kellogg Bird Sanctuary**
9am-10:30am, Birding and coffee at Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. [More here.](#)
- APRIL 26** **Wetland Wake-Up Day**
9am-3pm, Crafts, hiking & wildlife at Bay City State Recreation Area.
- MAY 1-3** **Michigan Inland Lakes Convention**
1st -3rd, Come visit our booth at Boyne Mountain Resort.
- MAY 15-18** **Tawas Point Birding Festival**
15th-18th, Guided birding walks in Iosco County. [More here.](#)
- MAY 31** **International Migratory Bird Day**
9am-6pm, Celebrate bird migration at Potter Park zoo. [More here.](#)
- JUNE 12** **Saginaw Bay Watershed Conference**
8:30am-5pm, Come visit our booth at Saginaw Valley State University.

Partners

