

Wye Island Restoration and Delaware Greenwings Festival

A Report for the Waterfowl Festival, Inc.

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Wye Island Wetland Restoration

Ducks Unlimited (DU), in partnership with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and Washington College, is making steady progress on the wetland restoration effort at Wye Island Natural Resources Management Area (NRMA) in Queen Anne's County, Maryland.

The project site—a 33-acre agricultural field historically ditched to increase grain yields—was initially targeted for complete reforestation. However, site assessments led by Washington College revealed that approximately eight acres within the field were better suited to wetland restoration. In response, MDNR invited Ducks Unlimited to design and lead this portion of the project.

Since then, Ducks Unlimited has completed all survey and design work for the wetland restoration, with funding support from Washington College. Our engineering team designed three shallow excavated basins that will seasonally hold water and restore hydrological function to the site. These five to six acres of moist-soil wetland depressions will be surrounded by 28 acres of native tree plantings, forming a forested wetland complex over time. The project will support key waterfowl species such as Canada geese, American black ducks, and mallards while reducing sediment and nutrient runoff into the surrounding watershed.

The project is currently under permitting review by the Queen Anne's Soil Conservation District. Once permits are approved, we will proceed with bidding on the project and preparing for the construction phase. Our goal is to complete on-the-ground restoration by July 2025.

This project has involved extensive coordination between DU, MDNR, and Washington College to align ecological goals, develop technical designs, and prepare the site for implementation. The next critical step is to secure the remaining funds needed for construction and to begin restoration activities as soon as permitting allows. This work protects and enhances a historically significant feeding site for waterfowl and contributes to the long-term ecological health of the region. The restoration effort at Wye Island will serve as a model for collaborative, science-based conservation that delivers tangible benefits to wildlife, local communities, and the greater Delmarva landscape.

Delaware Greenwing Conservation Festival

Ducks Unlimited is committed to conserving wetlands and waterfowl habitats and shaping the future of conservation by investing in young people. Through our Youth & Education Program, we engage students across North America in outdoor experiences that spark a lifelong interest in conservation. One of our most successful and long-standing efforts in this space is the Delaware Ducks Unlimited Greenwing Conservation Festival, an annual event designed to connect children with nature and the traditions of outdoor stewardship.

The 21st Annual Greenwing Festival was held the weekend of March 29, 2025, at Owens Station Sporting Clays in Greenwood, Delaware. Hosted by the dedicated volunteers of Delaware Ducks Unlimited's State Committee, the event welcomed 267 children ages 11 and under, known as "Greenwings," from across the tri-state region of Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The festival is offered entirely free of charge to participating families, a commitment made partly by generous support from partners like the Waterfowl Festival, whose grant helped cover the cost of materials and food for attendees.



The event featured a full day of hands-on outdoor activities designed to inspire curiosity, build skills, and promote environmental awareness. Youth participated in a duck calling contest, built wood duck and bluebird nest boxes, practiced archery, explored species identification, learned camping and fishing basics, and tried target shooting—all in a safe, structured setting. Face painting and other creative stations helped round out the day, ensuring something for every interest.

This year's festival saw robust participation from the scouting community, with 150 attendees representing six Boy Scout troops. The event provided opportunities for scouts to explore the outdoors and supported their advancement by helping them earn merit badges related to conservation, wildlife, and outdoor skills.

Thanks to increased outreach and strong community support, attendance and participation exceeded last year's numbers, marking a significant step in growing the event back to its pre-COVID scale. With approximately 600 participants, including youth, scouts, and accompanying adults, the 2025 Greenwing Festival successfully delivered an impactful, educational, and memorable experience for all involved.

Ducks Unlimited is deeply grateful to the Waterfowl Festival for your support, which helps us offer this unique opportunity year after year. Events like the Greenwing Conservation Festival are vital to DU's mission, building a foundation of conservation knowledge and outdoor appreciation for the next generation of stewards.



Thank you for your continued support of Ducks Unlimited!