

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act

- **Project title:** Glacial Habitat Restoration Area (GHRA) and Rush Lake Initiative to Restore and Enhance Wetlands and Associated Upland Habitats
- **Project sponsor:** Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- **FWS agreement number** 301819G024
- **Principal investigators/Project leaders:** Bryan Woodbury and Wade Oehmichen
- **Final report authors:** Bryan Woodbury
- **Description of tasks-**
 - Task 1: *Task Description.*** Restore and enhance approximately 30 acres of wetlands. The GHRA and the Fox Valley Technical College's surveying class was able to conduct contour surveys at 0.5 ft intervals for approximately 28 wetland basins during late 2008. During the winter of 2008-09, GHRA staff designed the basins and applied and secured the appropriate permits. In the spring of 2009, wetland basin construction bids were solicited and contractors were hired to construct the basins. During the summer of 2009, construction has completed for 15 wetland basins totaling a minimum of 31.07 acres located on 6 tracts of DNR land. This task is complete.
 - Task 2: *Task Description.*** Restore and enhance approximately 100 acres of upland and dense nesting cover. Fields were planted to soybeans by sharecroppers in 2008, in anticipation and in preparation for conversion to dense nesting cover. Fields were sprayed with Touchdown at 2qts/acre to kill any weed/invasive plants. Fields were then planted to a tall native prairie mix. The tall native prairie mix contains a minimum of 5 grass species and 20 forbs species. By 31 December 2009, the GHRA has completed the planting of 104 acres of dense nesting cover. This task is complete.
- **Accomplishments:** Wetland work included creating 8 wetland scrapes and 7 berms, for a total of 15 basins with a minimum of 31.07 acres of wetlands on 6 tracts of WDNR owned land. Five of the six tracts were previously planted to native warm season grasses. The WDNR planted 104 acres of native prairie grasses and forbs mix on two tracts of land owned by the WDNR. Two wetlands were previously constructed on the Pelz parcel, and the WDNR was able to plant the surrounding uplands to native prairie.
- **Management implications of your work:** The GHRA is a landscape scale approach to habitat management to incorporate a patch-work of wetlands and grasslands with cropland to create habitat conditions more favorable for self-sustaining wildlife populations. The intent is to widely scatter suitable habitat throughout the GHRA, rather than concentrating the habitat in one area as has been done on other Department Wildlife Areas. The objectives are to restore, enhance, and protect critical breeding and migratory habitat for waterfowl,

shorebirds, colonial waterbirds, and migratory songbirds within the GHRA. Since the GHRA is located in the historic center of the State's best duck range, one of our goals is to provide a complex of wetlands including small wetlands for breeding and larger semi-permanent and permanent wetlands for brood rearing interspersed within quality upland nesting cover. The focus of the scattered wetland restorations will be on reestablishing shallow water wetlands (1-3 feet in depth) with an appropriate mixture of open water and emergent vegetation. These conditions will facilitate meeting the habitat requirements of shorebirds, waterbirds, and songbirds, as well as waterfowl.

Restored wetlands and surrounding uplands will enhance waterfowl production, improve water quality, provide habitat for species of concern and endangered and threatened species, control flooding and erosion, and provide for public recreation. Attempts will be made to protect or enhance grasslands in the watersheds of the wetland that are restored at a ratio of 1 acre of wetland per 4 acres of grassland. The intent is to improve the water quality entering the wetlands. The enhanced grasslands will also improve the attractiveness of the area to ground nesting birds that have declined due to the lack of secure, high quality nesting cover.

- **Any relevant pictures or images associated with the project:**

Attach is an aerial photo of the Zuelke GHRA property in Fond du Lac County, WI. The GHRA was able to restore four wetland basins and plant the surrounding uplands into native grasslands. Additionally this particular project is highlighted in this YouTube video.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/WildlifeSociety#p/search/1/CHSIT2bgCas>

