

BLACK DUCK ACTION TEAM: WORKGROUP UPDATES FOR THE HABITAT GIT
SPRING 2024 MEETING

May 01, 2024

Maryland – Update from MD DNR/DU

- Construction on a 40 acre restoration project at Wellington WMA in MD is starting in the next couple of weeks. Last fall DU worked with MD DNR to purchase four water control structures at Fairmount WMA and also to spray 200 acres of phragmites there.
- Completed the deposition phase of the Deal Island Beneficial Use of Dredge Material (BUDM) thin-layer project this winter. About 200 acres of marsh was raised about a foot using material from the Wicomico River Channel. Hopefully this will combat the effects of sea level rise on this marsh that had become degraded and was losing its ability to protect the dike and water control structures on a 2800 acre tidal impoundment.
- About 15 acres of wetland restoration (impoundment construction) planned on former cropland at Browns Branch WMA for this fall. Our staff have been disrupting drainage tile at Browns Branch WMA in an effort to restore hydrology to 10 ephemeral basins in what was former cropland. Many of these basins filled up within days of plugging tiles and wildlife immediately began using them. Remaining cropland areas (500 ac) at Browns Branch will be planted to native grasses/shrubs so nesting cover and water quality benefits should be realized near and long term.
- NFWF is partnering with Virginia Tech to evaluate the effectiveness of wetland restorations to provide habitat for black ducks. DU has been indirectly involved by identifying several past DU projects for them to visit a few times last winter.

Virginia – Update from VA DWR

- Doe Creek WMA Wetland Enhancement with Ducks Unlimited – Chesapeake WILD. DWR is working with DU to restore and enhance 147 acres of existing wetland impoundments at Doe Creek WMA for American Black Ducks and other wetland species, leveraging federal Chesapeake WILD and Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Stamp funding. Construction for this project began in November 2023 and the project is expected to be completed by 2024. Wet conditions have delayed this project in 2024.
- Mattaponi WMA Wetland Enhancement Project with Ducks Unlimited – NAWCA. DWR is working with DU to restore wetland hydrology and enhance management of approximately 85 acres of wetland habitat at Mattaponi WMA. This project is funded through a 2022 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant and DU is currently finalizing construction plans. Expected completion date summer 2024.
- NRCS, Ducks Unlimited, and the [Working Lands for Wildlife Black Duck Initiative](#) - ATBC. Ducks Unlimited received 2022 America the Beautiful Challenge funding to provide engineering technical assistance and advance on-the-ground wetland habitat restoration in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Working Lands for Wildlife Black Duck Initiative. DU staff is currently working with Eastern Shore NRCS who is actively pursuing private lands projects which were previously stalled or denied.

due to capacity and funding limitations. DU currently has a job opening in Chesapeake Virginia for a Working Lands Biologist to provide this capacity on the Western Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. This job was recently readvertised.