UPPER MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY PARTNERSHIP
Project Portfolio

Wightman Lake Bottomland Forest Improvement

BACKGROUND
Ducks Unlimited will plant 20 acres of bottomland hardwood forest and enhance 30 acres of existing forested wetlands at Wightman Lake.

LOCATION
Wightman Lake is located along the Illinois River in Marshall County near Sparland, Illinois. Ducks Unlimited recently purchased 370 acres on the north end of Wightman Lake.

ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED
The purpose of the Wightman Lake bottomland forest improvement project is to improve bottomland forest surrounding restored wetland areas for the benefit of birds associated with Bird Conservation Region-22.

GOALS
Increase habitat for neotropical migrants and other forested wetland bird populations by:

- completing a detailed forest inventory and breeding bird survey;
- planting 20 acres of cropland to a mixture of tree species;
- selectively harvesting and thinning about 30 acres of existing wetland forest.

OUTCOMES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A topographic survey was completed and was used to assess flood frequency and duration
- Twelve acres of frequently flooded cropland was planted to bottomland trees and shrubs.
- A detailed forest inventory covering 71 acres was completed. Recommendations from a Aubudon member outlining recommended actions for improving bottomland bird habitat were included.
- About 10 acres were harvested to decrease stand density and remove unwanted species, primarily silver maple.
- Avian survey was completed in 2005. One of the more notable results was finding Prothonotary warblers during breeding season suggesting a local population of nesting birds.
- Prairie Rivers RC&D hosted a site tour for 12 participants in summer 2006.

PARTNERS

- **Ducks Unlimited**
- **Illinois Department of Natural Resources**
- **Prairie Rivers Resources Conservation & Development Area**
- **Peoria Audubon**

FUTURE PLANS
Ducks Unlimited eventually plans to transfer ownership of the Wightman Lake property to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for long-term protection and management. The area will be used as a demonstration site for educating private landowners about bottomland forest conservation.

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The USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry and the Midwest State Foresters have joined in partnership to build a watershed-wide approach to forestry efforts in the Upper Mississippi watershed in order to improve water quality.