



## President's Message

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year

2020 has been an extremely interesting year for our club. The Pandemic has greatly affected our fundraising and our charitable gaming with the bars and restaurants being shut down. We ask that you please try to patronize the sites as they need all of our support. We continue to be recognized and rewarded by the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council for WMA acquisitions in Martin County.

Our latest award of \$2.455 Million will be awarded to us after the 2021 MN Legislature approves the LSOHC bill. We continue to work very close with the Windom Area Wildlife Staff to determine the best additional acres to add to the WMA's that we currently have. We also have had great partnerships and work with Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and The Conservation Fund. The Martin County Conservation Alliance group constantly works together for the good of conservation in Martin County. We consistently work on water quality issues and native planting in our county. Along with these partners we helped restore over 54 wetlands this year. This will be a great help for wildlife and water quality in our area.

We also continue to work with MN DNR Staff and improve the existing habitat on the WMA's. We completed wetland restoration work on the Gruven WMA just east of Fairmont with a DNR CPL Grant. In the Spring of 2021 we will utilize a DNR CPL burning grant to assist the DNR with burning of hopefully 1200 acres on WMA's. The use of fire is a very important tool to improve the grasslands on the WMA's.

We did purchase a great piece of property that will help improve Water quality going into our lake. Fox Lake has a small 1000 acrea watershed ana we will be adding a wetland before this water gets to the lake within a year or so. This will filter the water before it enters the lake. We will also plant native grass's around this area in 2022 to also filter water before entering the watershed.

We have seen great support this year even with all the problems we had great support from sponsors and boosters even without holding an event. Thanks to all.

Due to the pandemic we were unable to host any Martin County Alliance events this year. We continue to work with all partners to make Martin County a better Conservation County.

Everett Park had another great year. With the pandemic, I think it may have been our busiest year ever. Our plan is to add a playground complex for the kids in 2021. We would like to thank all the campers that patronize Everett Park.

We will try another raffle in 2021. A) membership/ATV Raffle. Tickets will be \$20 and will include your \$10 FLCL Membership. Please see our add in this newsletter and if you would be willing to sell a book of these tickets for us please let me know.

We had 25 youth go thru our Firearm safety this year. 11 girls were part of this class and did an excellent job. We did change to a week end class mainly and it was very successful. Will try the same next year and are looking for few more instructors to help on the field day. Please let me know if you are interested.

Our board received 2 awards from organizations this past year. We received the Outdoor News Leadership award and DU's Beyond the Call Award. Please see additional articles about these awards.

Lastly, we meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month, November to April at the Welcome American Legion Club Room and May to October at Everett Park. We welcome input from our Membership. Thanks to all the past, present and future members.

Tim Eisenmenger, President



# 2020 Outdoor Leaders Award: Fox Lake Conservation League

Communication key to successful conservation in state's farm country

By Tim Spielman  
Editor

There are a host of superlatives that folks use to describe the Fox Lake Conservation League. Emilee Nelson, of The Conservation Fund, says the Martin County group's efforts for the outdoors are "phenomenal." DNR area wildlife manager Brian Nyborg calls the 400-member outfit "outstanding."

Among the Fox Lake Conservation League's accomplishments are thousands of acres of land added to the county's state wildlife management areas – no small feat in an area of southwestern Minnesota dominated by agriculture. The group hosts youth hunting events, leads firearms safety training classes, operates a park on Fox Lake near the town of Sherburn, and donates to a host of local causes. It's been doing so since 1947.

This year, for all its accomplishments, the Fox Lake Conservation League has been named the recipient of the *Outdoor News* Outdoor Leaders Award.

League leadership is a picture of longevity and consistency – a group of individuals with roots running deep in Martin County.

FLCL president Tim Eisenmenger, 58, has held that position for 25 years, and joined the league fresh out of high school. He's been a firearms safety instructor since the 1980s. Doug Hartke, 54, the league's grant coordinator, has been a member nearly as long as Eisenmenger. And he's lived in the Sherburn community his entire life. Nate Amborn, 39, the league's secretary, has been a member for nearly two decades. He's a graduate of Martin County West High School, a consolidation in 1988 of the Trimont, Welcome, and Sherburn-Dunnell school districts.

The league also has a 15-member board of directors.

"It's a group that has a lot of momentum, a lot of stuff going on," Nyborg said. "They're making a difference in Martin County."

While the FLCL has been around for 70 years, its conservation work was taken to new heights about five years ago. It was then that the group applied for and received funding from the state's Outdoor Heritage Fund (Legacy Amendment dollars) for land acquisition. In 2016, the FLCL was awarded its first \$1 million to expand state wildlife management areas in the county.

But it proceeded toward acquisition only after carefully laying the groundwork for success.

"Everybody in our group is all for (increasing wildlife) habitat," Amborn said. "But we have to be mindful of not taking good ag ground (out of production)."

Acquisition of land for public use doesn't occur without detractors, especially in farm country. But the FLCL had a plan – simple but effective, and an example of how effective communication can plow down barriers.

In 2016, a meeting was called to discuss land-acquisition goals for WMAs in Martin County, according to TCF's Nelson. There were about 20 people in attendance, representatives of a variety of government agencies and conservation groups: county commissioners and other county officials, the DNR, the U.S. Fish and



The Fox Lake Conservation League each year hosts a youth duck hunt. Above, a youth (l) is mentored by league members Egan Matson (c) and Bob Sorenson. Photo courtesy of FLCL.

Wildlife Service, the county soil and water conservation district, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and others. In essence, it was intended to show all vested parties the grand scheme, and to get buy-in thereof.

Conservation opportunities abound in the county, but the focus needed to be narrowed.

"You could fall out of a plane and land on a restorable wetland (in Martin County)," Nelson said.

Securing local support required a structured process. Those who'd gathered examined a map of the county and identified the best places to create wildlife habitat. Nearly all those locations were adjacent to existing WMAs and nearly all

consisted of marginal and erodible farmland.

By the time folks were heading home from the gathering, "We had very good consensus," Hartke said. The process of adding acres for wildlife and hunters in a county where just 1.5% of the land is in public ownership – building on acquisitions that began in the early 1990s – began to accelerate.

Since that first grant of \$1 million from the OHF, the group has received \$2.45 million in 2018, \$3.65 in 2019, and \$2.75 million in 2020. All is used for land acquisition and restoration. The group's recent funding past also has been checkered with various Conservation Partners Legacy grants that can range from \$5,000 to \$400,000. Much that funding is used for enhancement and protection of existing WMAs – things such as invasive plant removal and planting of more wildlife-friendly species.

For the most part, Hartke said, land-acquisition battles have been few.

"The Martin County board has been awesome and they support what we're doing," he said. "And Rep. (Bob) Gunther (a Fairmont Republican) has been phenomenal."

As for those who question removing land from private ownership, "We can publicly say there's 96% of the county (land) that we don't want," said Hartke, a member of the Sherburn Fire Department for more than 30 years.

CPL grants require a match from nonprofit recipients, and the FLCL has a source that's provided in excess of \$100,000 annually for the past several years: pull tabs, both electronic and paper, available at bars in the area. Amborn said 70% of that income is earmarked for conservation purposes. The remainder is donated locally – for high school senior scholarships, to fire departments, and so on. A few years ago, the group assisted with funds for a greenhouse at Martin County West High School.

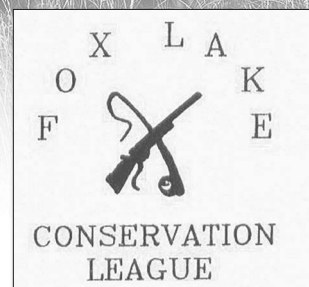
Some of those dollars might also be used for



**BEFORE:** This drone photo is of an addition to Rooney Run Wildlife Management Area before restoration efforts began. Photo courtesy of Fox Lake Conservation League



**AFTER:** Grasses and forbs were planted on Rooney Run WMA. This image is from two weeks ago. Wetland restoration is under way. Photo courtesy of FLCL



Members of the Fox Lake Conservation League (top photo) recently gathered at Four Corners WMA for a photo with the *Outdoor News* Outdoor Leaders Award. They are (l-r) Scott Kittleson (board), Jim Miller (treasurer), Tim Eisenmenger (president), Josh Markquart (board), Doug Hartke (grant coordinator), Josh Eisenmenger (board), Bob Smith (board), and Dustin Frank (board). Photo/image courtesy of FLCL

upkeep at Everett Park, located on the shore of Fox Lake, just north of Sherburn. The park is privately owned by the club and has available 30 campsites, a playground, shelter, public boat access, and fishing pier. Fox Lake anglers can fish for panfish, muskies, and even walleyes.

The FLCL also continues to keep the lines of local communication wide open. Once or twice a year, it hosts a meeting of the county's various conservation groups and others to talk about projects and opportunities to collaborate. It's model that's worked well for many years.

For example, Nelson said, TCF often assumes the role of real estate specialist during land purchases – handling appraisals and working out purchase details with sellers. Once land had been bought, groups like DU and PF offer restoration expertise. The DNR works with the group to identify priority acres.

But it's group members who do the things that make it possible for land acquisition to occur consistently.

"They're well known and they're active in the community," Nyborg said. "These guys are finding leads on good projects on a regular basis."

Willing sellers have emerged, understanding that marginal land is best suited for nature, and that dollars paid for such land is better invested in more productive farmland. And local officials who might otherwise balk at such sales understand what's being done has purpose.

"The biggest reason for their success is that they explain and communicate with townships and the county that this is the end game," Nelson said.

Martin County is now home to 10 WMAs totaling more than 4,000 acres – places where wildlife thrive and kids and adults can play.

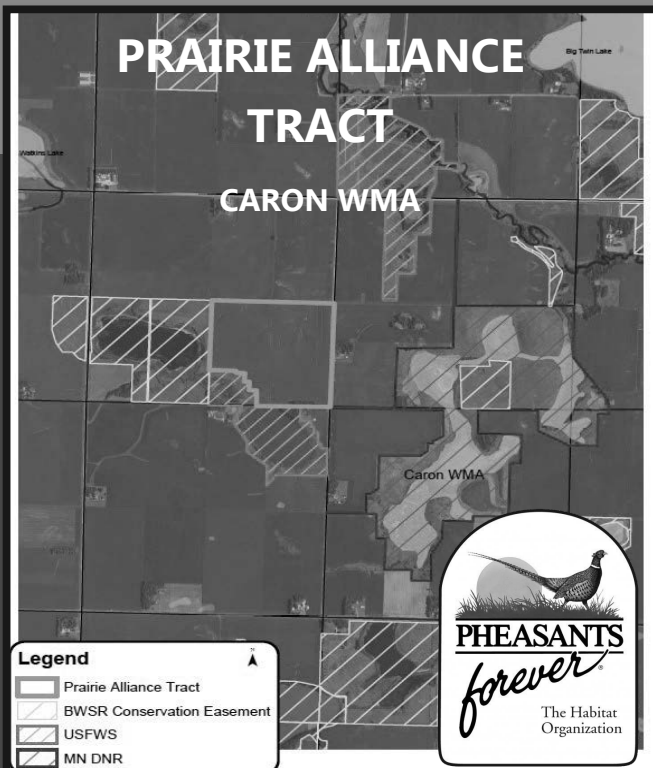
Eisenmenger cites varying expertise among the board and league members, a fiscally conservative approach to spending, an immense number of volunteer hours donated each year, and youth among membership as reasons for the group's success. The creation of WMAs – wild places where the last time they existed was nearly 150 years ago – and knowing they'll be appreciated into the future is the reward.

"I love to see the birds and the other wildlife out there, as well as the kids," Eisenmenger said.

# MINNESOTA PHEASANTS FOREVER



**NOW IS THE TIME FOR MN PF TO ACHIEVE  
SOMETHING WE HAVE NEVER DONE BEFORE,  
ALL 73 CHAPTERS UNITED TO SUPPORT  
ONE COMMON MISSION!**



**Contribute any amount -  
\$1000 or more gets you recognition on the sign.  
Half the total proceeds will benefit Pheasants Forever, Inc.  
The other half will stay in the MN Land and Legacy Fund-  
TO DO MORE MISSION!  
MN can unite to showcase everything we stand for-  
Quality Habitat, Public Access, and Grassroots Conservation!**

**OUR GOAL- All 73 chapters contribute =  
One United MN = \$73K for conservation**

**The 142 acre Prairie Alliance Tract is located in Martin County, MN and was purchased by PF from Fox Lake Conservation Club.  
A true example of cooperation, conservation, and public access!**

# Martin County



- 2 Aquatic Management Areas
- 3 Fish Management Areas
- 20 Wildlife Management Areas

- 140 Miles Grant-in-Aid Snowmobile Trails
- 11 Water Access Sites

- 227 Acres Walk-In-Access
- 1 Native Prairie Bank

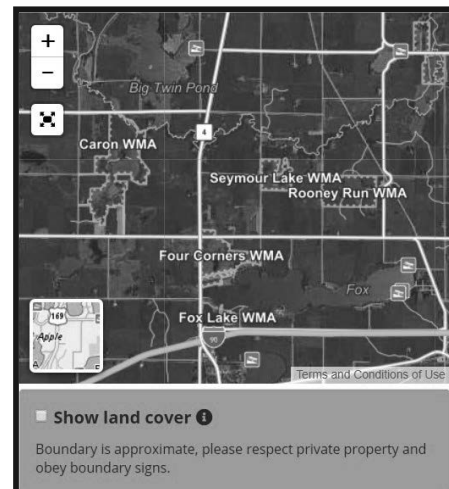
- 2020 Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)—\$50,784
- 2019 School Trust Fund Payments—\$269,549
- State Land Managed by DNR— 4,124 Acres;  
0.9% of County Land Base

## SUCCESSSES

- DNR Wildlife partners with the County and other conservation groups to form a Conservation Alliance to prioritize and target acquisitions in the county.
- DNR provides expert technical guidance to inform conservation actions and planning included in the Martin County Local Water Plan 2017-2026.
- DNR contributes to the conservation, management and protection of key private lands to improve habitat quality and connectivity of the landscape in the Perch Creek watershed.
- Conservation lands in the Perch Creek Corridor provide priority breeding and resting habitat for numerous species, contributes to local economy via recreation value and provides ecological services such as flood & erosion control, pollination and water quality improvement.
- Two of 3 Martin County Lake systems are managed for trophy Muskellunge. Fox Lake Muskellunge was introduced in 1999 and the Fairmont Chain of Lakes in 2016.
- A fish passage project was completed last year at the outlet of Amber Lake in Martin County. It was a collaborative project involving DNR-Fisheries and EWR, City of Fairmont, and Fairmont Lakes Foundation.
- Clam Lake AMA is 13.5 acre basin that allows for bank angler access.
- DNR Fisheries works collaboratively with the Martin County Sportsmen's Group, Fairmont Lakes Foundation, City of Fairmont, Fox Lake Conservation League, and Martin County on various conservation activities.
- DNR Ecological and Water Resources works closely with Martin County Planning and Zoning, SWCD and the City of Fairmont to solve problems around shorelands,

floodplains, outlet structures and best practices in agricultural waters.

- Wetland and grassland restorations on WMAs complement the Martin County Local Water Plan goals of protecting and improving surface and ground water quality and quantity.



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Shoreland erosion issues cause water quality problems and losses to local landowners. Partnering on landowner and LGU staff education about shoreland BMPs, ordinance administration and required permits is an opportunity for the future.
- Quality and quantity concerns regarding surface water use for municipal drinking supplies offers numerous opportunities to collaborate on best practices to reduce water pollutants and increase seasonal low water levels that not only negatively impact fish and wildlife species survival, but can also reduce recreation opportunities for those living in or visiting the area.

Scott W. Roemhildt, Regional Director  
DNR Southern Region Headquarters  
21371 State Hwy 15; New Ulm MN 56073  
507-233-1204 | Scott.Roemhildt@state.mn.us



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# SOIL HEALTH AND HABITAT PROGRAM

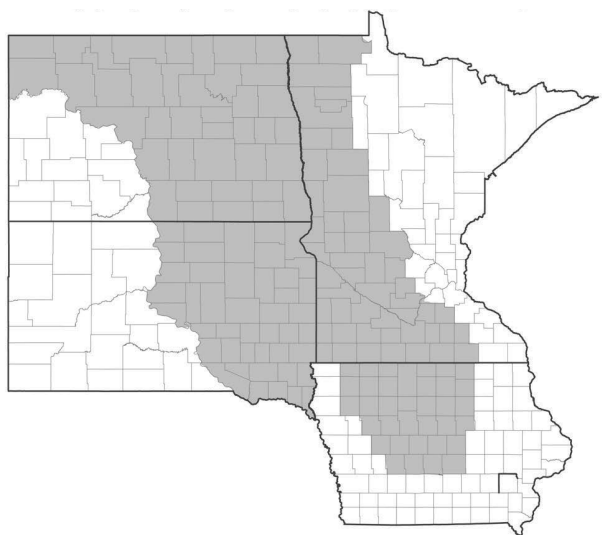
With generous funding from Purina and support from many other partners, Pheasants Forever has created a new Soil Health and Habitat Program. This program – focused in the prairie pothole region, aims to collaborate with 60 farmers in the four states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa in the next 3 years to help analyze 30,000 acres of precision ag data and rebuild soil health, improve water quality and increase biodiversity on approximately 7,200 acres. The goal of the program is to rebuild soil organic matter, sequester carbon, increase water infiltration and provide quality wildlife habitat on the least productive cropland acres while simultaneously improving profitability and sustainability.

## APPLICATION DETAILS

Application sign-up begins December 1, 2020. **All applications must be received by December 30, 2020.** Online applications are preferred and can be completed at: [www.pheasantsforever.org/soilhealthandhabitat](http://www.pheasantsforever.org/soilhealthandhabitat)

Hard copy applications should be sent to: Pheasants Forever, 2301 Research Parkway, Ste 152, Brookings, SD 57006

*Eligible geography - Counties shaded green on map (below) in ND, MN, SD and IA known as the Prairie Pothole Region.*



## PROGRAM DETAILS [Once Accepted]

- Precision Ag Data Analysis – Participating farmers agree to collaborate with Pheasants Forever and Truterra LLC to analyze data for profitability and environmental stewardship benchmarking using the Truterra Insights Engine. Eligible farmers must have at least 1 year of precision yield data through John Deere Operations Center, Climate Field View, or other precision platform and the farmer agrees to share the data with Truterra. For more information about Truterra, please refer to: [www.truterrainsights.com/](http://www.truterrainsights.com/) or [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAKkYFI7ko](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAKkYFI7ko)
- Results from the precision analysis with assistance from Truterra Insights Engine will guide the selection and prioritization of acres that could benefit the greatest by adoption of the Soil Health and Habitat program components. This is a farmer-led process, assisted by PF biologists and precision specialist. The Soil Health and Habitat Program includes:

### Perennial wildlife habitat cover consisting of grasses and wildflowers

#### designed by PF biologists:

- + Seed and establishment cost not to exceed \$150/acre based off actual receipts;
- + \$150/acre one-time sign-up incentive in ND & SD
- + \$250/acre one-time sign-up incentive in MN & IA

#### Cover crop:

- + \$20/acre for cover crop seed cost-share

Terms – Contract length between farmer and PF for perennial habitat acres is 5 years. Haying & grazing outside of the primary nesting season is allowed as part of rebuilding soil health and incorporating livestock into the regenerative process. Funding available based on competitive application sign-up and batching period. Pheasants Forever reserves the right to accept or reject all applications. \*\*Optional Public Hunting Access – Additional financial incentive payments may be available through State Wildlife Agency Walk-In Public hunting access programs. PF Staff can aid with this step and application where available. Access for hunting is entirely at the discretion of the landowner/operator for Soil Health and Habitat Program cooperators.

**Application Link: [www.pheasantsforever.org/soilhealthandhabitat](http://www.pheasantsforever.org/soilhealthandhabitat)**



# Fox Lake Conservation League has Success with Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council Grants!

Over the past 6 years the conservation club has had great success in applying and receiving grants from the LSOHC.

2016	\$1,000,000.00	Purchased Lorenz Parcel
2018	\$2,447,000.00	Purchased Krusemark Parcel & Blachowske Parcel
2019	\$3,650,000.00	Purchased Swanson Parcel and Pearson Parcel
2020	\$2,387,000.00	Working on appraisals of 3 parcels
2021	\$2,864,000.00	Waiting on final bill in MN Legislature

If you have any questions or would like more information on our Land Acquisition, please feel free to contact: Doug Hartke, Grant Coordinator, 507-236-1700, [doughartke@gmail.com](mailto:doughartke@gmail.com)

## Youth Hunt 2020

Friday September 4th youth duck hunters met with their hunter mentor prior to going to the field on Saturday morning. These youth and mentors met at the hunt-ing location that they would hunt on Saturday morning and met with the adult mentor to discuss decoy set up and how they would build a blind. All youth and mentors then met to have pizza and meet all the other mentors and youth hunters.



Mentors preached safety as the first priority and then how to enjoy the wonders of a wetland and all of the animals, birds, reptiles and insects that use

these precious resources. The duck harvest is just another benefit of the hunt! This year 3 youth hunters along with 7 adult mentors had a very successful hunt. We actually have more mentors than we have had youth hunters the past few years.

We sponsor this yearly and need more youth to enjoy and take up hunting. One of these hunters had never shot at game before, and she did an excellent job and bagged her first 2 birds. The other 2 hunter also did well with one of them getting their duck limit within 30 minutes. Ducks Unlimited Mentors from Freeborn County DU helped and again this year and we are grateful for their help. There will be an application on our web page in August 2021 to sign up for the youth hunt in the fall of 2021. We have enough mentors to host 12 youth hunters. We have had more mentors than youth hunters.

## DU “Beyond The Call” award for Fox Lake Conservation League

September 8, 2020

Ducks Unlimited’s “Beyond The Call” award is a conservation award developed to recognize individuals and organizations that go “Beyond The Call” of expectations to help Ducks Unlimited advance wetlands conservation in Minnesota. It was developed in 2000 to posthumously recognize Jason Barker, a young U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service biologist in Detroit Lakes who worked to conserve waterfowl habitat nearly up to the day he passed away from cancer, and has been presented selectively to deserving recipients several times since.



The Fox Lake Conservation League has now been selected to receive this award for their outstanding habitat conservation leadership and accomplishments in Minnesota.

For the past 27 years, Fox Lake Conservation League has contributed \$202,450 to Ducks Unlimited’s conservation mission in Minnesota, supporting our Living Lakes Initiative to directly conserve wetlands in Martin County. DU proudly recognizes the League as Diamond Benefactors, and they are well on their way to becoming a Legacy donor.

Furthermore, the Fox Lake Conservation League has been an important conservation leader in southern Minnesota, driving efforts to restore and protect wildlife habitat in and around Martin County while partnering with DU and other conservation organizations, the Minnesota DNR, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The League has publicly advanced the need to restore prairie and wetlands in Martin County with local citizens, landowners, stakeholders and elected officials alike, successfully protecting and restoring thousands of acres of public wildlife habitat in a strategic, focused approach to restore prairie-wetland complexes that were lost decades ago while maintaining positive support for conservation in the process. After working hard to help pass the Clean Water, Land, & Legacy Amendment in 2008, the League has successfully secured several Conservation Partner Legacy grants and three multi-million Outdoor Heritage Fund grants to further advance wildlife habitat conservation in Martin County, many of which include DU a restoration partner. In addition, local support from the League has helped DU protect and restore four public land tracts in Martin County totaling 615 acres for the Minnesota DNR (nearly a square mile of prairie and pothole wetland habitat) and also enhance or restore numerous other wetlands in area too.

Few other local conservation clubs in Minnesota are as actively dedicated to the mission of wildlife habitat conservation and have achieved as much as the Fox Lake Conservation League. Ducks Unlimited proudly presents our Beyond The Call award to the League now in 2020 in recognition of outstanding past conservation efforts and leadership, and we look forward to many more years of conservation partnership in the decades ahead.

## 25 Students Earn Firearms Safety Certificates

Earlier this fall we had 25 students take and pass the MN DNR Firearms Safety Class. Of these 25, 13 were boys with 11 girls and 1 mom taking part. We had excellent parent support and help and that is greatly appreciated.

This year we changed how we ran our class. We met with the kids early in September and handed out the student manual. We then gave them 2 weeks to work through the book and fill in the worksheets. Then we got back together on Friday night and started working through the student manual. Conservation Office Eric Shettler joined us that night to talk about rules and regulations. Then Saturday we met from 8:30-5:00. We finished going through the book, had some hands on activities with shooting positions and carrying positions, and we took the written test. We brought in a pizza party for all the students over lunch. All students passed with a 91% average. Then on Sunday we met from 12:30-5:00 and did our Field Test and our 22 and shotgun shooting. It was a great year and all the kids did a great job.

Please contact Nathan Amborn 507-236-2075 or Tim Eisenemnger 507-236-8404 if you have any questions about our Firearm Safety Training. You can also email us at [foxlakeconservation@gmail.com](mailto:foxlakeconservation@gmail.com). We are always looking for more adults that would like to get certified as a Firearm Safety Instructor so please let us know if you would like to help out.





# THE CONSERVATION FUND PURCHASES 72,440 ACRES IN MINNESOTA FROM POTLATCHDELTIC

One of the largest land conservation acquisitions in recent state history will support northern Minnesota's long tradition of timber production and outdoor recreation.

PotlatchDeltic Corporation has completed the previously announced sale of 72,440 acres of forestland in northern and central Minnesota to The Conservation Fund for nearly \$48 million. The Conservation Fund's purchase will provide time for the development and implementation of permanent conservation strategies with local partners that will preserve working forestlands and safeguard jobs, while also protecting water quality and wildlife habitat, contributing to local economies and allowing for recreational access.

The lands acquired by The Conservation Fund are in 14 counties—Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Carlton, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Kanabec, Koochiching, Morrison, St. Louis, and Wadena. Approximately 31,600 acres are located within the reservation boundaries of two bands of the Minnesota Ojibwe Tribe—the Bois Forte Band and the Leech Lake Band.

The Conservation Fund will manage the forestland, now called Minnesota's Heritage Forest, for wildlife, water quality and sustainable timber harvesting, while continuing traditional recreational uses, including hunting and fishing. The national nonprofit dedicated to protecting environmentally and economically significant natural spaces will work with county, state, tribal, and local governments to determine the best conservation and sustainable management outcomes for the forestland, with the goal of transferring ownership to public and tribal entities over the next decade.

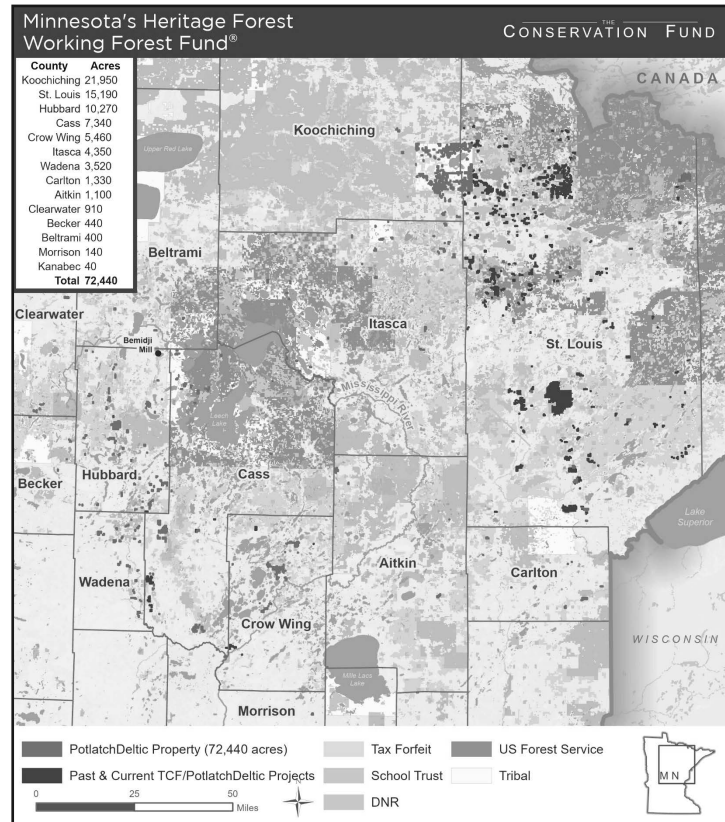
"Our temporary ownership provides time to develop permanent conservation strategies best suited for our partners and the lands that include public access and recreational opportunities under future county, state, tribal, and local government ownership," said Kim Berns-Melhus, Minnesota state director for The Conservation Fund. "We will work to better align and consolidate public forest holdings through land exchanges and direct conveyances resulting in improved economic returns to community,

state and tribal governments, as well as enhancing revenue for Minnesota school districts throughout the state."

This outcome is the culmination of work over the last decade between The Conservation Fund and PotlatchDeltic to achieve both conservation and economic goals. With this transaction and others underway, this partnership has been the catalyst to conserve more than 200,000 acres in the State of Minnesota for various conservation purposes, including working forests, protection of important habitats and public access. The lumber

mill in Bemidji will continue to be owned and operated by PotlatchDeltic as it has for nearly 30 years with logs supplied from Minnesota's Heritage Forest, supporting the essential jobs required to deliver and process the trees.

Many of Minnesota's Heritage Forest tracts are adjacent to existing public lands and will build on the network of large, protected landscapes of undivided forests that are essential to the ecology of the region and provide important habitat corridors for wildlife. The sustainable management of biologically diverse forests helps build resiliency and adaptability to stresses caused by changing environmental conditions. These forests also provide carbon dioxide-absorbing benefits to help fight climate change.



# Southern Minnesota Ducks Unlimited

*The state's largest sponsor event & nations largest virtual event in 2020*

*Thank you for your  
support this past year!*

**Annual Dinner Event  
Scheduled for  
Saturday, March 20th  
@ 5pm**

**Over 35 sponsor  
guns to be given  
away! 1 in 7 wins!**

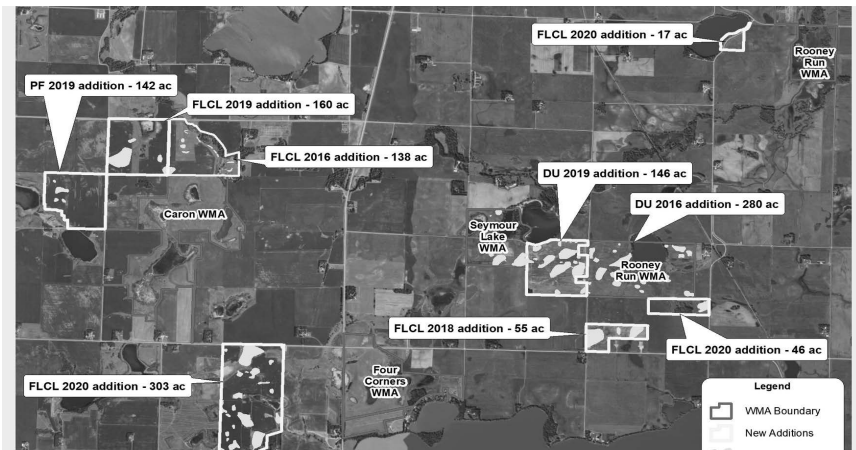
**DU & Fox Lake Partnership  
again secures multi-  
million grant for Martin  
County Projects**

**For more information  
or to get added to our  
e-mail list contact:**

Doug Hartke

(507) 236-1700

doughartke@gmail.com



## Upcoming Event & Project Information

Despite struggles from the COVID pandemic all Minnesota Ducks Unlimited projects remain funded for 2020 & 2021! Your tremendous support led to the organizations largest virtual event to date. Thank you for your support & we look forward to seeing you in March!

Minnesota Ducks Unlimited annual statewide Major Donor dedication ceremony to take place during the summer of 2022 on the Rooney Run project in Martin County. Please contact Doug for information to get you or your families name on the dedication plaque.

Summer of 2022 or 2023 Ducks Unlimited will be hosting a tribute event to Fox Lake Conservation League on a Martin County Project.



## Pierce Lake Drawdown

The DNR Wildlife and Shallow Lakes Staff began a winter drawdown at Pierce Lake on November 9nd, 2020. The target water elevation for the drawdown will be 1227.5 feet. Drawing the basin down to this water elevation which would leave approximately 2.0 feet of water in the basin, most of which should freeze to the bottom during winter. The basin will remain in drawdown through winter and into spring or summer of 2021, depending on climatic conditions.

Pierce Lake is an approximately 506-acre shallow lake that was once considered one of the best waterfowl hunting areas in Martin County. However, the quality of



Pierce Lake's wildlife habitat began to decline in the 1960s. To improve the in-lake habitat conditions, the DNR decided to pursue designating Pierce Lake as a Wildlife Lake under Minnesota Statute (M.S.) 97A.101. Pierce Lake was designated as a Wildlife Lake (M.S. 97A.101) in 1974, with the intent of being managed for waterfowl. A stop-log water control structure was installed at the outlet of the basin in 1999. The runout elevation of the

water control structure is 1230.3 feet and the sill elevation is 1227.5 feet. This means that the existing water control structure could lower water levels on Pierce Lake by 2.8 feet. On December 4 the water level in the lake was 1228.2 feet.

Water clarity in Pierce Lake is low, with Secchi disk readings averaging about 1.0 foot, and aquatic vegetation is sparse. Rough fish (e.g., common carp, black bullheads) also have been observed in Pierce Lake. All of these factors



(i.e., turbid water, presence of rough fish, and lack of aquatic vegetation) indicate poor in-lake habitat conditions. Implementing a water level drawdown on Pierce Lake should encourage a fish winterkill, promote the growth of aquatic vegetation next summer, and improve water quality in the basin.

## Everett Park - Annoucement NEW PLAYGROUND COMING 2021



### 2020 Donations From Gambling

Hunting Vests	\$3,600
MOHA	\$500
Relay for Life	\$1,000
CER	\$500
Ceylon Fire	\$1,000
MS	\$300
DU	\$21,500
Habitat	\$1,600
Trimont Fire	\$7,000
Welcome Fire	\$10,000
Greenwing	\$1,000
NWTF	\$300
Dollars for Scholars	\$500
Boat Landing Light	\$500
FLASK	\$600
Youth Hunt/Gun Safety	\$350
PF Shooting Trailer	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$55,250</b>

## Food Plot and Tree Planting Cost Share Programs

The Fox Lake Conservation League has 2 Cost-Share Programs for Martin County Residents that are looking to help with Winter Habitat and Wind Breaks.

We have a Food Plot Program that we will pay \$100 per Acre up to 5 Acres per year. This will be paid each year in December. Applications are available on our website.

We also have a Tree Planting Program. We will pay for 50% of your tree planting program up to \$500. For this program you just need to fill out the application from our website and bring us copies of your receipts for the trees.

If you have any questions just reach out to the Board of directors.

## Ducks Unlimited Projects in Southern Minnesota – Winter 2020-2021

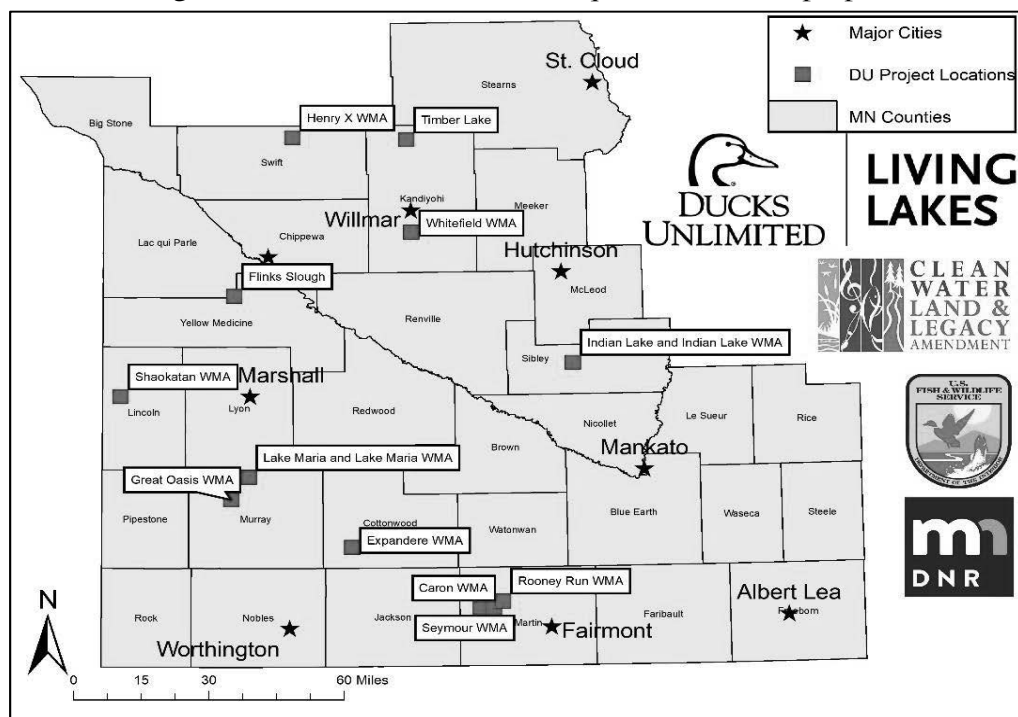
### Shallow Lake Enhancements

Shallow Lakes throughout prairie Minnesota have degraded to turbid conditions due to invasive fish, increased nutrient and water flow from a drained landscape, and stagnant high-water levels. These large wetland basins often have very little submerged aquatic vegetation or aquatic invertebrates that waterfowl rely on for food during nesting and migration. To improve degraded shallow lakes, Ducks Unlimited engineers design and construct water control structures for our DNR and USFWS partners that enable managers to temporarily lower water levels. These drawdowns, much like natural droughts, remove invasive fish, consolidate bottom sediment and nutrients, and allow for the germination of wetland plants on exposed lake bottoms. When natural water levels return, water quality and habitat are greatly improved. In the future, these enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands will provide critical habitat for both breeding and migrating ducks. In 2020 and 2021, DU is working with Minnesota DNR and the USFWS to enhance the following wetlands and shallow lakes:

- 425-acre Lake Maria in Murray County
- 227 acres of wetlands on Flinks Slough WMA in Lac qui Parle County
- 377-acre Indian Lake in Sibley County
- 191-acre Timber Lake in Kandiyohi County
- 148 acres of wetlands on Caron WMA in Martin County

### Public Land Acquisitions & Prairie/Wetland Restorations

DU is actively developing land acquisition and restoration projects in partnership with Minnesota DNR across southern Minnesota. Ducks Unlimited purchases land adjacent to existing Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), restores native prairie and drained pothole wetlands, and transfers the land to the DNR for public use. Restoration involves seeding the uplands to a high diversity mix of native plants, breaking drainage tile, scraping sediment from wetlands, building embankments, and sometimes installing water control structures. In 2020 and 2021, DU is working with the Minnesota DNR to acquire and restore properties on the following WMAs:



- Shaokatan WMA in Lincoln County
- Expandere WMA in Cottonwood County
- Indian Lake WMA in Sibley County
- Seymour WMA in Martin County
- Henry X WMA in Swift County
- Great Oasis and Lake Maria WMAs in Murray County
- Whitefield WMA in Kandiyohi County

**For more information, contact  
 Minnesota Ducks Unlimited  
 Regional Biologist  
 John Lindstrom:**

**320-212-8018 or [jlindstrom@ducks.org](mailto:jlindstrom@ducks.org)**

# Indian Lake Complex



- In 2018, DU purchased three parcels totaling 261 acres on Indian Lake WMA, adjacent to a 95-acre tract previously purchased by DU, that buffer shallow Indian Lake in Sibley County near Winthrop.
- Restoration of wetlands and uplands was completed over the past year, fully wrapping up in summer 2020.
- DU restored 49 wetlands totaling 67 acres and restored 193 acres of native uplands to add to this prairie pothole complex.

## Whitefield WMA

- In 2019, DU purchased the 64-acre Erickson Tract on Whitefield WMA in Kandiyohi County near Willmar.
- We have now restored a 34-acre wetland that was previously drained into nearby Lake Wakanda, a lake being enhanced with DU's help by Kandiyohi County and MNDNR.
- In 2020 DU purchased the 234-acre Leason Tract as another addition to Whitefield WMA with restoration pending



## Rooney Run and Seymour WMA

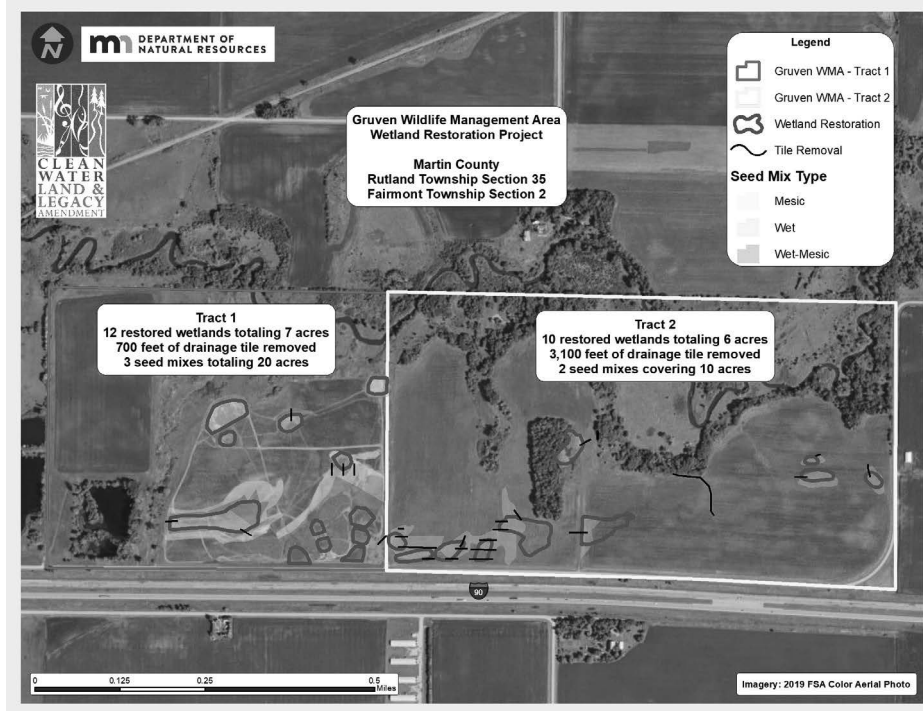
- Over the last several years, DU purchased the 280-acre Krahmer Tract as an addition to Rooney Run WMA and the 147-acre Tenhassen Farms Tract as an addition to Seymour Lake WMA, both in Martin County.
- Over 30 wetlands were restored over both properties!
- Uplands to be restored on Tenahssen Farms this winter.
- Uplands were previously restored on Krahmer, much to the benefit of grassland nesting birds and pollinators.

## Lake Maria Complex

- Lake Maria is a 425-acre Designated Wildlife Lake in Murray County.
- The pumps needed to conduct temporary drawdowns were failing as was the electric fish barrier that kept carp out of the shallow lake. This resulted in turbidity, little aquatic vegetation, and negatively impacted wildlife value.
- To enhance DU engineered and is installing new pumping and electric fish barrier infrastructure in winter 2020-2021.
- DU also bought the 136-acre Onken Tract right on the lake that will help buffer Lake Maria.







## GRUVEN WMA WETLAND RESTORATIONS

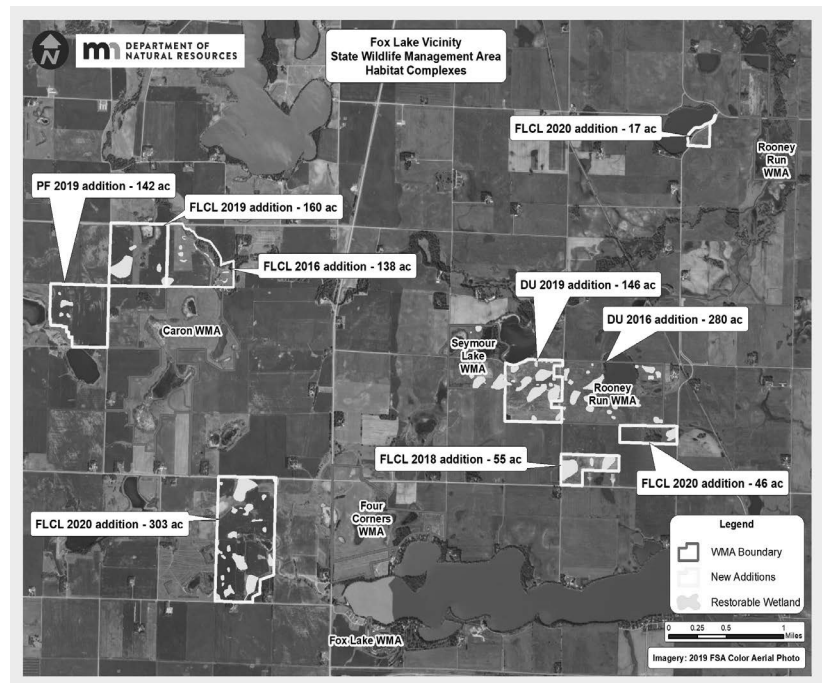
The Fox Lake Conservation League was able to restore 12 wetlands, remove 700' of drainage tile totaling 7 acres of wetlands on tract 1 of the Gruven WMA. This was done with a MN DNR CPL grant. The grant budget was \$50,000 with a \$7200 local match. 20 acres of grasses and forbs were also replanted on this parcel. Tract 2 was restored by Pheasant Forever with LSOHC Funding.

10 Wetlands totaling 6 acres with 3100' of drainage tile being removed and 10 acres of grasses and forbs were replanted on Tract 2. The grassland and forb mixes had over 95 species of plants. These additional wetlands and grasslands will support many declining species during migration and breeding such as waterfowl, shorebirds and grassland songbirds.

## FOX LAKE LSOHC Grants & MN DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grants

2016	138 Acre Lorenz Tract	Acquired by FLCL
2016	280 Acre Krahmer Farms Tract	Acquired by DU
2018	55 Acre Dick & Olson Tracts	Acquired by FLCL
2019	146 Acre Krahmer Farms Tract	Acquired by DU
2019	160 Acre Swanson Tract	Acquired by FLCL
2019	142 Acre Sickler Tract	Acquired by PF
2020	17 Acre Schultz Tract	Acquired by FLCL
2020	303 Acre Pearson Tract	Acquired by FLCL
2020	46 Acre Miller Tract	Acquired by FLCL

The Fox Lake Vicinity Map shows many of the land acquisitions that have happened by Fox Lake, DU and PF.



## 2020 BIG BUCKS CASH RAFFLE WINNERS



\$10,000  
\$1000  
\$1000  
\$500  
\$500  
\$500  
\$500

Megan Biehn  
Nick Gilliland  
Tucker Betts  
Nick Kruse  
Ken Meister  
Kim Jahnke  
Jennifer Behne



# Fox Lake Conservation League

## 2021 Raffle and Membership Drive

2021 Annual Meeting - April 30th 7:00 PM

Basement Sherburn Community Hall

1) 2021 Polaris 570



2) Winchester SX4 12ga Semi-Auto



3) Winchester SX4 12ga Semi-Auto



4) Yeti 65 Cooler



License OS-05344-999

**Each Ticket \$20**

**Purchase Tickets from Any of the  
Following Locations:**

FLCL Board Members

FLCL Gambling Sites:

Sherburn Liquor Store,

The Still Bar & Grill,

Legends II,

Kortes Bar & Grill,

Old Northrop Bar,

Granada Bar & Grill,

GhostTown Tavern

Other FLCL

Supporting Locations:

Welcome Legion,

Amborn Lumber

Mail Checks Payable to FLCL:

Fox Lake Conservation

Attn: Membership Raffle

PO BOX 212

Sherburn, MN 56171

Drawing to be held at the Annual Membership Meeting

Ticket includes \$10 Raffle and \$10 2021 Fox Lake Conservation Membership

Need not be present to win!

Winner Responsible for any applicable fees or taxes

Must be 18 to purchase ticket or win prize



Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc.  
Member Sherburn Civic & Commerce Club  
PO Box 212  
Sherburn, MN 56171  
[www.foxlakeconservation.com](http://www.foxlakeconservation.com)

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## Fox Lake Conservation League Board of Directors

Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone	Email
Nate Amborn		507-236-2075	namborn@bankmidwest.com
Jim Claussen	507-764-2445	507-236-8855	jimclaussen638@gmail.com
Josh Eisenmenger		507-236-4598	josheisenmenger1@hotmail.com
Tim Eisenmenger		507-236-8404	teisenmenger@brandfxbody.com
Dustin Frank		507-236-6188	dfrank125@gmail.com
Doug Hartke	507-764-2785	507-236-1700	doughartke@gmail.com
Scott Kittleson		218-670-0682	smkittleson@gmail.com
Jake Krohn		605-212-6682	jake_23_mj@yahoo.com
Tony Kuhlers		507-848-0347	anthony.kuhlers@gmail.com
Josh Markquart		507-236-6730	joshya.markquart@gmail.com
Jim Miller	507-764-2668	507-236-3442	mwt@frontiernet.net
Harold Nowak	507-764-2897	507-208-3682	
Robert Smith		507-639-5070	chinacat9@frontier.com
Terry Viesselman		507-236-4122	Terryviesselman@hotmail.com
Jordan Yahnke		507-327-4992	foxlaker@me.com

Find our latest info on [FoxLakeConservation.com](http://FoxLakeConservation.com) or Fox Lake Conservation is on Facebook