

Winous Point Marsh Conservancy Newsletter: June 2014

Sunrise in Shanty May 29, 2014



North and West Marsh Drawdowns



Removal of the broken lane pump

Our plans to drawdown the north and west marshes are on schedule despite the unexpected breakdown of the main pump. This drawdown should encourage annual plant growth providing abundant food for migrating waterfowl and should help restore perennial plants (e.g., cattail) in the next several years that provide important cover for a plethora of wildlife species. A special thanks to all those that pitched in to purchase the new gator pump that has proved invaluable thus far.



Both new gator pumps in operation

Special Events and Conferences

This spring has been packed with events and meetings here at Winous. Beginning in mid-May we hosted the Great Lakes Partner's Forum consisting of over 50 wetland researchers, managers, and graduate students from the U.S. and Canada. Less than a week later we entertained a dozen kids from Fremont Middle School's outdoor adventure club for an afternoon of fishing and punt boating.



Mckayla and Alexis unhooking a bullhead they caught during Fremont outdoor adventure club

Finally, on June 3rd, 4th, and 5th ten of the premier waterfowl biologists in the Midwest met here at Winous. These biologists are currently revising a regional plan aimed at conserving ducks, their habitat, and duck hunters in the Great Lakes region. As always, Winous Point is a tremendous venue for hosting these events and a thank you to all for allowing us to use the grounds for these purposes!

Rail Trapping



Virginia rail caught in Durban's

Despite spending more time stomping around the marsh than your average folks, we still rarely observe rails during our daily activities here at Winous. Rails are a secretive marsh bird that frequent dense wetland vegetation and Winous Point provides some of the highest quality habitat for rails anywhere in the Midwest. We began a pilot project this spring in cooperation with Sandusky County Parks to trap and band rails in an effort to learn more about the behavior and habitat requirements of these elusive game birds.



State endangered King Rail equipped with a satellite transmitter to track its movements.

Tracking songbirds during migration

Bryant Dossman (master's student: The Ohio State University) is currently studying the potential use of a radio tower array for tracking song bird's during migration. If successful, Bryant's research could greatly reduce the size of transmitter needed and some of the costs associated with telemetry studies opening up new species and new techniques for researchers interested in studying bird movements. Bryant's study area includes large portions of northwest Ohio and Bryant continues the Winous Point tradition of supporting graduate student research.



Yellow-rumped warbler equipped with a radio transmitter

Prescribed Burns



Opie lighting the Mackey Woods fire

Fire is an often used wildlife management tool to slow encroachment of woody vegetation and maintain prairie grass habitat. During May we burned approximately 25 acres of grassland habitat in Mackey Woods, Elm Island, and the Pheasant Fields and we hope to see a positive response from native warm season grasses. Although this technique is not directly related to wetland management it does maintain the health of the prairie habitat on our property and is an excellent land stewardship technique.



Mackey Woods burn

Intern Profiles

Another annual tradition is underway as both our summer and fall interns have started here at Winous. Derek Benner (summer intern) hails from nearby Woodville, OH and is currently in his second year at Hocking College studying wildlife and fisheries management. This year's fall intern is Mark Wallen from Urbana, Ohio, and Mark is a senior at The Ohio State University studying wildlife management. We look forward to having these two for the next couple of months, and as both appear to be avid outdoorsman, we imagine they will enjoy their stay exploring the marshes of southwestern Lake Erie.



Left to Right: Mark Wallen (fall intern) and Derek Benner (summer intern)