

 **SaskPower**
Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)
Media Backgrounder

Diamond Legacy Partnership 10-year Anniversary Celebration

- SaskPower values the opportunity to join community groups in protecting natural spaces, and in 1997, entered into a 30-year sponsorship agreement with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) referred to as the Diamond Legacy Sponsorship- the first of its kind in Canada.
- SaskPower provides DUC with annual funding of \$115,000 to support partnership projects relating to habitat protection and restoration, youth education and research.
- For nearly 70 years, Ducks Unlimited Canada has been conserving, restoring and managing wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. DUC also delivers wetland and environmental education programs to teach Canadians about wetlands and the need to conserve them.
- Wetlands are among the most threatened of Canada's ecosystems, and in some areas of Saskatchewan, DUC's research has identified documented wetland loss as high as 90 per cent. Such drastic loss rates could lead to increased flooding, poor water quality, desertification and declines in fish and wildlife.
- The partnership is guided by a steering committee that works together to identify opportunities that are of mutual benefit to the environment, SaskPower and DUC.
- SaskPower's investment has had numerous environmental benefits, most notably wetland education, wetland conservation and the promotion of agronomy/winter wheat.

Education

- Project Webfoot is an international, interdisciplinary wetland education program focused on students grades 4-6. Its goal is to teach students about the tremendous value of wetlands.
- SaskPower funding has provided learning opportunities to over 50,000 children and adults, and also helped to develop wetland and field resource materials for educators.
- In order to complement wetland education programs in Saskatchewan, SaskPower and DUC partnered to develop interpretive sites adjacent to the communities of Prince Albert, Humboldt and Melfort. These sites have helped to educate and increase public awareness of the importance of conservation.

Conservation

- With funding from SaskPower, DUC has been successful in taking action to conserve wetlands through the use of scientific research, education and the development of public policy. Some examples of programs include:
 - Conservation Easements – DUC identifies priority wetlands and provides options to ensure they remain intact. Conservation easements are legal agreements, which provide private landowners with incentives for restoring drained wetlands.
 - Rangeland Stewardship – Rangeland Stewardship Program that aims to maintain and/or improve grazing management practices in high waterfowl producing areas of Southern Saskatchewan. Improved grazing management practices assist in making grazing lands more environmentally sustainable, economically sound, and beneficial to waterfowl and wildlife.

Agronomy/Winter Wheat

- Because winter wheat is a preferred habitat for ducks and other wildlife, DUC promotes this crop to increase Saskatchewan duck populations. Winter wheat's early growth provides excellent cover, and the absence of spring tillage improves nesting conditions. Winter wheat also provides agricultural benefits by conserving soil resources through reduced wind and water erosion.
- Through the Core Grower Program, producers are paid to be winter wheat advocates based on the model of farmers learning from successful farmers. The greatest contribution a core grower makes is not growing the crop, but rather, influencing other producers in their area to grow winter wheat, helping to make winter wheat part of the mainstream of agricultural production in that area.
- Since the program began, winter wheat fields across Saskatchewan have experienced an upward trend, promising to expand as more people see the crop's many advantages. In 2006, 1.2 million acres of winter wheat were seeded, up 60 per cent over the previous year.