



Fifteen Years Later, Restoration Stands the Test of Time

August 2014 Snapshots

There is value in reflecting on past restoration projects – successes *and* failures – to learn what worked and what didn't. The Black Rush Lake restoration, which occurred in the late 90s, was a complex project that required teamwork and commitment from multiple agencies and partners. Looking at the wetland today, it's clear that all that hard work paid off. Fifteen years after the project was completed, the restoration is still considered to be a big success.

The 350-acre area in Lyon County, originally a shallow lake and wetland basin, was restored after being drained 100 years ago by tiling. Total cost of the restoration was \$284,408. Over 15 different partners had a role in the restoration of Black Rush Lake, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Corps of Engineers, Lyon SWCD, the DNR, BWSR, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, four local Sportsman Clubs, Area II – Minnesota River Basin, North American Wetlands Conservation Council, several departments of Lyon County, and private landowners.



The project was completed in 1999 with nearly 1,000 acres (650 acres of upland and 350 acres of wetland) successfully restored. A bulk of the restored land is open to the public and part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Another 40 acres of the site is owned and managed by Lyon County as a Wetland Bank mitigation site. Lyon County recorded a wetland bank easement with the Board of Water and Soil Resources and an easement with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which provide protection and management of the site for wetland management.



The project has had strong positive results for Lyon County. Wetland banking credits generated by the restoration have generated income for Lyon County that has been used in part to establish a new County Park, Twin Lakes. The restoration also enabled Black Rush Lake, which sits just 10 miles upstream of the City of Marshall, to retain a large volume of water, decreasing the amount of water heading downstream during runoff events that might otherwise add to flooding damage.

Today, Black Rush Lake is a thriving wetland area with improved water quality and a variety of landscapes and habitats.

Looking back, the hard work and planning that went into the Black Rush Lake restoration serves as great example of how partnerships can and should work. The wetland complex is also home to a pair of trumpeter swans, one of only a handful of locations in southwest Minnesota where these

birds can be found. According to Lyon County's Roger Schroeder, an Environmental Specialist, the pair has used the wetland complex every year since 2010 to nest and raise their young. Black Rush Lake's varied landscape and improved water quality have made it a destination enjoyed by wildlife and residents alike, fifteen years and counting.