

**Wildlife Restoration OPERATING GRANT
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Restoration Grant**

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-B-VERS-2020 Amendment #1

PROJECT NUMBER: 31.0

PROJECT TITLE: Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge and Minto Flats State Game Refuge

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2021

PERFORMANCE YEAR: 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021; year 2 of 2-year grant

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ryan Klimstra, Wildlife Biologist III

COOPERATORS: Fairbanks International Airport, U.S. Army-Ft Wainwright, Friends of Creamer's Field, Alaska Songbird Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR

1. OBJECTIVE 1: Manage both refuges to protect and conserve wildlife populations and their habitats and to allow for compatible uses by the public.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: We consulted with Division of Habitat, other state departments, and other agencies regarding responsibilities for permitting and land management to assure development and land use activities in these refuges did not significantly impact wildlife and their habitats. We conducted public education, field projects, and other efforts to assure public use of lands is consistent with protection of wildlife populations and their habitats. We coordinated these efforts with other state departments, other agencies, and public organizations such as citizen support groups and conservation organizations. We conducted farming activities specifically to maintain and enhance wildlife habitat in an effort to provide access to large expanses of high-quality open habitat. It must be noted

that the ongoing pandemic did slightly retard our farming efforts this year as it had last year.

2. OBJECTIVE 2: Promote community and individual stewardship of both refuges through public participation and multi-use of these refuges.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: We assisted the public in being active and informed participants in the refuge planning processes and conservation strategies by informing user groups through outreach. We worked with the public, neighboring landowners and state/local agencies to assure legal public access to each refuge is maintained or enhanced; and conflicts between refuge users and neighboring landowners are minimized. We continued to help facilitate the addition of 480 acres to Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge (CFMWR) by working with The Conservation Fund, various private citizens, UAF, and the ADF&G hunter access program. We managed, maintained, enhanced and promoted compatible public uses of both refuges (including hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife viewing, and others) and minimized conflicts between user groups. We encouraged public access to, and understanding of, both refuges by placing signs along access routes, creating brochures and maps, maintaining refuge websites, developing educational panels, and through other educational programs or promotional methods. We planned, maintained, and developed improvements for public access and other facilities to both refuges as needed (e.g. trails, parking lots, kiosks, and other facilities). It must be noted that the ongoing pandemic has continued to alter our outreach and education efforts. Staff have continually adapted and designed and developed online information packets and activities for students, families, teachers, and the general community to print out and work through on their own on refuge grounds. It was quite successful and rather innovative. Additionally, we did hold in-person programs and activities as state mandates and Covid-19 outbreaks allowed.

3. OBJECTIVE 3: Conduct and support studies of various species of wildlife and wildlife habitat to support refuge management and planning.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: When possible and appropriate, we developed and conducted studies to assist in management of refuges, address biological knowledge gaps, and improve management of wildlife and their habitats. We continued our partnership with UAF to develop a camera trap study in an effort to better understand winter trail use on CFMWR. Specifically, we were interested in measuring frequency of use, type of use, and timing of each type of use. This project was developed to better inform the user groups that regularly have complaints about other user groups. An undergraduate student from UAF and her advisor and Ryan Klimstra (refuge manager and regional biologist) developed a sampling design based on existing winter trails. We then installed 50 cameras to capture all major trails and junctions. The cameras were in place for the

months of November through mid-April of 2019-2020. The photos have been analyzed and a publication will be completed in the near future. Results will help guide future decisions regarding trail use. We supported a waterfowl banding effort on the refuge by state waterfowl biologists and USFWS partners again this year. Overall, the team deployed 1,096 new bands at the refuge. Of those, 487 were mallards, 481 were northern pintail, 123 were American green-winged teal, 3 were northern shovelers, and 2 were American wigeon. This is a tremendous accomplishment, and we plan to continue these efforts in the future. Additionally, we plan to expand these efforts to include geese and cranes.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

N/A

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

N/A

IV. PUBLICATIONS

N/A

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

This project should be extended. The direct results and contributions of this project to the community of Fairbanks, State of Alaska, and scientific community are very apparent.