



□ *Editor's note: This is one in a series of feature stories concerning organizations that benefit the Imperial area. Volunteering in a community, through organizations, is a way to pay back for the benefits that the community offers an individual.*

**By Carolyn Lee**

### ***The Imperial Republican***

With about 100 members, the Frenchman Valley Chapter of Ducks Unlimited raises money each year for conservation work to protect, enhance, restore and manage wetlands in flyways for ducks. Chase County is a flyway to the north for ducks, according to Kelen Fortkamp, cochair of the local chapter.

"Our primary focus is on the breeding grounds in Canada and North and South Dakota," he said. The local chapter also donates funds that help improve habitat along the Platte River near Paxton and in rainwater basins in the area.

DU has identified these areas as priority areas for conservation work.

"Even though we are unable to spend our funds in this (Chase County) area," Fortkamp noted, "you can rest assured that Ducks Unlimited is making the best use of your donations."

DU chapters have conserved about 55,643 acres in the state of Nebraska. In 2011 Nebraska DU raised \$1,009,598 for work in the state.

Fortkamp said he and interested persons resurrected the local DU chapter in 2003, after it had been dormant for a number of years.

Jason Speck is cochair with Fortkamp. Other officers are Jeremy Vlasin, Ryan Wisnieski and Kendall Dubas.

The group's main fund raiser is a banquet and auction in the spring.

DU has been conserving wetlands for 75 years in Nebraska. Just three percent of expenses are due to administrative costs.

Persons interested in joining Ducks Unlimited may contact Fortkamp at (308) 883-6338.