

## Two Drakes hanging out.

Wood Duck on the left. Mallard on the right.

Gail says she took this photo.

The hens are setting eggs. Not much for the drakes to do but lounge around this little pond.

Vernal (spring) ponds like this are incredibly important to hundreds of species of wildlife, from toads to herons.

Over the years, I have added dozens of ponds to this farm. This special pond is my favorite.

In the spring of 1972, I was preparing a field for corn planting when I got my tractor stuck in mud on a relatively high spot in the field.

As I got the tractor unstuck, I realized there was a seeping spring just below the surface.

In 1975, the county built up the road that runs near this end of the field.

My cornfields ran for about a mile along the road.

In compensation for damage to my crop when sloping the ditches, I had the road crew excavate a shallow basin about 100 feet long and 50 feet wide over the seeping area.

Within a couple years, the new impoundment was reclaimed by nature.

The birch and poplar trees you see in the photo self seeded by 1980.

There are about 100 birch trees now.

Within two years, many grasses and forbs moved back, including my favorite, "Closed Gentian."

It is now a fenced area of about one acre.

I mob graze it twice each summer.

Mob grazing means a high number of animals for a very short time.

That most closely emulates a herd of bison passing through and is the best technique for improving grasslands and savannas.

Passersby think this beautiful little wetland has always been there.

Tom.

