

Island 42 Habitat Project, Wabasha County, Minn.

Location/Description

The site is located on the Minnesota side of the Mississippi River channel, approximately 20 miles upstream of Winona, Minn. The site is in the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

Backwater sloughs at Island 42 did not receive adequate water flows from the Mississippi River at normal pool levels. As a result, these waters had depleted dissolved oxygen and were stagnant during late summer and winter. Also, the lack of adequate nesting cover was a major limiting factor for ground-nesting waterfowl.

The Island 42 habitat project provides flow to a semi-isolated backwater area via two 80-foot-long gated culverts and a 900-foot-long by 50-foot-wide channel to alleviate low dissolved oxygen problems in the backwater. In addition, approximately 36,000 cubic yards of material was dredged from about 7 acres of the backwater area, deepening it from about 2 feet to 5 feet for overwintering by fish. The dredged material was placed on an abandoned placement site adjacent to the backwater area for revegetation.



Excavated channel and backwater area at Island 42, Minnesota.

Status

The project construction was completed in June 1987. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has assumed the operation and maintenance responsibilities of the project. A performance evaluation report was completed in August 1995. Generally, dissolved oxygen levels in the backwater have been maintained above the desired 5 mg/l level by opening the gate structure for summer and winter flows and closing the gate during the spring high water. A fisheries survey in 1990 indicated high fishing use of the area. Vegetation monitoring indicates that the area has maintained good overall cover for waterfowl nesting.

Authority

The Island 42 Habitat Project was planned under the authority of the Upper Mississippi River System - Environmental Management Program and constructed in accordance with an environmental assessment dated August 1986. The Environmental Management Program was authorized by Section 1103 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 and reauthorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

The Island 42 Habitat Project was planned and designed as part of a cooperative effort of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Fiscal

Project design and construction costs were 100 percent federal because the project is located on lands managed as a national wildlife refuge. Operation and maintenance costs are 100 percent federal (a responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Federal cost \$262,000

Non-federal cost \$0

Total cost \$262,000