

Rice Lake Habitat Project, Savage, Minnesota

Location/Description

Rice Lake is a 170-acre shallow floodplain lake on the right descending bank of the Minnesota River within the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge near Savage, Minn.

Natural levees formed by the Minnesota River would trap higher river flows to create marsh areas, but the area had no controlled outlets to the river. The existing outlet allowed Minnesota River floodwaters to back into the wetland, depositing river sediments. The natural levees were also topped by Minnesota River flood flows, allowing more sediment into the wetlands. This process was reducing water quality and increasing the aging rate of the marsh, substantially reducing the areas used by migrating birds for nesting, breeding, and feeding.



The project included excavating a 2,500-foot-long channel into Rice Lake and installing a stoplog water control structure in the channel to provide for water level management of the lake. A 40-acre agricultural field adjacent to the lake was planted with floodplain forest trees. The project optimizes aquatic vegetation growth in the lake for migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. Restoring 40 acres of bottomland hardwoods will increase wildlife diversity and use of the area.

Status

A construction contract was awarded in September 1996, and construction was completed in November 1998. The project has been transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for operation and maintenance.

Authority

The Rice Lake Habitat Project was planned under the authority of the Upper Mississippi River System - Environmental Management Program and constructed in accordance with a definite project report dated July 1995. 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 project was planned and designed as part of a cooperative effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and local interests.

Fiscal

Project design and construction costs were 100 percent federal because the project is 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 \$682,000
Non-federal cost \$0
Total cost \$682,000