

# Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, Trempealeau, Wis.

## Location/Description

The 6,000-acre Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge is adjacent to the Mississippi River on the Wisconsin side at pool 6, approximately 3 miles above Trempealeau, Wis. A railroad embankment separates the refuge from the main channel of the river.

The role of the refuge as a major feeding and resting area for migratory birds was declining. Wetlands in the southern half of the refuge were unproductive for wildlife because of turbid water conditions that limited aquatic plant growth. Wave action contributed to the water quality problem. In other areas of the refuge, woody vegetation was expanding into wetland areas, degrading the migratory bird habitat.



Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge - Pool 6,  
Trempealeau, Wis

The project constructed dikes to create three separate management pools. The 700-acre pool A has a pump station that is capable of drawing down the water level by 3 feet to establish and promote the growth of aquatic vegetation. Water levels can be increased up to 4 feet to control woody vegetation in the 220-acre pool C2 by using portable pumps or an inlet structure. Water levels can be increased 2 feet in the 550-acre pool E using portable pumps. Migratory bird habitat was improved on 1,470 acres, and water levels are maintained on 2,000 acres.

## Status

Construction began in 1995 and was completed in September 1999. Additional work to repair ice damage and other minor work were performed in 2001 and 2002. The 700-acre pool was successfully drawn down, and the 220-acre pool was flooded in spring and summer 2000. Since 2000, several additional drawdowns have been accomplished. Vegetative response has been very good.

The Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers selected the project as one of the Seven Wonders of Engineering in 2001. The project was officially dedicated in October 2002. In 2004, the pool A pump station was modified to gain more than 2 feet of additional drawdown capability.

## Authority

The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge Habitat Project was constructed under the authority of the Upper Mississippi River System – Environmental Management Program in accordance with a definite project report dated January 1994. 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 constructed as part of a cooperative effort of the Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wisconsin 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 \$5,823,000  
Non-federal cost \$0  
Total estimated cost \$5,823,000