

ST. CROIX WETLAND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
New Richmond, WI

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT  
Calendar Year 1994

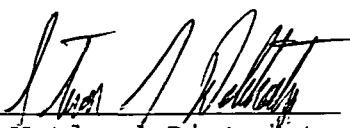
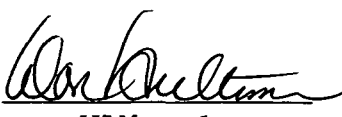

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

REVIEW AND APPROVALS

St. Croix Wetland Management District  
New Richmond, WI

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Calendar Year 1994

 Wetland District Manager	<u>3-15-95</u> Date	 WAM - 1	<u>3/20/95</u> Date
 Regional Office Approval		<u>4/10/95</u> Date	

## INTRODUCTION

The St. Croix Wetland Management District (WMD) was established on September 21, 1992. WPA acquisition began in 1975. From 1975 through 1992, WPA's were managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) under a cooperative agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Following a one year transition phase of joint management, the Service assumed full management responsibilities for Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA's) on July 1, 1993

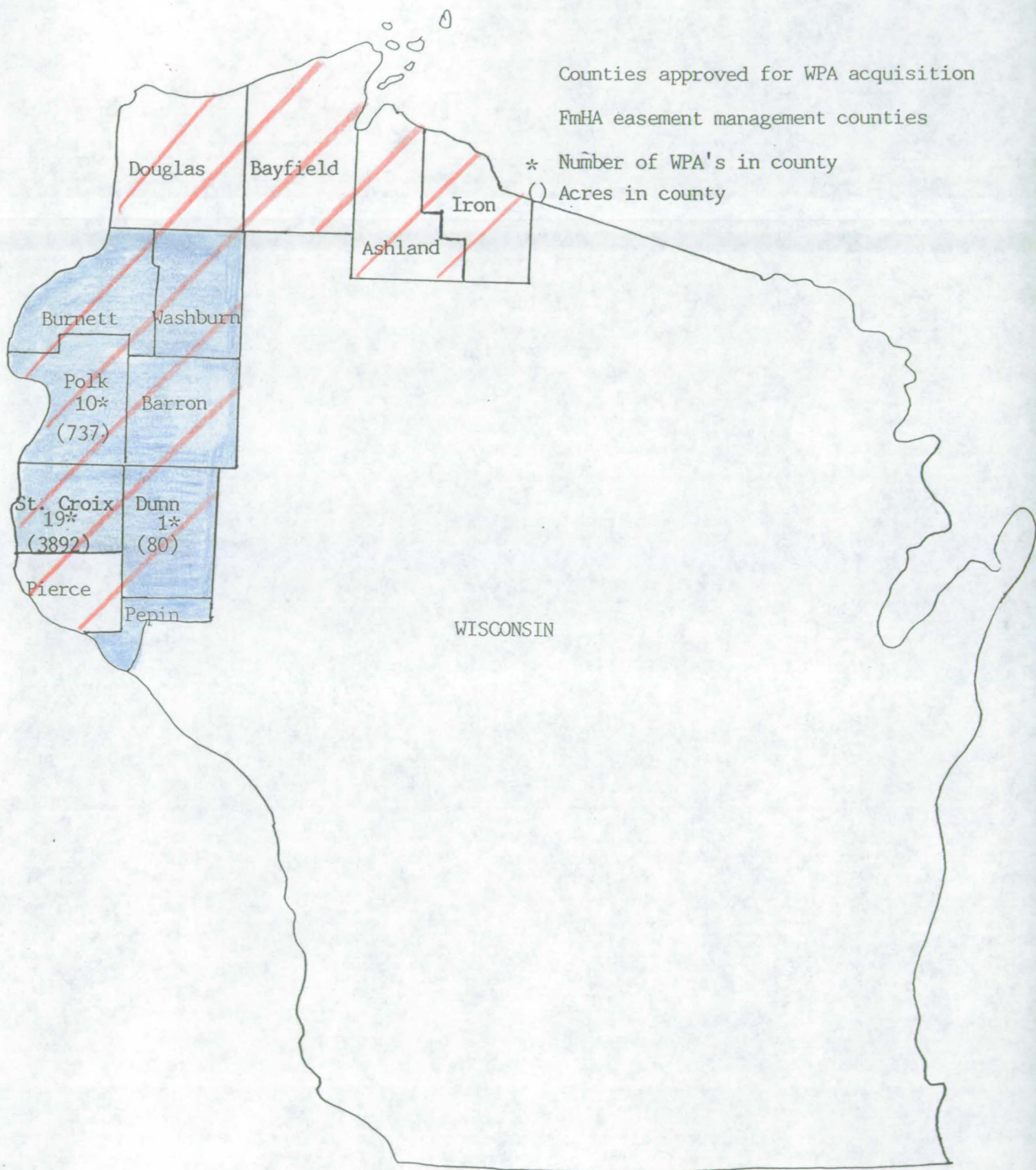
The District includes counties within the "northwest Wisconsin pothole area", an area which resembles the prairie pothole region of North America. This part of Wisconsin contains abundant small wetlands within an historical prairie area. Waterfowl breeding densities and nest success compare favorably with the prairie pothole regions of the Dakota's and Canada although fewer waterfowl species nest in this area.

Several parts of the District contain high quality wetlands and native prairie remnants. However, we are within a zone of increasing urban encroachment from the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. The greatest threat to remaining habitat is not agriculture, but urban sprawl.

The St. Croix WMD is charged with managing 4720 acres of WPA's, 920 acres of conservation easements, acquisition of new WPA's, and coordinating an aggressive wetland restoration effort on private land.



# ST. CROIX WETLAND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



## INTRODUCTION

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K. FEEDBACK



#### A. HIGHLIGHTS

Eighty-six wetlands were restored on private land in partnership with the WDNR, SCS, LCD's, DU, WWA and private landowners (Sec. F.12).

The 10 acre Beestman tract was purchased. This is the first acquisition since the St. Croix WMD office was opened (Sec. C.1).

An option was signed on the 80 acre Boucher Tract. This tract includes a nice home which will serve as our District headquarters office (Sec. C.1).

Basic resource inventories were completed on 19 WPA's (Sec. F.5).



Figure 1. ARD Haseltine, WAM-1 Hultman and Trempealeau NWR Manager Frietsche visited the District in July.



## B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

The geographical area in which the St. Croix Wetland Management District is located has a temperate, continental climate that is characterized by extreme seasonal variability. Mean monthly air temperatures are 10° to 15.8°F in January and 68° to 71.6°F in July. The average growing season ranges from 100 days in the northern counties (Burnett, Washburn) to 120 days in the southern counties (Pierce, Pepin). The ground is usually frozen from late November through mid-April and the frost depths range from 66 to 86 cm.

During 1994 mean minimum temperatures for the year were 33.9°, only .40° below normal. Mean maximum temperatures were 54.9°, the normal maximum temperature is 55.0°. Precipitation for the year was 30.6 inches, just slightly above normal for the area. However, September was a particularly wet month with 5.89 inches of precipitation falling, 2.3 inches above normal for the month.

## C. LAND ACQUISITION

### 1. Fee Title

The St. Croix WMD grew out of a WPA acquisition effort begun in 1975. WPA acquisition occurred sporadically from 1975 through 1986 as acquisition funding permitted. Since 1987, some acquisition money has been available each year. Acquisition money is divided between the two WMD's in Wisconsin.

Acquisition efforts increased in 1994, following a fairly inactive period during the first 18 months of the stations existence. WMD staff located willing sellers; realty assumed the lead upon receiving an appraisal request. Acquisition efforts, results and costs are show in Table 1.

At the close of the year, the Service had accepted two options totalling 10.75 acres and had in hand three more options totalling 240.00 acres.

Table 1. St. Croix WMD 1994 Acquisition Results and Costs

COUNTY	NAME	ACRES	LANDOWNER DECISION	OPTION ACCEPTED BY FWS	CY 94 COSTS
St. Croix	Williams	80	Declined	N/A	
St. Croix	JMJ Acres (Cullen)	80	Declined	N/A	
St. Croix	Beestman*	10	Option signed	7-27-94	\$29,000
St. Croix	Van Dyk	~130	Declined	N/A	
St. Croix	Van Dyk	10	Declined	N/A	
St. Croix	DuBois	65	Pending		
St. Croix	Boucher	80	Option signed	Pending	
Dunn	Cook	110	Option signed	Pending	
Polk	Steffan	1	Option signed	9-22-94	\$ 1000
Polk	Hose	120	Pending		
Polk	Christianson	28	Pending		
Polk	Boe	50	Option signed	Pending	
Polk	Lee	147	Pending		

\*After obtaining the Beestman option, the Service choose to use the Beestman tract as part of a complex trade involving WPA lands in Southeast Wisconsin.

One of the signed options was for the Boucher tract. This will become the headquarters of the WMD on June 1, 1995. This 80 acre tract, located three miles west of New Richmond, contains a nearly new, two story house which will be adapted for use as an office. The house can be converted to basic office use with only minor modifications. The tract contains all or part of 18 wetlands plus some native prairie remnants and is well suited for environmental education.

## 2. Easements

Except for FmHA easements, no easements have been taken in the District. After an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate a debt restructure easement on a tract adjacent to Oak Ridge WPA, the Service appraised the property and plans to offer an "upland" (grassland) easement on an 85 acre parcel. The offer had not yet been presented at year end.

## D. PLANNING

### 1. Master Plan

Nothing to report.

### 2. Management Plan

On July 1, 1993 the habitat management responsibilities of the District's WPA's were transferred from the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources(WDNR) to the Fish and Wildlife Service. As part of this transfer process all habitat management files were received from the WDNR Baldwin field office. A complete review of all WPA files was begun to determine our current and future management and acquisition needs. During the field season land and vegetation inventories were conducted on 19 of the 30 WPA's located within the District.

WPA habitat management during the 1994 field season consisted primarily of brush/shrub control through mechanical and chemical techniques, cooperative farming agreements, and noxious weed control.

### 3. Public Participation

Nothing to report.

### 4. Compliance with Environmental and Cultural Resource Mandates

Nothing to report.

### 5. Research and Investigation

Although no formal research projects were undertaken or planned during 1994, two special use permits were issued which involved small research projects conducted by local High School students.

In April and May special use permits were issued to Jim Margeneau of St. Patrick's High School in Hudson. Jim was interested in involving his 8th grade students in a salamander research project on Clapp WPA. The project was designed to determine numbers and species composition of salamanders using the area and was part of the Wisconsin Herptile Atlas. During early spring, salamanders migrate to ponds as part of their breeding activities. Salamander surveys are commonly conducted during this time of the year by setting minnow traps along the edges of ponds. This procedure was used during the study. The traps were checked once daily (mornings, as salamanders are active at night) and were run for approximately 4 weeks. Unfortunately no salamanders were caught during the investigation.

In June, Jim once again requested a special use permit for a research project which was part of a ground level ozone study being coordinated through the State of Wisconsin. The permit was issued for 10 Mile WPA located in St. Croix county. Ozone damage is visible on the stems and leaves of milkweed and therefore milkweed plants are commonly used as indicators of ozone damage. Results from the study indicated that stems and leaves within the study transects showed relatively little damage. However, several leaf samples that were collected just outside of the measured transects showed considerable damage. All samples and data were sent to Madison for analysis by the State of Wisconsin.

E. ADMINISTRATION1. Personnel

Table 2. 1994 Staffing at St. Croix Wetland Management District

Name	Position	FTE
Steve Delehanty	District Manager	PFT - 1.0
Bobbi Webber	Refuge Operations Specialist	PFT - 1.0
Nancy Unbehaun	Administrative Assistant	TFT - 1.0
Debra Guanitz	Biological Technician	SFT - 0.5
David McConnell	Biological Technician	SFT - 0.5
Jeannie VanBeek	Administrative Assistant	TPT - 0.75

At the beginning of FY 94 the District staff included Manager Delehanty, ROS Webber and Administrative Technician Unbehaun. Nancy Unbehaun, however, resigned on 3/25 after 20 years of service with the Federal Government.

On 2/7, Doug Denk, a graduate student from the University of Wisconsin - Steven's Point, arrived for work at the St. Croix office. Doug is conducting a research project on restored wetlands within the St. Croix District. Doug worked out of our office for the month of February and then reported to work as an Limited Term Employee for the WDNR out of the Balsam Lake, WI office.

On 4/4 temporary Biological Technicians Gaunitz and McConnell reported for work. Both Gaunitz and McConnell worked as FWS employees in 1993 as well.

On 4/18 Jeannie VanBeek started work as a temporary part time Administrative Assistant. In April Jeannie started working a 20 hour/week schedule. In September her hours were increased to 32 hours/week.

Two work study students from University of Wisconsin River Falls campus worked on the District for 10 weeks. Wendy Thomford and Dixon Magneson worked from 6/6 through 8/19.

Ginger Molitor, a fellowship student from the Winona office, spent the week of 8/22 working at our office.

In October, WMD Manager Delehanty began reporting directly to WAM 1 in the Regional Office, ending our designation as sub-station

under the auspices of Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. While the support and supervision by Trempealeau NWR Manager Rick Frietsche were excellent, the station had matured sufficiently to function independently.

Three permanent positions, 60 % of the projected permanent staff, remained unfilled in 1994. Much work normally accomplished by permanent staff is accomplished at St. Croix by temporary staff and other work simply remains undone. A particular frustration is the fact that administration occupies such an overwhelming percentage of staff time especially in a small but independent office.

#### 4. Volunteer Program

The volunteer program at St. Croix WMD is in its early stages of development. Currently we have one volunteer, Tom Marcouiller. Tom joined the District staff in June and has been a welcome addition. Tom attended tractor safety training on 6/28 and since then he has completed several projects with the tractor. Tom mowed all of the WPA parking lots prior to hunting season, mowed two fields of brush, mowed a firebreak on Somerset WPA and assisted in the clean-up of the Oak Ridge shed.

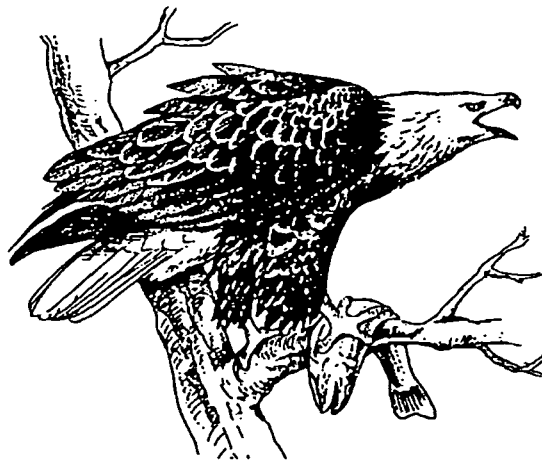






Figure 2. District Manager Steve Delehanty and Refuge Operations Specialist Bobbi Webber.



Figure 3. Administrative Assistant Jeannie VanBeek, Biological Technicians Dave McConnell and Deb Gaunitz. (left to right)





Figure 4. Work Study students Dixon Magnuson and Wendy Thomford.

## 5. Funding

Our 1994 budget reflected the challenge of funding a new station, however, three additional funding sources(1230, 4672 and 4673) allowed the District to increase our upland and wetland habitat management accomplishments (see Table 2).

**Table 2. St. Croix WMD 1993 and 1994 Funding**

FUNDING SOURCE (CODE)	1993	1994
Private Lands (1121)	\$ 60,000	\$ 75,000
O & M (1261)	\$ 18,760	\$ 79,480
MMS (1262)	\$ 37,000	\$ 20,000
Migratory Birds (3100)	\$ 5,000	
Joint Venture (3110)		\$ 5,000
Fire (9120)		\$ 2,600
Flood (4672)*		\$ 98,000 (\$ 27,104 spent)
Flood (4673)*		\$ 34,000 (\$ 16,314 spent)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$120,760</b>	<b>\$320,080</b>

\*Flood monies are two year monies (FY 94 and FY 95)

During July the FWS, WDNR and other partners jointly applied for a North American Wetland Conservation Act Grant. This grant was approved in August. St. Croix WMD will be receiving approximately \$450,000.00 for land acquisition and \$100,000.00 for wetland and upland habitat restorations. This money will be spent during 1995 and 1996.

## 6. Safety

Safety meetings were held each month during the year. Topics covered included: fire extinguishers, Aids, first aid, driving safety, tornado safety, accident prevention, etc. Biological technician McConnell attended an 8 hour First Aid/CPR course offered by the local college. On 4/6 Biological technicians McConnell and Gaunitz and ROS Webber had fire physicals and successfully completed their step-tests. Manager Delehanty completed his LE physical in March. Maintenance of a safe work

environment and personnel safety are top priorities. Safe operation of equipment used in all WPA activities is ongoing.

#### 7. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for wildlife habitat management activities and the private lands program was provided through numerous contacts and cooperation with the WDNR, local LCD, SCS, ASCS and FmHA offices, and local interest groups/individuals.

#### 8. Other

The Refuge Revenue Sharing Act provides for yearly payments to local units of government for lands under the administration of the Service. Funds for these payments are derived from revenue from the sale of products from these lands plus a supplemental congressional appropriation.

Fourteen refuge revenue sharing checks totalling \$18047.00 were distributed in 1994 (Table 3).



Table 3. 1994 Refuge Revenue Sharing Payments

COUNTY	TOWNSHIP/VILLAGE OR TOWN	PAYMENT
Polk	Alden Township	\$ 859.00
Polk	Black Brook Township	\$ 561.00
Polk	Town of Farmington	\$ 719.00
St. Croix	Village of Deer Park	\$ 520.00
St. Croix	Cylon Township	\$ 1016.00
St. Croix	Town of Star Prairie	\$ 158.00
St. Croix	Town of Hudson	\$ 1326.00
St. Croix	Stanton Township	\$ 5298.00
St. Croix	Richmond Township	\$ 2821.00
St. Croix	Hammond Township	\$ 100.00
St. Croix	Erin Prairie Township	\$ 742.00
St. Croix	Somerset Township	\$ 2138.00
St. Croix	Warren Township	\$ 1607.00
Dunn	Rock Creek Township	\$ 182.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$18,047.00</b>

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT1. General

We accomplished little habitat management on WPA's due to our small staff and the need to accomplish a basic inventory of WPA resources.

Favorable moisture and growing conditions throughout the District encouraged excellent growth of grasses and forbs. Agricultural crop yields were reported by many to be the best ever for this area.



## 2. Wetlands

The wetlands were full during 1994. Heavy precipitation in 1993 and slightly above normal precipitation in 1994 left most semi-permanent wetlands full all year. Many large wetlands, including those on Erickson WPA, appeared to reach even higher levels than in 1993. This may be in response to ground water levels rising due to 1993 precipitation levels. Zones of flooded dead trees are a common site around area wetlands. Even ephemeral wetlands remained full longer than usual and some re-filled once or twice during the summer in response to rainfall.



Figure 5. High water levels are evident on this private property adjacent to Amschler WPA.

One WPA wetland, on Kobernick WPA, has a water control structure. The wetland has not been manipulated since the structure was installed in 1980. ROS Webber wrote a brief water management plan for this wetland which calls for a 1995 drawdown.

A floating waterfowl nesting platform was constructed by a local student for use on the District. This platform was placed on Alden WPA just after ice out in April. The platform was removed in September and showed indications of use by a nesting duck (most likely a mallard).

## 3. Forests

Nothing to report.



#### 4. Croplands

Approximately 10 acres on Erickson WPA were seeded down to a cool season mix under a cooperative agreement with a local farmer. He harvested a (weedy) crop of oats from the field and has no further privileges under the agreement.

Eighty acres on Kerbers WPA were planted to corn under the last year of a cooperative agreement developed by WDNR in 1992. The agreement calls for a corn food plot to be left until spring of 1995 and the field prepared in the spring for seeding to a native mixture.

WDNR planted a warm season mixture on a 10 acre field on Bierbrauer WPA which they were unable to seed in 1993.

#### 5. Grasslands

Roughly one third of the St. Croix WMD was originally prairie, savannah, or pine barrens with a grass understory. Most of the WPA's are in the historic prairie and savannah areas. The District goal is to maintain healthy grassland communities through planting, burning, and brush control. We may incorporate haying and grazing as management options if feasible with the local dairy based agriculture. Dairy farmers typically want only high quality hay and forage and WPA fields managed for residual cover are often poor quality forage.

During 1994, we spent much time accomplishing a basic inventory of WPA resources to identify native prairie remnants, native grass seedings, planted cool season fields, and other resources and problems. This inventory will be used as a basis for future management decisions.

In preparation for a 1995 burn a fire break was mowed on Somerset WPA. Fire management is expected to stimulate a degraded native prairie. We also mowed brush on Beyl WPA (west field; 13.4 acres) and Oak Ridge WPA (east of storage shed; 7 acres). In addition, brush and trees were cut on Bierbrauer WPA during 1994.

#### 6. Other Habitats

Nothing to report.

#### 7. Grazing

Nothing to report.

#### 8. Haying

Nothing to report.

#### 9. Fire Management

Five prescribed burning plans were completed (Three Lakes, Bass Lake, Kostka, Kobernick and Risberg WPA's), however, we failed to accomplish any prescribed burning on WPA's in 1994. We do not have the equipment or staff to burn on our own so we depend on sharing staff and equipment with the DNR. We did assist on some DNR burns. It is extremely frustrating not to have sufficient staff or equipment to accomplish our own burns or at least be able to offer enough equipment and staff to be an equal partner with DNR. By the end of 1994, we had acquired a surplus tractor and a rotary mower which at least allows us to prepare fire breaks.

A Cooperative Fire Agreement was written and submitted to the RO for approval in January. The purpose of the agreement was to provide for response to wildfires which may occur on the Districts WPA's. The agreement was sent to all fire departments within the District where WPA's occur. As of the end of the year all but three fire departments had signed the agreement. We will continue to pursue agreements with the three remaining Departments.

#### 10. Pest Control

One small infestation of purple loosestrife on Deer Park WPA was contained by hand pulling plants and cutting seedheads. After eliminating the herbicide application (Rodeo) of the past several years, the stand is getting noticeably larger. We plan to use Rodeo in 1995. We have made inquiries about biological control and may have an opportunity to participate in biological control efforts in a few years.

While we have some stands of noxious weeds on WPA's, weed control is not the political issue that it is on many Wetland Districts. Few private landowners make any attempt at noxious weed control so our few serious weed problems blend into the landscape.

### 11. WPA Easement Monitoring

We have no traditional wetland easements. We visited each FmHA conservation easement in 1994 and posted nearly all easements. Posting some easements was challenging. Since they had been surveyed five or more years before posting, we had to search for long obscured monuments.

### 12. Private Lands

During the first two years of the St. Croix WMD District office we have established a successful and aggressive Private Lands Program. During 1994 86 basins totalling 130 acres were restored in St. Croix, Dunn, Polk, Pierce, Barron and Burnett counties. Wetlands ranged in size from .25 acres to 7.6 acres.



Figure 6. Kanten wetland restoration site located in St. Croix County.

Projects were funded by FWS Private Lands funds, St. Croix County Land Conservation Department (\$4000.00), Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (\$880.00), Ducks Unlimited (\$8300.00) and the WDNR.

Ducks Unlimited also provided engineering services on a large project scheduled for completion during 1995.

During 1994 the private lands work load was shared with the WDNR. It was established in a joint agency meeting held in February, 1994 that WDNR would be the primary contact for wetland restoration work in Polk, Barron, Washburn and Burnett counties in the waterbank townships. FWS was the primary contact in these counties for the non-waterbank townships. FWS was also the primary contact for restoration/enhancement work in St. Croix, Dunn, Pierce and Pepin counties. This working arrangement went smoothly during the year.

In January, 1994 a contract was signed between the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point to fund a graduate student to complete a two year wetland restoration research project in northwestern Wisconsin. The student, Doug Denk, started his project by working with our office to select sites for his study from wetlands that had been restored within the District since 1987. Doug also assisted us with Private Lands activities during the month of February. The remainder of the year Doug worked with the WDNR out of the Balsam Lake field office assisting them with wetland restoration activities and conducting his research investigations.

#### G. WILDLIFE

##### 1. Wildlife Diversity

Habitat types within the District vary widely and include northern forests, oak\pine barrens, oak savanna prairies and intense agricultural areas. As result of the habitat diversity found within the District, a variety of both game and nongame species utilize the WPA's within the District.

##### 2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

Eight State and/or Federally listed species are known to occur within the St. Croix WMD boundaries. These species include: peregrine falcon, bald eagle, osprey, red-necked grebe, caspian

tern, Forster's tern, trumpeter swan and great egret. Trumpeter swans were observed using the wetlands on Three Lakes WPA during the year.

### 3. Waterfowl

The WPA's within the St. Croix WMD serve both as migratory resting areas and breeding/nesting areas for a variety of waterfowl. The most common species to breed/nest on the District are mallard, blue-winged teal, wood ducks, and Canada geese. Other dabblers commonly seen during migration include gadwall, widgeon, pintail, and shoveler. In both spring and fall a variety of diving ducks also utilize the areas.

Waterfowl use was noticeably heavy on Oak Ridge WPA and Alden WPA during the year. Trumpeter Swans were observed on Three Lakes WPA several times during the summer.

Approximately 203 wood duck nesting boxes are located on various WPA's throughout the District. These boxes are monitored by the WDNR. In 1994 152 boxes (74%) were used by either wood ducks or hooded mergansers. Sixty-nine percent of the wood duck eggs hatched and 58% of the hooded merganser eggs hatched.

### 4. Marsh and Water Birds

Various species of marsh and waterbirds are common to Wisconsin and the St. Croix WMD. Blue herons, black-crowned night herons, green heron and sandhill cranes have all been observed in the area.

### 5. Shorebirds, Gulls, and Terns

Several species of shorebirds are known to utilize the St. Croix WMD area. Currently none of the WPA's are known to attract large numbers of these birds.

### 6. Raptors

The grassland and open agricultural fields within the district provide good habitat for various species of raptors. Species common to the area include red-tailed hawks, American kestrels, northern harriers and great horned owls. Occasionally Cooper's hawks, sharp-shinned hawks and broad-winged hawks are sighted. A short-eared owl was sighted on Kostka WPA.

### 7. Other Migratory Birds

American woodcock and common snipe are also found on various WPA's within the District. On 4/20 ROS Webber and Biotech Gaunitz

conducted the FWS Woodcock Survey on a route located in eastern St. Croix county. Conditions were ideal, however, only three birds were heard.

#### 8. Game Mammals

White-tailed deer inhabit all of Wisconsin and are found in noticeable numbers on WPA's and surrounding lands. In addition, muskrat, raccoon, red fox, coyote, mink and black bear can be found on various WPA's.

#### 9. Other Resident Wildlife

A host of wildlife find WPA's an attractive area to live, including striped skunk, opossum, ring-necked pheasants, ruffed grouse, a variety of song birds and various small mammals.

#### 10. Fisheries Resources

A survey of the fisheries resources on St. Croix WMD WPA's has not been conducted. It is assumed that a variety of minnows and pan fish can be found in several of the wetlands.

#### 11. Wildlife Propagation and Stocking

Nothing to report.

#### 12. Scientific Collections.

Nothing to report.

#### 13. Marking and Banding

On 6/30 District staff assisted WDNR with the capturing and banding of Canada geese on Three Mile WPA. Eighty one birds were captured. Sixty eight were banded with leg bands and 38 of these birds were also fitted with neck collars.

#### 14. Disease Prevention and Control

Nothing to report.



## H. PUBLIC USE

### 1. General

All WPA's (with the exception of Oak Ridge WPA during waterfowl hunting season) are open to hunting, fishing and trapping. The District received significant use during small game and deer hunting seasons. The District office had many visitors requesting maps and information about hunting on WPA's.

### 2. Hunting

Hunting is a popular activity on the District's WPA's. The most sought after species are waterfowl and white-tailed deer. However, many hunters utilize the areas in pursuit of upland game birds (primarily ring-neck pheasants) and rabbits.

### 3. Fishing

Fishing occurs on various WPA wetlands. According to the "locals" ice fishing is good on Erickson WPA. In addition, the wetland on Bierbauer is known to have excellent perch fishing in the winter.

These wetlands periodically winter kill which eliminates fishing for several years.

### 4. Trapping

Some trapping is occurring on WPA's, however, trapping pressure is not significant due to the current low market price for hides. Species taken include muskrat, raccoon, mink, fox and beaver.

### 5. Wildlife Observation

Many of our WPA's are in close proximity to the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. Therefore, a number of people are utilizing WPA's for wildlife observation activities. Oak Ridge WPA has been included in the Wisconsin Watchable Wildlife Guide, and is a popular area for birdwatchers.

### 6. Other Wildlife Oriented Recreation

Nothing to report.

## 7. Law Enforcement

Law enforcement is minimized because of our small staff, lack of back-up officers and radio communications. Manager Delehanty is the only LE officer at the station. Delehanty issued one NOV for driving off road on Alden WPA. Most hunting and fishing enforcement is accomplished by WDNR Conservation Wardens.

### I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

#### 1. New Construction

Two grass parking lots were constructed on WPA's located in St. Croix county during 1994, a five car lot on Clapp WPA and a five car lot on Somerset WPA.

Boundary fences were constructed on Farmington WPA (.23 miles), Christensen FmHA easement (.30 miles) and Rantala FmHA easement (.24 miles). Boundary posting was accomplished on Farmington WPA in Polk County and the Rydberg FmHA easement tract in Washburn County.

Gates were installed at Rock Creek WPA (Dunn County) and Kerbers WPA (St. Croix County).

#### 2. Rehabilitation

Two wells were abandoned by the staff during the month of August. Dan McDonah, maintenance worker from Trempealeau NWR travelled to the District with a backhoe to assist with these projects. An irrigation well located on Erickson WPA was abandoned according to WDNR specifications. The well was dug out with the backhoe until the casing was exposed. We then placed an old culvert over the casing and filled the casing and the culvert with a concrete slurry. The site was then backfilled. The second well abandoned was located on Kerbers WPA. This well was abandoned by filling it with bentonite.

In August, the storage shed located on Oak Ridge WPA was completely cleaned out. A 32 yard dumpster was filled with various types of junk that had collected over the past 15 years. After it was empty, approximately 6 inches of gravel was laid on the floor. This eliminated a dust problem and secured the



Figure 7. Well abandonment at Erickson WPA.



Figure 8. A wetland was restored on Kerbers WPA by filling an old well with bentonite.

building more adequately. In addition, the access driveway into the shed was graveled to provide a more functional area for our day to day operations.

Other rehabilitations activities included replacing damaged boundary signs on several FmHA easement properties and WPA's. Fence repair was accomplished on Kostka WPA (.1 mile) and Erickson WPA (.2 mile). Gate repair was done on Beyl, Erickson and Kostka WPA's.

#### 4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement

Several new purchases were made in 1994 that were welcome additions to our growing office. For field use we purchased a Stihl 026 chainsaw, a Stihl power auger, a John Deere heavy duty mower, a magnetic locator, a John Deere post hole digger, a battery charger and an air compressor. We also received several items from Trempealeau NWR including an International dump truck, a Redi-Haul trailer, a John Deere riding lawn mower, a John Deere 2440 tractor, a utility trailer and a John Deere pull behind rotary mower. We obtained a military surplus 1976 Dodge 4x4 pickup truck from Seney NWR and a 100 gallon fire pumper from Upper Mississippi NWR. In addition to the larger items we also purchased several small items, mainly hand tools.

#### 5. Communications Systems

A Panasonic plain paper fax machine was purchased to replace the old Canon thermal fax machine.

#### 6. Computer Systems

New computer purchases for the year included a Dell 466/L and a Dell Laptop. We also received an IBM PS/2 from the RO to bring our office total to five computers. In addition we purchased a second HP Laserjet printer and received a Microcom modem.

#### 7. Energy Conservation

Nothing to report.

## 8. Other

The station continued to rent a storage garage space from Dick's Mini Storage located in New Richmond.

## J. OTHER ITEMS

### 1. Cooperative Programs

Nothing to report.

### 2. Items of Interest

During November Manager Delehanty attended the "Management Program for Natural Resource Managers" held at Penn State University.

### 3. Credits

All staff members assisted in writing the report. The report was compiled and edited by ROS Webber. Administrative Assistant Van Beek assembled and distributed the narrative.

## K. FEEDBACK

Opening a new station is both exhilarating and challenging. I recommend it to anyone who has the opportunity to do this during their career.

There is always much discussion over the advisability of creating new stations when existing stations are understaffed and underfunded. Any new station should quickly receive at least a minimal core staff if it is to open and operate independently. If we cannot support a core staff within the first few years, we should consider either not staffing the station or operating it as a satellite whereby some administrative burden is avoided.

I have received enormous help over the last 2 1/2 years from many people. My sincere thanks to the staff at Trempealeau NWR, the WAM 1 office, Wisconsin DNR staff, and all of the others who have guided me along towards independence. Most importantly, thanks to the great staff of the St. Croix WMD who have done most of the real work involved with managing land, restoring wetlands, and running a federal office.

Getting started was hard but fun.