

FORT PECK QUARTERLY NARRATIVE REPORTS

AUGUST 1940

thru

JANUARY 1941

ROUTING SLIP

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

DATE: 3-10 1941☒ ~~MR. [unclear]~~☒ ~~MRS. WOODIN~~☒ ~~MR. ELMER~~☐ MRS. GARVIN☒ ~~MR. DILMONT~~JCSShwaccPAS

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~~Mr. Kubichek~~~~Mr. Smith~~~~Mr. Griffith~~~~Miss Cook~~P. H. A.BEGgwc

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SECTION OF ERA:

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SECTION OF STRUCTURES:

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REMARKS:

Ft. Peck QuarterlyNovember '40 - January '41

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Cook

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I. General.

A. Weather Conditions. Weather conditions have been abnormally dry and abnormally warm, though there have been cold snaps.

	<u>Rainfall</u>	<u>Max. Temp.</u>	<u>Min. Temp.</u>	<u>Reservoir Elevation end of month</u>
November	<u>0.74</u>	<u>53.2</u>	<u>-17.9</u>	<u>2103.93</u>
December	<u>0.08</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>-18</u>	<u>2109.02</u>
January	<u>0.15</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>-16.3</u>	<u>2112.74</u>
Total	<u>0.97</u> Extremes	<u>53.2</u>	<u>-18</u>	

B. Water Conditions. The lake has been rising steadily during the report period. Only 1,000 second feet a day has been discharged through a single tunnel. Navigation closed on the lower Missouri before the beginning of this report period, or at least before water from here could reach navigation after November 1. The water was about down to the irreducible minimum--the height of the intakes--in October. It stood at 2,104.33 feet on November 3, and remained about the same during November. On December 2, it was 2,104.16 feet. There was a steady increase in elevation to 2,109.26 on January 2, and to 2,112.74 on January 31. The slow rise will presumably continue, to increase with the spring floods to perhaps 21,060 feet before navigation demands that it be drawn down.

2,116.9
pms

II. Wildlife.

Since the principal effort during this report period has been devoted to salvage material and organization, there has been little

further wildlife data obtained. The same conditions prevail as was mention^{ed} in this section of the preceding report.

A. Waterbirds.

Migrations in general were pretty well over by November 25, though thousands of birds were still around spring holes and seeps. I chased coyotes over Lake Bowdoin with a car on November 24, which indicates a limitation of open water. There were many birds hanging around the single open spot in Bowdoin, and heavy concentrations below Nelson Reservoir and in open spots in the Milk and the Missouri. A few birds from the Missouri apparently pulled out in early December. I estimated 600 ducks--largely mallards--were still at Fort Peck on December 16. I could only find about 300 at the time of the annual count in this general area, but about 500 concentrated during a very cold snap about January 24. They drifted out as soon as more water opened up, but some 200 mallards seem to be definitely on relief. We fed only a bushel or so of grain experimentally in late December, but around a half ton in January, feeding largely when weather conditions were bad. Ducks are getting some food below the tunnels continuously, and they went to the grain fields to some extent during moderate weather all through January.

During the worst weather, local ducks concentrate in the warmest and most sheltered seep ditch dangerously close to a 32 wire "high-line". They frequently get killed when they boil

up. We are keeping them out of this dangerous spot by feeding elsewhere, though this is the best spot there is, barring the line. Some 13 ducks are all that have been picked up at the present writing, though doubtless the toll is much heavier than that, as ~~some~~ ^{may} predators ~~doubtless~~ carry off some of the dead or injured birds. Several cripples, also presumably injured by this wire, are still around. There is a chance that this condition may be remedied in the future, but nothing is definite. It is being studied by the District Engineer and his electrical experts. The power comes in from Great Falls on 3 very heavy wires. A big transformer steps it up, primarily for the electrically run dredge pumps and boosters. This need is over, and this type of line may be unnecessary when the power plant is completed and all power comes directly from the plant. This is my first experience of exactly this sort. I have seen 3 ducks fall, and Mr. Johnson saw 2 more. They apparently never hit big wires, widely spaced, and few in number, but a flock of 100 or more birds seem unable to get over this 32 wire line in safety.

B. Upland-game Birds.

Though exotic upland birds have been given only limited attention, there are reasonable numbers of pheasants and many Hungarian partridges right here on the War Department reservation. The winter has been very favorable to upland birds. Sage hens and sharp[✓]tails are wintering well, and said to be far more numerous than for several past winters. There have been a couple of

reports of shooting sage hens inside the Game Range boundaries, but no violators have been apprehended, and there is every indication that there is some improvement in respect to the law on the part of the natives.

C. Big-game animals.

Reports from the western end of the Range--the only high grade deer country--indicate that deer are at least holding their own. My opportunities for field observation have been too few, and tracking snow has largely been lacking. Deer are scarce enough, and will continue to be scarce until the boundary is marked, the residents within the boundary moved out, and adequate patrol established, to say nothing of prohibition of deer shooting in the Missouri Breaks of Phillips and Petroleum Counties.

Some antelope have moved within the Range boundary this winter. The largest band, probably, is about 35 near Five Point. There are other bands, enough to make a total of perhaps 200. The best antelope range is just outside the present boundary. Though it is possible to see antelope at about any time if you know where to look, I consider them to be very scarce. There are not more than a tenth as many as are found in no better living conditions in the vicinity of Roundup. The people are a little less wild down there and do not shoot them.

D. Fur-bearers and Predators.

me No plan has as yet been even tentatively set up for predator control. I have been in Billings twice during this report period,

but Mr. Bateman has been out both times. I have gone over this matter in some detail with Mr. Isaac and briefly with Mr. Grand. Coyotes are being hunted very strenuously this winter, but there are plenty of smart ones left for breeding stock. There are no other predators of importance, and nothing further to add to the last report.

E. Fish.

Wall-eyed pike fishing has continued throughout the winter in the open water below the tunnels. Many were caught throughout the report period. My statements in the last report on fish still hold, with the exception that my prediction as to available CCC labor must be discounted.

III. Development and Maintenance.

There has been no development during the period. Three carloads of posts have been delivered and are in storage--2 at Fort Peck and 1 at Bowdoin, where they will be handier to the west end of the Range. This supply of posts may predict boundary posting.

The 50 man CCC detail from Medicine Lake has made amazingly fine progress with the salvage of buildings since they went to work in late December. Chief Foreman McKenzie admittedly sent over a picked crew. Foreman Benson has handled the job here most of the time, though Foreman Gormley was here for a short time. Both have done an excellent job, and the leaders and crew compare favorably with any CCC workers I have seen anywhere. Undoubtedly detailed reports have been sent in directly from the camp. The present buildings will be razed by late spring.

How much time must be spent on disposing of the concrete foundations has not been estimated.

This section in the previous report is worthy of note. My most recent legal information indicates that we have the authority to acquire private--or State--lands within the boundary, and I think that we are going to get all necessary State cooperation.

It looks as if our chances of getting more or less permanent CCC help were remote.

IV. Public Relations.

I have continued my excellent contacts with the local sportsmen's organizations, extending to some extent to the Dakota boundary and collaborating with Mr. Rodgers in Roundup. The contacts have largely been incidental, with no per diem involved, and little Government time or Government gasoline has been involved with the exception of attendance at the Montana Wildlife Federation meetings in Helena in January.

After considerable hesitancy, I have also accepted assignments on important committees for the local post of the American Legion and for the local Boy Scout organization.

V. There has been no further progress made in grazing plans, and probably cannot be until State cooperation has been worked out and the boundary marked.

War Department leases were gone into in such detail in my letter of January 17th to Regional Director Laythe and the copy of my letter of January 18th to State Fish and Game Commissioner Harry Lay, that repetition is not indicated. The letter to Mr. Lay was printed, ^{as} and

I expected it to be, in the Lewistown Democrat-News. There has been some most favorable comment from sportsmen on this letter. Also, as might be expected, a feeble reply ^{has appeared} from the spokesman of the farmers involved. Of course I have paid no attention to this reply, and am keeping out of newspaper controversies. My letter to Mr. Lay was inevitable, as he almost demanded our side of the matter, and I consider him to be one of the most friendly of the Fish and Game Commissioners.

A few photographs are attached. The labels, perhaps, describe them in sufficient detail. These all chance to be from films that were personally paid for and personally developed, since Government films were not obtained until after the close of the period. The films will be donated to the Service, however, if there is any need for them.

Bullington

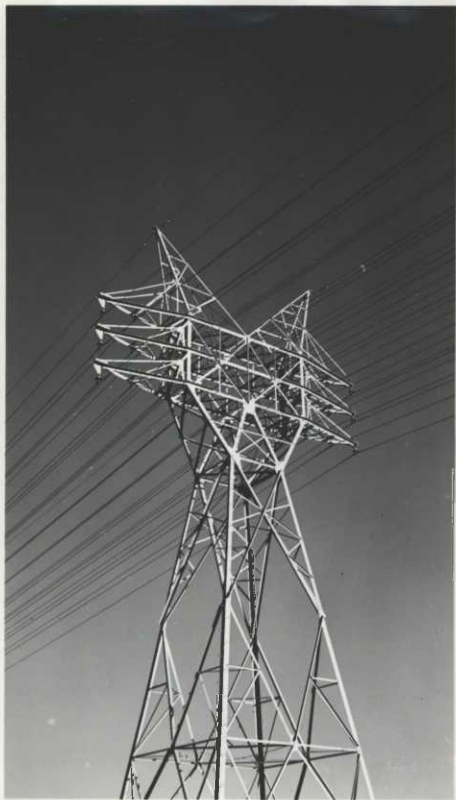
PHOTOGRAPHS TO ACCOMPANY QUARTERLY REPORT
FOR PERIOD
November, December 1940, January 1941

Photographs taken during the month of January 1941

LEGEND

Film No.

- 41-1 The deadly power line, Fort Peck flood plain, where rising ducks from seep ditch hit wires. (Afternoon shot in bright sun, but moon is visible)
- 41-2 Another view of the power line--and the moon.
- 41-10 Mallards on relief, in flood plain seep ditch, below the raid and the power line.
- 41-11 Johnson feeding ducks in the seep ditch.
- 41-5 Steel warehouse, 30'x100', for which transfer negotiations have been started. Location is permanent, about 1/8 mile from Judith Road farmhouse, on the flood plain.
- 41-12 Judith Road farmhouse, now requisitioned, with warehouse (photograph 41-5) in background at right. Former R.R. station (photograph 41-14) is about 100 feet away, across the road.
- 41-13 Close-up of farmhouse, building is 27'x32' outside, 4 rooms and bath, utilities at hand, but temporarily cut off. Equipped with complete bath, gas furnaces, gas stove, and electric wiring. Needs a basement, but a buy for \$10.00. It is proposed as a residence for a patrolman.
- 41-14 Old R.R. station across road from farmhouse. Available for purchase, but not requisitioned as of March 1, 1941. Proposed to move it across road and convert to patrolman's garage and for grain or other storage. Includes toilet room and gas furnace.
- 41-9 The reservoir, end of January, 1941. Elevation about 2,112 feet. Looking across to mouth of Big Dry.
- 41-3 Flood plain. Strip food patches proposed. May be used as pasture, or allowed to grow up for whitetail deer. This is below dam and will never flood.
- 41-8 View of proposed Fort Peck pasture, New Deal in background. Up to 2 sections available. Proposed fence will run up the hills just this side of New Deal.
- 41-4 CCC crew from Medicine Lake wrecking a Fort Peck messhall.
- 41-6 Fort Peck salvage yard. Crew wrecking building in background.
- 41-7 Part of Fort Peck salvage yard.



41-1

41-1 The deadly power line, Fort Peck flood plain where rising ducks from seep ditch hit wires. (Afternoon shot in bright sun, but moon is visible.)



41-2

41-2

Another view of the power line--and the moon



41-10

41-10 Mallards on relief, in flood plain seep ditch, below the road and the power line.



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41-11 Johnson feeding ducks in the seep ditch.



41-5

41-5 Steel warehouse, 30'x100', for which transfer negotiations have been started. Location is permanent, about 1/8 mile from Judith Road farmhouse, on the flood plain.



41-12

41-12 Judith Road farmhouse, now requisitioned with warehouse (photograph 41-5) in background at right. Former R.R. station (photograph 41-14) is about 100 feet away, across the road.



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41-8 View of proposed Fort Peck pasture. New Deal in background. Up to 2 sections available. Proposed fence will run up the hills just this side of New Deal.



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41-6 Fort Peck salvage yard. Crew wrecking building in background.



41-7

41-7 Part of Fort Peck salvage yard.

CCC side long crew from
Medicine Lake wrecking a ~~5000~~
Pike mess hall.

January 1941 1
Pulling

41-4 CCC crew from Medicine Lake wrecking a Fort Peck
mess hall.

Fort Peck Salvage yard
with Medicine Lake crew
wrecking a building in the
background.

Pulling 1
January 1941

41-5 Fort Peck salvage yard. Crew wrecking building
in background.

Salvage yard at Fort Peck.



Jan. 1941 1
Pulling

41-7 Part of Fort Peck salvage yard.