

DETROIT LAKES WETLAND MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
Calendar Year 1987

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

REVIEW AND APPROVALS

DETROIT LAKES WETLAND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Detroit Lakes, Minnesota 56501

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Calendar Year 1987

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Wetland Manager Date

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Division Supervisor Date

John R. Eadie 3/8/88
Regional Office Approval Date

DETROIT LAKES
WETLAND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Fosston

Mahnomen

Headquarters WPA

Hawley

Detroit Lakes

Red = FWS Wetland Easements
Green = Waterfowl Production Areas



INTRODUCTION

Detroit Lakes WMD, the northernmost district of the Division of Wetland Management, is located in northwestern Minnesota and includes the counties of Becker, Clay, Mahnomen, Norman and Polk. The headquarters is near Detroit Lakes which is located in the southern portion of the District. The District is bordered on the west by the flat Red River Valley Floodplain and by the rolling hardwood forest - lake region on the east. The primary economic base of the area is agriculture, with a strong tourism industry centered on area lakes.

The rolling prairie zone and associated wetlands of this District, located between glacial Lake Agassiz's beachline and hardwood forest, have not been spared from agricultural development. The tall grass prairie, most of the prairie wetlands and much of the timberland have been converted to crop production. During the past 30 years, over 75 percent of wetland Types III, IV, and V have been drained in Minnesota.

The Small Wetlands Acquisition Program preserves valuable wetland habitat through fee and easement purchase. The progress of this effort has slowed in recent years for several reasons, chief of which is a lack of funds and more recently a shortfall of funds for Refuge Revenue Sharing Payments. The Detroit Lakes District currently manages 33,136 fee acres on 150 WPAs of which 34 percent are wetland acres. The District administers 39,776 acres of perpetual easements of which 23 percent are wetland acres.

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A. HIGHLIGHTS

Weather for the year was warm and dry. Locally heavy rains in late May destroyed some overwater nests but by fall many wetlands were dry or nearly so (Section B).

The Conservation Reserve Program provided an opportunity for the Service to manage wildlife habitat on private land. Wildlife Management Agreements were secured (Section C.1.c.) and 45 wetlands restored on private lands (Section I.1.c.).

A total of 24 Farmers Home Administration tracts were reviewed for wildlife habitat value. Deed restrictions and title transfers are proposed on seven tracts (Section C.3.d.).

Two waterfowl nesting studies were active during the year. Observations indicate nest success is depressed due to high predation rates and local flooding due to heavy rains (Section D.5).

Seeding of native grasses was accomplished on 312 acres (Section F.5.a.).

Conditions favored native seed harvest operations. A total of 24,050 pounds of cleaned native grass seed was harvested on 252 acres (Section F.5.b).

Thirteen easement violation cases were closed during the year. Seventy-four wetlands were restored (Section F.13).

Duck production on WPA's was an estimated 4,336 (Section G.3).

Trumpeter swans were released on Struss WPA by MN DNR as part of a program to reintroduce a wild population in this area (Section G.12).

Construction of a building to house the seed cleaning operation was nearly complete (Section I.1).

A total of 140 wetlands were restored on WPA, CRP and other private lands (Section I.1).

A total of 50,000 pounds of bulk seed was processed yielding 44,000 pounds of cleaned seed for five stations (Section I.4).

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

As a whole, weather conditions for 1987 were warm and dry. A total of 21.88 inches of rain were received, which is 2.9 inches below normal. The average temperature was 45.1°F or 6.4°F above normal.

Record-breaking high temperatures and near normal precipitation characterized the first quarter of 1987. In January, the average temperature was 12.8°F above normal with record breaking high temperatures of 42°F and 47°F occurring on January 12 and 13 respectively. By the end of the month, most plowed fields were completely bare of snow. Warm temperatures continued through February and March with average temperatures that were 17.3°F and 10.3°F above normal respectively. Records were broken on four consecutive days in early March as temperatures rose above 50°F. Most Type I wetlands were ice free by mid-March while ice remained on Type V wetlands through the end of the month.

Warm, dry weather prevailed during the second quarter. In April, temperatures were 6.6°F above normal and ranged from a low of 16°F to a record-breaking high of 85°F. Only 0.14 inch of rain and 0.3 inch of snow was received during April. Ice-out on Detroit Lake occurred on April 11. The warm, dry conditions allowed local farmers to begin field work by the third week of April. Temperatures were 7°F above average in May. After more than two months without any significant precipitation, field conditions were extremely dry and fire danger was high. This condition was improved during the last two weeks of May when 4.49 inches of rain were received. Weather in June continued to be warm and dry with average temperatures 4.4°F above normal and only 1.4 inches of rain falling (2.72 inches below average).

Windy, warm and localized wet weather occurred during July and early August. July had five days where winds ranged from 35 to 58 miles per hour. As a whole, precipitation was near normal in July with 4.68 inches received, however, areas in Mahanomen and Polk Counties received up to eleven inches of rain, filling the wetlands and damaging some crops. Near normal weather conditions characterized August. Temperatures ranged from a high of 97°F on August 1 to a record setting low of 33°F on August 23, causing the first frost of the season. Both temperatures and precipitation were slightly above normal during September.

Cool and dry weather prevailed during October. Temperatures were 3.2°F cooler than average and only 1.14 inches of rain were received. The first snow of the season fell on October 9. November weather was warmer and dryer than usual. Temperatures were 5.6°F above normal and less than one inch of snow was received. These conditions enabled farmers to work their fields and clean ditches until the

middle of November. Detroit Lake and most of the smaller lakes and marshes were iced up by November 25. Temperatures were 6.4°F warmer than usual with about average precipitation in December.

CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA - 1987

Month	(Temperature - °F)				(Precipitation - Inches)	
	Max.	Min.	Ave.	Departure from Normal	Precip.	Departure from Normal
January	47	-33	15.6	+12.8	0.47	-0.20
February	46	-3	26.8	+17.3	0.85	+0.29
March	67	-1	32.5	+10.3	0.29	-0.29
April	85	16	50.8	+6.6	0.14	-1.84
May	90	34	60.6	+7.0	4.49	+1.90
June	91	35	67.1	+4.4	1.41	-2.72
July	97	44	71.6	+4.1	4.68	+0.86
August	97	33	65.1	-0.7	3.80	-0.02
September	81	31	57.8	+2.4	2.87	+0.57
October	77	14	41.7	-3.2	1.14	-0.35
November	59	5	32.9	+5.6	0.37	-0.43
December	35	-1	18.4	+6.4	1.37	+0.65
Total				+6.4	21.88	-2.90

C. LAND ACQUISITION

1. Fee Title

Fee acquisition efforts have been undertaken in four of the five district counties (Becker, Clay, Mahnomon and Polk). No land has been purchased in Norman County to date, although there is a goal of 9,400 acres for that county. The following acreages from the Complex's quarterly acquisition report reflect accomplishments and goals through 1987. Only 304 acres were added to the fee goal acreage during 1987.

FEE ACQUISITION AND GOAL ACREAGE

<u>County</u>	<u>Wetland Acres</u>	<u>Total Acres Optioned</u>	<u>County Goal Total Acres</u>	<u>Remaining County Goal</u>
Becker	3,869	10539.76	22,220.00	11,680.24
Clay	2,650	8,826.67	28,960.00	20,133.33
Mahnomen	1,705	4,909.86	14,000.00	9,090.14
Norman			9,400.00	9,400.00
Polk	<u>3,020</u>	<u>8,860.03</u>	<u>29,700.00</u>	<u>20,839.97</u>
Total	11,244	33,136.32	104,280.00	71,143.68

Assignment of four appraisers to the four working counties in 1987 was followed by a transfer of one to the Litchfield WAO Supervisor position.

Thirty-two percent of the district's acquisition goal has been achieved with 3,136 acres purchased to date. Becker County has been the most active fee acquisition county of the district where 47 percent of the goal has been reached. Wetlands constitute 34 percent of the total fee acreage of all counties.

Two fee tracts totalling 304 acres were in Clay and Becker Counties. Only one tract was optioned during the year, the second tract being optioned in 1986 and approved by The Land Exchange Board (LEB) following non-certification by the Becker County Board of Commissioners. Two other 1986 options in Becker County (Shodean and Rodewald) were withdrawn by the Service for fear of further conflict with the LEB, state, county and township officials. Concern over the future of Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge also resulted in the decision not to pursue acquisition from willing sellers in that county. Non-certification of the three Becker County tracts was over the issue of taxes and shortfall in revenue payments; however, substantial WPA acreage and the Hamden Slough Refuge proposal may have influenced those actions as well.

FEE ACQUISITION - 1987

<u>County</u>	<u>Former Owner</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Tract No.</u>	<u>WPA</u>
Becker	Lester Hass	160.00	131	Spring Marsh
Clay	Frank Maresh Est.	<u>144.00</u>		New
Total		304.00		

The Hass Tract (131) was presented to the Becker County Board in June, 1986 and after failing to receive certification the Hass' requested review by the LEB. After hearing testimony from the landowners, Becker County and Hamden Township, the tract was approved on March 4, 1987. The 160 acre roundout to the Spring Marsh WPA will add 42 acres of wetland habitat and bring the total WPA acreage to 707. The quarter section also happens to lie within the core area of the proposed Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge.

Purchase of 144 acres of the Maresh Estate in Goose Prairie Township, Clay County was certified December 8 at the second meeting held to consider the proposal. A third party was interested in purchase and cast early doubts on the outcome. About 32 acres of wetlands plus native prairie were purchased for this new WPA which will total 310 acres when completed.

Limited appraisals on other tracts did not lead to signed options, the most noteworthy, the Bergum tract which was to be a quarter section roundout to the Jacobson WPA, Polk County. Other contacts in Becker County, where willing seller contacts were most numerous, were not pursued because of the unwillingness of the county board to certify tracts for fee purchase. Roundouts to six Becker County WPA's could not be secured, plus other new starts considered.

Indian title problems remained unresolved and prevented further roundout of the Sandy Lake WPA (Jirik Tract-96) in Mahnomen County. Considerable effort was expended on boundary and other problems with new neighbors to the 120 acres purchased in 1984; 40 acres with title problems remain from the originally optioned Jirik quarter section.

New responsibility and opportunity resulting from the Food Security Act of 1985 (Farm Bill) may result in the future transfer of three farms from the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) to the Service. These FmHA lands are on an Inventory list resulting from recent farm foreclosures.

Wetland determinations were made on 69 parcels of land, nine of which were from a Farm Credit Service (FCA) listing. The number of determinations, excluding FCA, was comparable to the previous three years; however, willing seller interest was very low for the last five months of the year. It is speculated that low land values has forced landowners to hold their property. More than half of the parcels screened qualified for purchase, only 8 (12 percent) for fee acquisition. Some ownerships (33) qualified for easement consideration, others were referred to the Minnesota DNR. About half of the willing sellers were again from Becker County, the county least receptive to acquisition by the Service.

Pressures on county and townships relative to funds available to conduct local government business continued during 1987. A fourth successive year of decline in Revenue Sharing payments, to the 60

percent level, is leading to worsening county support. Additionally, the Land Exchange Board expressed its concern following the Hass Tract review by developing a resolution and writing the President. A local IWLA chapter similarly sent a resolution to Congressmen supporting 100 percent Revenue Sharing payments.

Payments to the four counties totalled \$78,278, a drop of more than \$9,000 from 1986. The average per acre was \$2.41, ranging from \$2.79 in Clay County to \$1.81 in Mahnomen County.

REFUGE REVENUE SHARING PAYMENTS

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u> ^{1/}	<u>Payment</u>
Becker	10,232	\$25,974
Clay	8,692	24,266
Mahnomen	4,929	8,903
Polk	8,580	19,135
Norman	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	32,433	\$78,278

^{1/} DOI Annual Report, as of September 30, 1986

Shortfalls in the Revenue Sharing Fund have been a direct cause of the loss of support in one county which has influenced the Service's acquisition program and priorities. This same county contains the Hamden Slough Refuge proposal. Other counties could follow. Mahnomen County has already failed to certify an easement tract on the basis of low revenue payments and other unrelated issues.

2. Easement

Four of five wetland easements presented to three county boards were certified in 1987, adding 26 wetland acres to the district total of nearly 9,300 acres. Although four easements were taken, the total wetland acreage is less than the single easement agreement taken in 1986. The one Mahnomen County tract (Irish) which contained 23 wet acres was not certified over concerns of lost taxes, impaired drainage improvements and impacts on cropland improvements. The average cost of \$195 per wetland acre for the four agreements was about half of previous years' efforts. Three easements were in Clay County, one in Becker County.

The total district acreage under easement is nearly 40,000 acres with 9,293 wetland acres. Only 22 percent of the district goal has been accomplished, significantly below the completion rates of other districts. When projecting the percentage of wetlands (23%) over the total goal acres, 43,000 acres of wetlands could be protected.

Total wetland easement accomplishments as reflected in the Fergus Falls WAO's quarterly acquisition report are shown in the following table.

EASEMENT ACQUISITION AND GOAL ACREAGE

<u>County</u>	<u>Wetland Acres</u>	<u>Total Acres Optioned</u>	<u>County Goal Total Acres</u>	<u>Remaining County Goal</u>
Becker	1,144	4,923.44	35,900	30,976.56
Clay	2,812	16,465.08	38,400	21,934.92
Mahnomen	4,300	13,839.01	38,250	24,410.92
Norman	0	0.00	4,900	4,900.00
Polk	1,037	4,548.53	61,460	56,911.47
Total	9,293	39,776.13	178,910	139,133.87

3. Other

a. Exchange

No progress has been made in identifying suitable Service property to exchange for The Nature Conservancy's Santee Prairie in Mahnomen County. Past cooperative water development by the MN DNR/TNC on this property has prolonged a controversy with a wetland easement violator, lessening Service interest in an exchange at this time.

Controversy over the acquisition of a roundout for Balke Lake WPA, Becker County in 1985 resulted in a Service commitment to seek to exchange prime cropland of Tract 130a for land containing a portion of Balke Lake basin. No further progress was made in gaining support of the financial institution involved.

In 1986 Minnesota completed their appraisal of the 100 acre Clark WPA, Becker County for an exchange for two MN Trust Fund forties. One lies adjacent to two tracts purchased in 1984 for the Plum Grove Lake WPA, the second "40" lies close to the Ulrich WPA. The exchange properties approximate "equal value" but action has ceased pending the clearing of title on the Clark WPA because of Indian title problems.

The proposed exchange of lands for the Salvhus WPA progressed little in 1987. A boundary dispute, earlier prolonged because of the reported disagreement by Mrs. Swanson, mother of Roger who operates the farm northwest of the WPA, now is unsettled due to Service priorities.

b. Farmers Home Administration

A new opportunity to provide protection for important resources became a reality in 1987. The Food Security Act of 1985 (Farm Bill) now provides the Service the chance to place deed restrictions on properties held by the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) before they are sold back to private interests. Values such as wetlands, riparian areas, endangered species habitat and other resource values can be protected by easement or use reservations against the property. Minimum protection is required of FmHA for wetland and flood plain protection under Executive Orders 11990 and 11988.

FmHA Inventory Lands are farm lands that are now owned by the U.S. Government because the landowner failed to make loan payments.

These properties were examined for the purpose of wetland restoration. Since July 1987, the Service decided to do wetland restoration on all FmHA Inventory Land regardless of location and develop deed restrictions with FmHA to permanently protect existing and/or improved wetlands. In addition, if a tract meets the criteria for a WPA and is located in a District county, it can be transferred to the Service.

A list of 20 Inventory Tracts was provided by The Regional Office for review in June. A summary of this review is as follows:

	Number of Tracts
Outside the Detroit Lakes WMD	7
Within the Detroit Lakes WMD that had been resold to the private sector	5
Meeting Waterfowl Production Area requirements	2
Needing Deed Restrictions for existing wetlands	4
Not needing wetland improvement work	2

Later in the year, four Inventory Land tracts were reported in Norman County. Three of the tracts had no need for water restoration and one had WPA potential. The tract with WPA potential will hopefully be transferred to the Service or the State.

c. Hamden Slough Study and Proposal

The Hamden Slough Study was initiated late in 1983 to determine the study process to best protect and enhance an important resource area northwest of Detroit Lakes. A three-man study team, headed by

Manager Lipke, organized to develop a procedural plan which included a Public Participation Plan, and Land Protection Plan (LPP) and NEPA requirements.

The Service has long been interested in the Hamden Slough area and presented its first proposal for a national wildlife refuge at a public meeting on May 4, 1976. A proposal for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System was approved by the Region 3, Regional Land Acquisition Review Committee on March 27, 1975, and by the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service on February 24, 1976.

Although a project did not result from the effort, continued interest led to the present study on 13,754 acres. Following the January, 1985, announcement of the study, area landowners were visited to get their ideas and concerns. Similar inputs were sought from various groups, agencies and government. More than 100 meetings occurred, including landowner visits. Information received on the preliminary refuge proposal at a February 20, 1986 public meeting was used as well.

The principal needs and concerns voiced during public contacts made during the study were: 1) support for total resource protection and management to increase waterfowl and other wildlife production; 2) public use opportunity and regulation; 3) protection of existing drainage for maintenance of cropland; and 4) economic effects, e.g., taxes, cropland, and depredations.

Several alternatives were considered to determine the most appropriate method of protection that would also be cost effective in achieving Service waterfowl production objectives. Public input was combined with basic inventory information collected during the study and planning process and was used in developing and evaluating alternatives.

A computer model was used to determine the most effective land use and wildlife management tools from seven alternatives initially considered. An eighth alternative, the preferred alternative, was not modeled but was developed using the most efficient wildlife management uses from the other alternatives. Wildlife productivity, site characteristics, proximity to other lands, existing land use, economics, and social impacts were used to determine the method of protection, type of development and approach to management.

An assessment evaluated the impacts of eight alternatives for the conservation of these lands, including the Service's preferred alternative which combines fee title and wetland easement acquisition, leases and cooperative farming agreements, and includes the widest range of management practices by the Service. Other alternatives include: 1) no project establishment (no action), 2) fee acquisition with full refuge development and limited management, 3) varied acquisition with partial refuge development and conventional farming, 4) varied acquisition with partial refuge development and

conservation farming, 5) fee acquisition with full refuge development and exclusion of predators, 6) fee acquisition with full refuge development and seasonal removal of predators and 7) varied acquisition with partial refuge development and widest range of management.

The preferred alternative would require less than two-thirds of the study area acreage and would give a five-fold increase in duck production. It minimizes economic and social impact to landowners and communities while providing optimal benefits of wildlife production, soil and water conservation, and educational and recreational opportunities. Although the study included 13,754 acres, nearly 5,200 acres were excluded during the planning process. The preferred alternative includes 8,565 acres; 5,944 acres in the core refuge area and 2,621 acres in the bordering lease-easement area (Figure). Acquisition of all land interest is proposed for purchase from willing sellers only.

The purpose of Hamden Slough would be to increase waterfowl production, including such National Resource Species as mallard, northern pintail, wood duck, redhead, canvasback, ring-necked duck and Canada Goose. The refuge would produce nearly 10,000 waterfowl annually (40 percent of which are National Resource Species) by restoring and protecting prairie pothole habitat.

A July 25, 1986 Preliminary Cost Estimate and Realty Report provides estimates for acquiring perpetual interest to fee and easement land totalling \$2.6 million. Adding annualized costs for term leases and farm agreements which will require operations and management funding, the total 10-year project cost is \$3.47 million, the 50-year cost, \$6.55 million.

Ducks Unlimited, anticipating doing the major developments, provided the Hamden Slough Preliminary Cost Estimate on October 1, 1986. Total development costs were estimated to be \$4.2 million.

Annual operational costs for administration and management would be about \$150,000 considering operating out of the wetland district.

Internal and external document needs required two additional efforts, the Service's Land Protection Plan (LPP) and the Environmental Assessment to meet NEPA requirements. The LPP was submitted in January along with information for the Services' Land Acquisition Priority System (LAPS). The plan was approved mid year and was distributed to some interests. Ranking of projects through the National LAPS rating system resulted in Hamden Slough Refuge being second in priority, behind the Minnesota Small Wetlands Acquisition Program.

In March, Realty provided the supplemental report on tax implications, revenue sharing and state aids which contained needed information for the writing of the environmental assessment (EA). The last of

three drafts following Regional reviews was submitted to WSS (Planning) for final reproduction at years end. A February, public review is anticipated; the final decision rests with the Regional Director following public comment on the EA.

d. Wildlife Management Agreements

Late in 1986, a new incentive program was introduced to encourage private landowners to enroll their land in the Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) during the February, 1987 sign-up period. A total of \$300,000 was appropriated, \$100,000 for Minnesota, the rest for North Dakota, to fund the program. As an incentive, the Service offered a \$5.00 per acre per year bonus to landowners whose land qualified for the CRP and had waterfowl habitat potential.

To be considered for the bonus payment, landowners were required to sign a Wildlife Management Agreement (WMA) that allowed the Service to undertake mutually agreed upon waterfowl habitat management activities such as predator control, wetland restoration, nest basket placement and input on establishment and management of vegetative cover.

To encourage and facilitate landowner enrollment in the WMA program, WMD personnel were present in area Soil Conservation Service Offices during the CRP sign-up period. This effort, combined with pre-sign-up publicity was successful. A total of 135 agreements covering more than 17,000 acres were signed by landowners. The sign-up far exceeded expectations and funding for the \$5.00 per acre payment. As a result, enrolled farms were assigned to one of three priority groupings and funded by priority. The priority groups were as follows:

- Priority 1: Farms with an existing Service wetland easement to ensure establishment of nesting cover adjacent to easement wetlands.
- Priority 2: Farms adjacent to existing WPAs or State of Minnesota WMA's.
- Priority 3: Farms located in good wetland/habitat complexes.

Due to the magnitude of the sign-up only farms in priority group 1 and some in priority group 2 were accepted for funding. A summary of funded WMAs for this District's counties is as follows:

SUMMARY OF WMA'S FUNDED

<u>County</u>	<u>Number of Agreements</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Average Acres Per Agreement</u>
Becker	14	1,932.6	138
Clay	8	609.2	76
Mahnomen	6	774.9	129
Polk (East)	<u>1</u>	<u>9.9</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	29	3,326.6	115

The Service was allowed, with landowner permission, to restore or improve wetlands on the accepted Wildlife Management Agreement (WMA) farms: The summary of this WMA construction is found in Section 1.1.b.

D. PLANNING

1. Master Plan

A single, district-wide master plan document has not been developed. However, development plans for each WPA provide the long-term development direction for each unit. Since development plans also incorporate management strategies, they are discussed in section (D.2).

History and resource inventories for each WPA and objectives on a district-wide basis are master plan oriented facets incorporated in the development planning process.

The Wetland Management District objectives are:

1. Waterfowl Production
2. Increase Wildlife Diversity
3. Provide Wildlife Oriented Recreation
4. Production and Maintenance of Resident Wildlife Species
5. Maintenance of the Tall Grass Prairie Ecosystem

2. Management Plan

The Wetlands Management approach to master planning is the "Development Plan" for individual WPA's. Development plans outline upland development, wetland restoration, reclamation needs, facility developments, historical development and management strategies for each WPA. One of the significant components of each plan is the collection of resource inventory data and completion of Resource Inventory and Planning (RIP) cards. With the exception of recent acquisitions each WPA has a completed development plan, a total of

five plans completed in 1987. Continuing acquisition necessitates the preparation of new plans or updating of existing plans. RIP cards were completed for new acquisitions (4 roundouts) and others updated with new developments. More than 50 were updated for management changes.

An Annual Prescribed Burning Amendment to the Complex's "Fire Management Plan" was submitted for approval to burn 6,154 acres in 41 separate burn proposals.

Annual seasonal predator management under the Complex's Seasonal Predator Management Plan was acceptable until this year. Controversy tied to predator removal led to the revision of the Wetland Division's Predator Management Plan and writing of an environmental assessment which was still under review at year's end.

3. Public Participation

Public participation is not sought for development plans of individual WPA's because of the nature of the planning process and habitat needs of the units. Obvious development needs are to restore the natural habitat of the areas. Facility needs are generally limited to boundary posting/OLM's/fencing. Significant water development project plans are however, submitted for review by the appropriate agencies and local units of government.

Local government participation, notably through the county board process, continues for all acquisition proposals. Acquisition guidelines call for county certification of purchase options. This encourages public involvement during the acquisition process but prior to completion of individual development plans. Frequently inputs are received from township governments and individuals as well during presentation of proposals to county boards. Six county board meetings in three counties were attended in 1987.

County weed control meetings, although few in recent years, provide an open forum for public input and participation into an important management program - cover establishment and noxious weed control. County, township and agency officials and citizens have an opportunity to convey concerns, needs and problems as well as receive current program information on a first person basis. Public participation was sought to locate plants of a new Minnesota noxious weed, Purple Loosestrife. Mailings and news articles plus coordination with county officials resulted in an inventory of problem areas for eventual control efforts.

4. Compliance with Environmental and Cultural Resource Mandates

Four environmental assessments were written during the year - one for a WPA construction project, two for road right-of-way (ROW) requests, and one for a new refuge proposal. The documents were written as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969,

to determine whether the selected alternatives would, or would not, have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment

Although the recent Hamden Slough Study has been ongoing since January 1985 (See Section C,3,c), 1987 activity on the project centered on completing the Land Protection Plan and Environmental Assessment. Drafts, with interim Regional Office reviews, were submitted in June, August and January, 1988. A Draft Environmental Assessment will not be available for public review until early March 1988. During a 30 day review period, written comments will be accepted from the public. After the review period, these comments will be used in preparing a Final Environmental Assessment and will be considered in the decision making process. The Final Environmental Assessment and the Finding will be made available to the public for 30 days before the Service would continue the land protection process. If the Regional Director finds that significant impact would occur, then the Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, including additional public involvement and review.

Compatibilty Determinations are being written for all Special Use Permits issued. Assessment of impacts for grazing and cropland uses have been completed.

Cultural resources are considered in all actions potentially affecting public lands whether requiring Compatibilty Determination statements or Environmental Assessments (EA's). The Regional Historian has consulted on the four actions requiring EA's and initiated appropriate State reviews and clearances.

a. Becker County Highway 16 Dike Project

A permit to construct a dike on the Shay Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) was requested by the Becker County Highway Department. The Shay WPA is located in the NE 1/4 of Section 23, Walworth Township.

The purpose of this dike was to prevent water from touching the road embankment, because, it was thought that the water in the wetland was the cause of the road problems.

An Environment Assessment was prepared and a permit issued. The loss of 0.36 acres of wetland was mitigated. A wetland of equal size to the one impacted was created on the WPA under the provisions of the permit prepared by the Service.

b. Ottertail Power Company -- Powerline Right-of-Way

A permit to construct an electrical powerline across the Brandy Lake Waterfowl Production Area was requested by the Ottertail Power Company. Brandy Lake WPA is located in Sections 17, 19 & 20 of Detroit Township, Becker County.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for this permit request was not completed in 1987 because of other projects having a higher priority. The required EA will be written in 1988 to determine whether or not this project is compatible with the resource management objectives of the WPA and that if constructed, no wildlife or habitat will be permanently impacted.

c. Spring Creek Township Road

The Spring Creek Township Board requested permission to slope an imbankment on a township road which borders the west side of the Spring Creek WPA. A 1-3 foot vertical bank at the outer edge of the right-of-way resulted from a road improvement project in 1986. This bank presented a public safety hazard to motorists. A Special Use Permit was issued to the Township to slope this bank. A strip of WPA only 3-4 feet wide was affected when this bank was sloped. Disturbed soil was seeded with local, warm season native grasses. The Township will be responsible for noxious weed control for three years.

d. Polk County Highway 35

A Right-of-Way request was received from Polk County Highway Department to reconstruct Highway 35 on the west and north sides of Hanson Waterfowl Production Area. To qualify for State funding, the inslopes would have to be flattened and the sharp curve in the northwest corner of the WPA changed to a gradual curve that would allow vehicles to travel safely at 55 miles per hour. As proposed, this project would cause disturbance, loss, or degradation to 14.1 acres of upland and wetland habitat. An EA was completed. Because of the environmental damage involved in this request, the preferred alternative was to not issue a permit.

e. Headquarters WPA - building construction

An Environmental Assessment was completed and submitted August 26 for construction of a 60'X120' building on the Headquarters WPA to house and operate the native grass seed cleaner, provide an adequate facility for drying locally harvested grass seed, house a seed storage bin, and provide storage for vehicles and equipment that is currently stored outside.

5. Research and Investigation

a. Small Unit Management Study - NPWRC

Three district WPAs are included in a study called the "Small Unit Management Project" (SUMP), which is being conducted by the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center. This project will study ways to intensively manage small units of land, such as WPAs, for

maximum duck production. Predator control will be evaluated on one WPA, predator exclusion on another, and the third unit will serve as a control. Similar evaluations will be conducted on two Wetland Management Districts in North Dakota.

Field work on SUMP was initiated in early April, on the predator removal and control study areas. The predator exclusion fence and planted cover inside the fence will be ready in the spring of 1988.

Nest searches were conducted three times on randomly selected areas. A total of 83 nests were found, 28 on the control and 55 on the predator removal areas. Thirty-five (42%) of the nests were mallards, 12 on the control and 23 on the predator removal area. Four of the nests on the control area and 10 on the predator removal area hatched.

b. The Importance of Overwater Habitats for Nesting Mallards in West-central Minnesota. - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

The third year objectives of this study were to determine the proportion of mallards selecting overwater nest sites, to determine mallard nest success in overwater habitats, to document habitat characteristics of overwater nests, and to determine major causes of nest failure.

Ten study areas were located in Polk and Mahnomen counties of which six were WPA's.

Roadside surveys were conducted to estimate mallard density. The surveys indicated a mallard density of 2.6 pairs per square mile.

Radio transmitters were placed on 17 mallard hens. Of 13 hens successfully tracked, 3 were killed by mink. None of these was incubating when it was killed. Only two radioed hens were found on nests. During the latter half of June, radioed hens tended to be associated with small flocks of other hen mallards. This flocking of mallard hens suggest that many of the hens had given up attempting to nest.

A total of 60 ducks nests were found in 174 acres of overwater habitats searched. Mallard nest density was one nest per 14.5 acres of overwater habitat. Heavy rains occurring from 17 - 21 May caused the flooding of 13 duck nests. Hatch success for the 29 nests useable in Mayfield calculations was 17.3%.

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

Permanent staff at the district increased to eight with the addition of a Wildlife Biologist position to handle expanded private land extension work with the Farm Bill. Although John Lindell, Wildlife Biologist, remained based at the wetland district office during his one year Mid-Level Manager Development Program his time and salary are not charged to, or summarized here. He transferred to Rice Lake NWR effective November 22, 1987.

Steven Kallin, Assistant Wetland Manager fulfilled the responsibility of the easement enforcement biologist position vacated by John Lindell October 13, 1986. He was a candidate for, and was eventually selected for the GS-11 position following the January 4, 1988 closing date.

John Gunderson transferred from the Regional Office on May 11, 1987 to the new Wildlife Biologist position to meet expanded involvements in wetland restoration and related Farm Bill activities. All salary charges were paid by the Regional Office under 3100.



Back row (L to R): Christen, Lipke, Deike, Kallin
Front row (L to R): Atkins, Gunderson, Peterson, Hanson

PERSONNEL

1.	Howard Lipke, Wetland Manager	GS-12	PFT
2.	Thomas Atkins, Assistant Wetland Manager	GS-11	PFT
3.	John Lindell, Wildlife Biologist	GS-11	PFT
4.	John Gunderson, Wildlife Biologist	GS-11	PFT
5.	Steven Kallin, Assistant Wetland Manager	GS-09	PFT
6.	Darlene Christen, Secretary	GS-05	PFT
7.	Larry Hanson, Biological Technician	GS-06	PFT
8.	Richard Deike, Maintenance Worker	WG-07	PFT
9.	Leslie Peterson, Assistant Wetland Manager	GS-07	PFT

Temporary personnel hired in 1986 were rehired for the 1987 field season. Two tractor operators, Jeff Axton and Steve Maneval, helped with the land use program, and David Herr assisted in district biological and maintenance efforts. All arrived on duty April 27, the Biological Technician job ending September 25, tractor operators remaining until October 23.

TEMPORARY, MN CEP AND VOLUNTEER WORKERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointment</u>	<u>EOD</u>	<u>Terminated</u>
Axton, Jeffrey	FWS-Tractor Operator	WG-06 4/27	10/23
Maneval, Steven	FWS-Tractor Operator	WG-06 4/27	10/23
Herr, David	FWS-Bio. Tech.	GS-05 4/27	9/25
Nordstrom, Peter	MNCEP-WR		2/14
Nordstrom, Jim	MNCEP-WR		2/14
Bellcourt, Craig	MNCEP-WR	3/02	3/20
Chelmo, Bill	MNCEP-JTPA	3/02	3/17
Opsahl, Dianne	MNCEP-WR	3/16	6/05
Bunnis, William	MNCEP-JTPA	4/06	4/30
Black, Anita	MNCEP-JTPA	5/26	7/17
Anderson, Steven	MNCEP-SY	6/04	7/29
Curtis, Marsha	MNCEP-SY	6/08	7/24
	Volunteer	7/27	8/07
Stahn, Keith	MNCEP-JTPA	7/07	9/04
Hummingbird, Kathy	MNCEP-JTPA	7/27	8/21
Hagen, Donna	MNCEP-JTPA	10/07	12/31
Murray, Gene	MNCEP-JTPA	10/14	

DISTRICT STAFF - 1983-1987

Year	Permanent		Temporary	Total FTE
	Full time	Part Time		
83	7	1*	2	7.87
84	7		5	8.52
85	7		4	8.46
86	7		4	8.62
87	8		3	9.17

*Wildlife Biologist/Enforcement Specialist position split with Fergus Falls WMD.

Management reports summarizing staff days are no longer available to reflect salary charges by fund and subactivity. The total staff hours, including overtime, was 19,076 which was 6.5 percent above last years' 8.62 FTE's. The 9.17 FTE's in 1987 reflects the addition of the the new extension biologist position. No youth program (YCC) director was necessary in 1987.

A total of 343.5 overtime hours (43 staff days) was incurred to accomplish important jobs such as Farm Bill activity, prescribed burns, other grassland needs and native grass seed harvest. More efficient operations plus seed valued at nearly a quarter million dollars were benefits.

This year was the first in the last three years in which there was a significant increase in paid staff time. While workloads increased other sources of personnel were utilized. Volunteer and local employment programs provided a total of 13 individuals contributing 2.0 FTE's of labor (18% of the total district labor effort). For further detail see Section E, 3.

A special thanks to members of the wetland complex staff for their supportive role in easement enforcement, land acquisition and a number of other new initiatives undertaken this year.

3. Other Manpower Programs

The Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (MN CEP) provided an invaluable source of personnel throughout the year. These individuals are recruited locally by MN CEP, referred for interview and selection, supervised by WMD personnel and paid minimum wage by MN CEP. Employees were enrolled in several programs administered by the MN CEP office including Work Readiness, Job Training Partnership Act and Summer Youth. Length of appointment varies from seven to twelve weeks and individuals must be unemployed and/or ineligible for unemployment compensation.

These employees possess a diversity of work experience and skills. As a result they become involved in nearly all aspects of WMD

operations. Thirteen MN CEP employees contributed 2.0 FTE's of labor at no salary cost to this station.

5. Funding

Station funding figures were received near the end of the second quarter. Minor revisions followed and the final budget was set in July with notification to spend pay act money. Late receipt of funding advices made it difficult to plan programs and complete expenditures in a timely fashion. The final funding level was \$484,800 and represents a 17% increase from the previous year. The increase was in ARMM funding and used to construct a seed cleaning, storage building.

WMD FUNDING - FY 1983- 1987

(Thousands of Dollars)

Activity	83	84	85	86	87
1210/1260	264.5	283.5	401.5	391.5 <u>3/</u>	469.8 <u>4/</u>
1220	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1230	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
1240	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1510	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
1520	0.0	0.0	8.7	10.8	0.0
3100	5.0	5.0	9.0	10.0	10.0
Construction	0.0	65.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	38.5 <u>1/</u>	46.6 <u>2/</u>	0.0	0.0
Total	309.5	392.6	465.6	412.6	484.8

1/ Amount originally allotted in 1260 but subsequently placed into five Job Orders.

2/ Specific ARMM's projects in six Job Orders.

3/ Includes \$33,400 ARMM and \$5,000 RP Job Ordered funds.

4/ Includes \$183,000 ARMM, \$25,000 RP and \$4,200 Pay Act Funds.

The obligation rate for total station funding was 99.9%. Major projects accomplished with ARMM and RP funds included native grassland establishment and management, building construction, vehicle replacement, mobile radio upgrade and computer equipment purchase. Pay Act money was received late in the year and designated for wetland restoration on Conservation Reserve Program lands.

Farm Bill activity was a major impact on staff time and funding. A total of .78 FTE and \$31,000 from this station were expended on

various Farm Bill activities. Although the Pay Act funds were certainly appreciated, the \$4200 covered only a small portion of funds expended.

The station budget was significantly supplemented from several sources. A new position, extension specialist, was established and filled during the year. Salary was funded by 3100 and not charged to this station. The Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program provided 2.0 FTE in labor at no cost. Funding for a computer was provided by the Regional Office. Three refuges provided heavy equipment operators and salary to accomplish wetland restorations on CRP lands. Three area sportsmens clubs donated funds to restore wetlands on WPA's and CRP lands. The total contribution from these sources was approximately \$63,000. Although the official station budget was \$484,800, in reality the budget was more like \$547,800.

6. Safety

Seven staff safety meetings were held during the year, covering such topics as ATV operation, hunter safety, and vehicle operation.

The three person safety committee met three times during the year. They addressed a variety of safety concerns, and made recommendations to the wetland manager on such safety items as the station smoking policy, cold weather footwear, and an annual review of body armor.

Two accidents occurred at the station during the year. In April, while prescribed burning, Biological Technician Hanson sustained minor back and shoulder injuries when the four-wheeled ATV he was driving fell into a beaver created hole in a ditch plug. In September, Assistant Manager Peterson fell on a sidewalk and broke his knee cap, resulting in three days of lost work time and his leg in a cast for three weeks.

Assistant Manager Atkins presented safety programs to 250 enrollees of the MN CEP Summer Youth Program at the Detroit Lakes Technical School.

Assistant Manager Peterson and Biologist Gunderson attended a 6-hour First Aid course at the Detroit Lakes Technical School.

Two vehicle and facility safety inspections were completed.

Material safety data sheets were reviewed with staff members for all herbicides used on the district.

7. Technical Assistance

a. Scent-Station Survey

Scent-station surveys to estimate trends in carnivore populations were continued in cooperation with MN DNR, Forest, Wildlife Population and Research Group. Three routes totaling 50 scent stations per route were censused. The MN DNR provides scent discs, analyzes data and provides results of analysis. Results of this year's survey are found in Section (G).

b. Prairie Chicken Survey

Prairie chicken booming grounds in Mahnomon and Becker counties were censused as part of a cooperative, range-wide survey in Minnesota. Survey data are summarized by MN DNR and results are detailed in Section (G. 10).

c. Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)

The Reinvest in Minnesota Resources Act of 1986 and resulting RIM program was active in the six Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's) that are within the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District. The only problem was insufficient funds to process the 20 year easements and permanent easements for all of the landowners willing to participate.

The Service did work with Clay County on revising their system for evaluating potential program lands. After the sign-up period, the Service again participated in evaluating and selecting tracts based upon their resource benefit.

Some counties within the Detroit Lakes WMD did not have any sign-ups from landowners because the amount offered to landowners for easements was lower than what the landowners were willing to accept. Consequently, those counties had no new RIM contracts.

The Minnesota RIM program is complimentary to USDA's Conservation Reserve Program. The lands enrolled do not always have to be croplands and easement can be permanent if the landowner wishes.

d. Food Security Act of 1985

Several provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 (Farm Bill) make the goals of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm and conservation programs more consistent. This is the first time in Agriculture/Conservation history that the two (conservation and production) have been linked.

The Bill encourages the reduction of soil erosion and retention of wetlands. The conservation provisions are Swampbuster and

Sodbuster. The Conservation Reserve Program and the Service's involvement as well as Wildlife Management Agreements was discussed in Section C.3.c.

Sodbuster: Sodbuster applies if landowners plant annually tilled crops on highly erodible land that was not used for crop production during the period 1981 - 1985. If highly erodible land is plowed or cleared of trees it must be farmed under a conservation system approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District in order for the landowner to remain eligible for USDA program benefits. The Soil Conservation Service and Agriculture and Stabilization Service are responsible for enforcing Sodbuster. The WMD was called upon to evaluate one parcel of native prairie in Norman County that involved both a Sodbuster evaluation and a Swampbuster compliance check. USDA calls upon Service for technical expertise in determining violations concerning sodbusting.

Swampbuster: Swampbuster applies if landowners convert naturally occurring wetlands to cropland after December 23, 1985. With some exceptions, the landowners must discontinue production of annually tilled crops on newly converted wetlands to remain eligible for certain USDA farm programs.

Conservation Compliance: Conservation compliance applies to farming erodible cropland and draining natural wetlands for production of annual crops. Conservation compliance is an important tool in protecting both wetland and upland habitat.

The WMD has been called upon to assist SCS and ASCS on four different occasions for wetland classification appeals made on landowners' farms.

The number of Wetland Classification appeals is relatively small compared to what has been reported at the other WMD's. However, it is anticipated that after the first USDA/FWS Farm Bill Training Session in January, 1988, the number will be increasing.

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

2. Wetlands

Generally, wetlands in this part of Minnesota experienced a gradual draw-down throughout the ice-free period. Snowfall and rainfall was sufficient for excellent upland vegetative growth, but insufficient for maintenance of wetland levels. Above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation combined to dry up most seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands by fall. However, because of the dry weather, conditions were excellent for wetland development construction. (Section I.1).



Generally, District wetlands, such as this DU restored wetland on Lake Park WPA, Becker County, were in good condition Spring, 1987. However, water levels dropped throughout the summer and fall period. SK 10/87.

4. Croplands

Farming was authorized on 1,286 acres on 22 WPAs through the cash rent program. Special Use Permits for cash rent were issued for farming 352 acres in preparation for seedings in 1990 and 1991.

The cash rent program provides a method of converting problem weed areas and/or poor quality, non-native grassland to native grass cover. Areas are typically farmed for three years by a local farmer to control weeds and prepare a seedbed. Soybean stubble has provided the best seedbed. Use of Treflan herbicide is also required the last year of farming to control annual foxtails. No tillage is permitted after soybean harvest.

After farming, areas are treated with Roundup herbicide (1 1/2 qt./ac.) primarily to control quackgrass (*Agropyron repens*). Roundup is usually spring applied. However, late fall application has proven effective in also controlling thistle species. Truax brand native seed drills are used to seed a mix of predominately locally harvested native grass seed, supplemented with purchased northern origin cool season grass.

Cash Rent Program Summary 1979-1987

Year	Acres	Receipts
1979	787	\$13,679
1980	1,386	18,769
1981	1,012	7,952
1982	1,048	16,730
1983	1,092	18,911
1984	1,145	13,490
1985	1,310	15,145
1986	1,250	21,621
1987	1,286	22,700

Cash rent rates are determined by annual surveys of local officers of USDA Soil Conservation Service and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service offices and county extension agents. Rental rates are typically well toward the low end of the local private rental scale. Rent is adjusted on an increasing sliding scale. Third year rates vary between \$15-35 per acre, depending on soil, fertility, slope, moisture, etc.

5. Grasslands

a. Seeding

Seeding was completed on 317 acres on 12 WPAs. Most areas were seeded with a mixture of locally harvested native grasses, supplemented with North Dakota origin switchgrass, Killdeer and Pierre side oats grama, Lodorm green needlegrass, slender wheatgrass and blue grama. The ND origin switchgrass was harvested in 1985 from a seed source plot established on the Korell WPA. All other seed supplements were obtained from commercial sources.

Below normal precipitation during most of April, May and June provided good field conditions for seeding.

1987 NATIVE GRASS SEEDINGS
DETROIT LAKES WMD

County	WPA	Date	No.PLS/ft2	Seedbed	Acre
Becker	Tessman	4/22	81.0	corn stubble	15
	Shay	6/15	105.2	soybean stubble	107
Clay	Scheelk	4/29	59.3	pulvied	5
	Rustad Lake	4/30	63.4	disced & pulvied	6
	Sagebraaten	6/2	58.0	soybean stubble	18
	Stangland	6/3	64.8	small grain stubble	10
Polk	Tattie Ex.	4/30	63.4	disced & pulvied	5
	Aasen	5/6	52.4	small grain stubble	11
	Clarke	5/11	71.1		28
	Jenkins	6/8	77.2	small grain stubble	100
	Salvhus	5/7	86.6	corn (plowed)	4
	Sollie Ent.	6/11	77.5	small grain stubble	8
Total					317

1987 GRASS SEED MIX (PLS)
DETROIT LAKES WMD

Species	Variety	No. PLS/ft2	Lbs. PLS/Acre
Warm/Cool Season Mix (Typical Rate 20# bulk/ac)			
Switchgrass	NDG 965 98	37.9	4.2
Indian grass	local harvest	1.6	.4
Big bluestem	local harvest	5.7	1.5
Little bluestem	local harvest	.1	.02
Sideoats grama	Pierre/Killdeer	3.6	.8
Green needlegrass	Lodorm	6.1	1.5
Slender wheatgrass	Primar	3.4	.9
Blue grama	SD origin	.8	.04
Total		59.2	9.36

The local origin native grass seed was harvested from prairie grasslands in 1985 and 1986.

Prior to seeding, each area is evaluated to determine if preplanting tillage and/or Roundup herbicide is needed. Seedbeds are typically crop stubble although some tillage (i.e. discing) may be required on some areas.

Fine textured sandy soils on the Clarke WPA in Polk County made it impossible to seed using our drills. Switchgrass was broadcast seeded using a commercial "float" which is a common method of seeding CRP acres in Polk County.

b. Native Grass Seed Harvest

Excellent weather conditions in August and September allowed 252 acres of grassland to be harvested for native grass seed. A total of 24,050 pounds of cleaned seed was harvested off of three local origin native seedings, and two native prairie areas. Demand for grass seed resulting from the Conservation Reserve Program, has driven the average market price of native grass seed to \$10.00 per pound or more. The cost to purchase a similar quantity of native grass seed on the open market would have exceeded \$240,000.

This was the first year that seed was harvested by three custom combiners, one in each county, instead of one per District. In the past, one combiner was selected for the District, and often this same person was also awarded the harvest contract for the Fergus Falls District. This shared combiner arrangement often prevented the harvest of seed during critical periods. This frequently resulted in reduced yields due to shattering of over-ripened seed. The use of one custom combiner per county gave flexibility to harvest seed when it was ready to harvest.

The Ashmore WPA, a local origin native seeding of primarily big bluestem, Indian grass and switchgrass produced 112 pounds of cleaned seed per acre. Switchgrass seedings (NDG 965 98) on the Korrell and Waubun WPAs averaged 180 pounds of cleaned seed per acre. The Marks WPA and Lofgren WMA native prairie areas produced 26 pounds of cleaned seed per acre.

1987 SEED HARVEST SUMMARY
DETROIT LAKES WMD

Unit	County	Ownership	Acres Harvested
Marks WPA	Becker	Service	45
Ashmore WPA	Clay	Service	112
Korell WPA	Clay	Service	25
Lofgren WMA	Clay	DNR	45
Waubun WPA	Mahnomen	Service	25
Total			252

7. Grazing

Grazing was permitted on 10 acres of the Salvhus WPA in Polk County. The purpose of this permit was to allow access to a Type V marsh for cattle watering. This access was discussed, and a commitment made to allow access, during negotiations for purchase of this recently acquired roundout. There was no fee for this permit. A costly, many-cornered fence along the meander line of this Type V wetland would be required to exclude the adjacent landowner's cattle from grazing this narrow strip of vegetation. It was not considered worth the cost of installing a fence to control cattle access or charge a grazing fee on such small acreage.

8. Haying

Haying to control noxious weeds and reduce competition for native prairie plants was permitted on 41 acres of the Chief Lake WPA in Mahnomen County. The permittee paid \$2.00 per acre for one cutting of hay from July 2-August 30.

9. Fire Management

1987 PRESCRIBED BURNING SUMMARY DETROIT LAKES WMD

Unit	County	Date	Burned by	FD Cost	WPA Acres
Axberg Lake	Becker	4/27	Lake Park	\$150	6
Bakken	Becker	5/2	Audubon	\$200	74
Brandy Lake	Becker	5/4	Service		113
Headquarters	Becker	4/29	Service		7
Hellikson	Becker	4/24	Service		620
Lee Marshes	Becker	5/5	Lake Park	\$200	110
Lindsey Lake	Becker	4/15	Service		111
Marks	Becker	4/22	Lake Park	\$200	314
Spring Marsh	Becker	5/2	Audubon	\$200	403
Westbury	Becker	5/4	Callaway	\$150	33
Ashmore	Clay	5/4	Ulen	\$300	148
Holte	Clay	4/22	Hitterdal	\$150	45
Kenyon	Clay	4/25	Hawley	\$200	238
Korell	Clay	4/28	Ulen	\$200	282
Lofgren	Clay	4/25	Hawley	\$200	198
Rossell	Clay	4/15	Hawley	\$200	37
Chief Lake	Mahnomen	5/5	Mahnomen	\$200	107
Nelson Prairie	Mahnomen	4/10	Service		438
Nelson Prairie	Mahnomen	4/30	Mahnomen	\$200	157
Waubun	Mahnomen	4/25	Waubun	\$250	260
Winger	Polk	4/22	Winger	\$200	259
Total				\$3,200	4,014

Excellent burning weather allowed 4,014 acres on 20 WPAs to be burned in the spring. Emphasis was to burn areas seeded to native grass.

Local fire departments completed prescribed burns as authorized by purchase orders and Special Use Permits on 2,725 acres on 16 WPAs. The total amount paid to fire departments was \$3,200.

District staff completed five prescribed burns on 1289 acres. Prescribed burns which are complicated by the potential of damaging private property are typically conducted by force account.

Six wildfires occurred on WPAs during the year. Fire Departments extinguished wildfires on the Rushfeldt, Haverkamp and Winger WPAs. The remaining wildfires went out naturally.

1987 WILDFIRE SUMMARY DETROIT LAKES WMD

WPA	County	Date	WPA Acres
Buchl	Becker	4/9	210
Haverkamp	Becker	4/21	130
White Earth	Becker	4/9	28
Haugtvedt	Clay	4/23	10
Rushfeldt	Clay	4/29	100
Borgrud	Mah.	4/15	55
Halvorson	Polk	4/6	15
Winger	Polk	11/12	80
Total			628

10. Pest Control

a. Weed Control for Establishing Native Grasses

Selective herbicide applications were used to enhance the success of native grass seedings and varied according to the stage of grass establishment. For the first time in several years precipitation did not adversely affect field operations and timing of treatments.

The herbicide glyphosate (Roundup) was applied on 261 acres prior to seeding native grasses to reduce competition especially from introduced cool season grasses such as quackgrass. Results were satisfactory; however, broadleaf competition developed from seed later in the growing season and required treatment with 2,4D on

184 acres. Fields seeded to native grasses during the previous three years were treated with 2,4D as broadleaf competition dictated on 638 acres.

Three fields totaling 209 acres and previously seeded to warm season native grasses were treated with Atrazine to eliminate broadleaf and introduced cool season grass seed production. These areas were intended for seed harvest to supply native seed for future native seedings on WPA's.

The total cost of these herbicide applications was approximately \$14,300. All of these applications were completed using ground spraying equipment and 40% of acreage was treated by commercial applicator.

b. Noxious Weed Control

County weed control meetings are held on a biennial basis and usually early in the year. Due to staff involvement with CRP sign-up no meetings were attended. However, contact with County Agricultural Inspectors was maintained and a good working relationship with these individuals continues.

A total of four weed complaints from three counties were received during the year. Complaints involved thistles, leafy spurge and for the first time, purple loosestrife. This is an average number of complaints.

Weed control efforts consisted of contract and force account herbicide application, force account mowing and permittee haying. For the first time in several years precipitation did not adversely affect field operations and timing of treatments.

Ground application of 2,4D was used to control thistle on 2,402 acres. Aerial application of 2,4D was used to control thistle on 249 acres where boundary or ground conditions did not permit access or operation of ground equipment. Approximately 90% of this total area was treated by contractors.

The use of chlorsulfuron (Telar) to control thistles in grassland was continued on a trial basis on 208 acres. Five plots were selected and thistle populations estimated at the time of treatment and approximately seven weeks following treatment. The average reduction in thistle population was 90%. General observation of plots at ten weeks following treatment indicated a higher kill of thistle. Telar is very slow acting and some plants judged surviving likely died following data collection. Telar proved about equally effective on perennial, biennial and annual thistles.

It was also noted on two plots that Telar had no effect on purple prairie clover and alfalfa.

Evaluation of effects of Telar on thistle population in years subsequent to treatment will be made. Several observations of areas treated in previous years indicate that thistle population may be significantly reduced in subsequent years.

Leafy spurge continues to be a difficult noxious weed problem. This year 289 acres were treated with Tordon K or Tordon 2K pellets. On areas with a history of treatment, the density of plants is significantly reduced and some areas do not require annual treatment. However, as in past years, new areas of spurge were found. The net result is that the area requiring treatment remains about the same but the area needing inspection increases.

Purple loosestrife continues to spread in the area. The plant has now been found on five WPA's, one more than last year. On two WPA's where plants were individually treated with glyphosate (Rodeo) in previous years no plants were found this year. On two other WPA's plants were individually treated with estimated treated area of less than one acre. One WPA with an estimated 45 acres of loosestrife remains untreated.

Purple loosestrife is now listed as a noxious weed in Minnesota. County Agricultural Inspectors have made an effort to inventory the plant in their areas but to date, no control efforts have been observed on private land. In spite of its new status and publicity, purple loosestrife is constantly observed in flower beds.

Mowing of thistles was accomplished by WMD and MN CEP employees on 238 acres. This is about half the average mowed in recent years. The availability of employees and advanced phenology of the season contributed to the reduction in acres mowed.

13. WPA-Easement Monitoring

Waterfowl production easements are administered on nearly 40,000 acres, of which 9,293 acres are wetland. These acreages include all areas accepted by the government as of the end of the calendar year.

Twenty five easement violations were active during the year. Nineteen cases were carried over from 1986, and six new cases were confirmed after the 1987 fall compliance flights. None of the six cases scheduled for litigation which were carried over into 1987, were closed.

Active Easement Cases - 1987

<u>Easement #</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Violation</u>	<u>Year</u>
125x	Becker	Loren Jetvig	fill	87
48x	Clay	F. Sayre	drain	87
94x	Clay	H. Young	drain	87
109x	Clay	Erwin Johnson	drain	86
160x-1	Clay	F. Lunder	fill	87
12x	Mahnomen	David Green	drain	86
19x-1	Mahnomen	Jerome Matter	drain	83
19x,1	Mahnomen	Jerome Matter	drain	86
20x,1	Mahnomen	Myron Lhotka	drain, fill	68
25x	Mahnomen	Clifford Fraser	burn	86
29x-2	Mahnomen	Cletus Geray	ditch	86
30x	Mahnomen	Jer. Schoenborn	fill, drain	76-79
31x	Mahnomen	Richard Wilt	drain, burn	86
35x	Mahnomen	David Trnka	drain	86
32x	Mahnomen	J.D. Smith	drain	80
38x	Mahnomen	J.D. Smith	drain	86
47x	Mahnomen	Clayton Drake	drain, burn	84&86
50x	Mahnomen	Sheldon Nygaard	drain	87
56x	Mahnomen	Todd Turner	fill, drain	85
58x	Mahnomen	Milo Winter	drain	86
63x	Mahnomen	Chris Erickson	fill, drain	87
66x	Mahnomen	Walter Stalboerger	fill	86
71x	Mahnomen	John Gunvalson	drain	86
70x	Polk	Bruce Olsen	ditch	86
111x	Polk	John Dorr	burn	86

All easements were checked by aircraft during the fall. Six new violations were documented, and confirmed by ground checks. Several additional violations are suspected but will require a ground check in 1988 to verify.



Despite best efforts, field checks reveal wetland easement violations such as this plow furrow ditch on Easement 35x, Mahanomen County. SK 3/87.

Thirteen easement cases were closed in the field during the year. Two landowners made commitments to restore violations in 1988. Seventy four wetlands which were illegally drained or filled, were restored. All new violations discovered during the 1986 fall compliance flights were closed.

Easement Cases Closed - 1987

Easement #	County	Disposition
109x	Clay	E. Johnson; restored five wetlands
12x-1	Mahnomen	D. Green; restored one wetland
19x-1	Mahnomen	J. Matter; restored 12 wetlands, refused to restore one large wetland
31x	Mahnomen	R. Wilt; restored one wetland
25x	Mahnomen	C. Fraser; warning letter sent for burning
29x	Mahnomen	C. Geray; restored two wetlands
35x	Mahnomen	D. Trnka; restored 12 wetlands
38x	Mahnomen	Victor Broadwell (tenant farmer); restored three wetlands
58x	Mahnomen	M. Winter; restored one wetland
66x	Mahnomen	Allen Krebsbach (tenant farmer); removed fill from one wetland
71x	Mahnomen	Victor Broadwell (tenant farmer); restored four wetlands
70x	Polk	B. Olson; restored four wetlands
111x	Polk	J. Dorr; warning letter sent for burning

Substantial time and effort was spent trying to resolve a carry-over violation on 19x-1, Mahnomen County. Jerome Matter refused to restore a Type III/IV wetland to our satisfaction. The natural outlet of this wetland was gradually deepened over a number of years by man-made causes. Disagreement over the Ordinary High Water Mark prevented this restoration, and required the documentation of biological indicators throughout the field season.

The civil trial for the Schoenborn case (30x) was held September 22, 1986, and the ruling was in favor of the Service. The Schoenborns appealed this ruling to Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals on June 6, 1987. This ruling should be received within the next year.

Interrogatories for the Clayton Drake case were submitted to the Field Solicitor on September 22. This violation was first detected in 1984, and was filed for civil litigation April 1987. The case is now pending before the court.

G. WILDLIFE

2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

During migration periods, eagles were seen on several district WPA's. Although present in the working area, no falcons were observed.

A "Special Concern Species" of butterfly - - the Poweshiek Skipper - - can be found on Flickertail Prairie WPA. This dry - prairie site on

the sandy beach-line of glacial Lake Agassiz may also hold a small population of the "Threatened" Dakota Skipper.

Several reports of mountain lion and gray wolf were received from the public, but no sightings were confirmed on WPA's.

3. Waterfowl

After eight years of censusing waterfowl using Quarter Section Surveys of WPA lands, we were directed to switch to the four-square mile plot system developed by Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center. The system involves the census of waterfowl on fee, easement and private ownership. This district had 23 plots in five counties to census twice in May.

To complete the census, extensive preparations, including landowner contacts, were necessary. In addition to the census work, the plots were video taped from an airplane for habitat analysis. All of the census work and habitat analysis were to provide a computer generated estimate of pairs and production for various land ownerships in the district.

Unfortunately, this system, as of yet, provides no data for divers, cavity nesters, geese, coots or grebes. In addition, estimates of production are based primarily on upland nesters, and thus provide an unrealistic estimate of recruitment, especially for mallards.

Because of the change in census procedures, any comparisons to previous years for various species is considered invalid. For example, cursory observations and Minnesota DNR census data indicates mallard breeding pairs declined about 20%. However, the four square mile plot system indicated 29.25 mallard pairs per square mile of WPA in 1987, while the Quarter Section Survey method of censusing indicated 11.7 pairs per square mile in 1986. General observations and DNR census work indicates a 20% decline in mallard pairs, while the census indicates a 155% increase! DNR census work indicates blue-winged teal breeding pairs increased 50%, however, the four square mile survey data indicate a 15% decline. Both census' indicate pintail numbers were down, and there can be no doubt that Canada geese and wood ducks were at much higher densities than previous years. Production appeared to be quite good for all species, with Canada goose broods being the most notably successful.

An estimate of breeding pairs and duck production on WPA's is presented in the following table. Note that calculations are based upon estimates derived from studies over many years but where possible based on current year information. The total estimate of production represents a 35% decrease from 1986 and this change likely reflects the changes in methods of counting and estimating rather than the change in duck population.

1987 WPA Breeding Pair and Production Estimates

Species	Pairs	Production	
Mallard	1518	1351	1/
Blue-winged teal	1332	2018	1/
Shoveller	9	1	1/
Pintail	29	9	1/
Green-winged teal	62	40	2/
Wood duck	223	424	3/
Redhead	57	60	4/
Ring-necked duck	238	252	4/
Canvasback	88	93	4/
Ruddy duck	83	88	4/
Total	3639	4336	

1/ Estimates from four-square mile survey.

2/ Estimates from eight year average Quarter Section survey, assumed 80% hen survival, 8.8 eggs hatched per nest and 54% brood survival, and 17.1% hen success from SUMP study.

3/ Same as 2/ but assumed 50% hen success.

4/ Same as 2/ but assumed 7 eggs hatched per nest and 35% hen success from MN DNR study.

The 175 nest baskets donated by Ducks Unlimited in 1986 were checked/restrawed by district staff in 1987. Of the 175 baskets, five were destroyed by fire, shifting ice and vegetation, or stolen. Of the 170 baskets available only five were used by mallards. There was only one successful mallard nest (Union Lake WPA in Polk County) and four abandoned nests (no embryo development). Two baskets produced raptors--one owl and another hawk. One of the abandoned mallard nests (Circle Lake WPA in Mahanomen County) was known to have had an incubating mallard hen for over 30 days.



175 nest baskets had limited success. Only one mallard hen hatched with four mallard clutches being abandoned. This nest had eleven eggs and the hen was observed incubating over 30 days. There was no embryo development. DH 7/87.

4. Marsh and Waterbirds

Due to the change in waterfowl census procedures, no estimates of coot or grebe production are available. Minnesota DNR estimates state-wide coot numbers were only one third of a year ago. Based on cursory observations throughout the summer, coot numbers were far below recent years, and little production was noted. No obvious changes were noted in pied-billed grebe numbers. Loons and double-crested cormorants continue to frequent the deeper marshes of area WPA's. Cormorants appear to be increasing as well. The abundant sora and Virginia rail populations seem stable.

5. Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns and Allied Species

Shorebirds common to the area include killdeer, marbled godwit, upland plover (sandpiper), spotted and pectoral sandpiper, Wilson's phalarope, greater and lesser yellowlegs, American bittern, great blue heron, green-backed heron, great egret and common snipe. These species and others were observed during migrations and breeding seasons.

Herring gulls, ring-billed gulls, Franklin and Bonepart's gulls were frequently observed during migration. Black terns are summer residents of many WPA's.

6. Raptors

At least 20 species of raptors utilize WPA's in this area. Marsh hawks, sharp shinned hawks, red-tailed hawks, rough legged hawks, American kestrels, broad-winged hawks, goshawks and great horned owls are among the most common.

8. Game Mammals

Weather conditions were favorable for mammal populations throughout 1987. The combination of below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures (especially during winter months) was a benefit for all species except muskrat and beaver.

Minnesota DNR estimates of deer density were down slightly in the eastern (less cropland) half of the district (after a significant over-harvest decline in 1985 and '86), but declined sharply in the western (agricultural) half. DNR officials attribute the western decline to increased harvest levels as well. Fawning rates increased from 1.26 fawns per doe in 1986 to 1.34 fawns per doe in 1987 -- thus reflecting the easy "86/87" winter. The Detroit Lakes WMD overlays four Minnesota Deer Management Units (DMU)). Productivity is based on an average of the Prairie and Big Woods DMU's.

Moose numbers increased. Productivity appeared good and moose sign was frequently observed on many WPA's. An estimated 50 to 75 moose inhabit WPA's of the district.



Moose such as this young bull find district WPA's to their liking. This one is drinking from a wetland created by highway department mitigation on the Shay WPA, Becker County. Highway department employee Mike Juene donated photo. Fall, 1987.

Populations of muskrat and beaver declined dramatically. Muskrat declined due to dropping water levels. Beaver decreased due to a combination of dropping water levels and increased trapper harvest.

Based upon general observations, trapper reports, and autumn scent post surveys, fox and coyote numbers increased, while mink and raccoon numbers declined.

10. Other Resident Wildlife

No significant increases or declines were noted in small rodent or most insect populations. However, the weather was apparently "very" favorable to local deer fly populations. They made outdoor activities in or near woodlands particularly miserable for about a month this summer, and were even noted in early September. Local scent post surveys and general observations indicate a significant (30%) decline in an otherwise high skunk population.

Because of the nice winter and excellent production weather, pheasant populations increased. Minnesota DNR pheasant counts

indicated a 300 percent increase for west central Minnesota. Gray partridge increased significantly (45%) and ruffed grouse also benefitted from the mild winter and warm, dry summer (increased 33%). Ruffed grouse numbers have climbed two years in a row, and they have once again become welcome additions to any woodland walk.

District-wide prairie chicken populations declined for the third year. Significant declines were noted in the counties of Becker (down 46%), Mahanomen (down 38%), Norman (down 32%), and Polk (down 25%). Statewide, only 650 males were counted on booming grounds this spring. Based on weather and food availability, this decline lacks explanation.

No significant changes were noted in most populations of smaller birds. However, pileated and red bellied woodpeckers appear to be on the increase -- perhaps due in part to the expansion of Dutch elm disease.

12. Wildlife Propagation and Stocking

On April 21, a pair of trumpeter swans was released on the Struss WPA, one of 11 pairs released by the MN DNR on lakes in central Becker County. The three year old swans were raised at the Minnesota Zoological Garden and the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago.

In the late 1800's, trumpeter swans were completely eliminated from Minnesota by hunting. Through the efforts of former State Senator Collin Peterson of Detroit Lakes, steps were taken to reintroduce trumpeter swans into western Minnesota. This project has been funded by donations to the Nongame Wildlife Checkoff on Minnesota income and property tax forms.

The birds were wing clipped prior to release so they could not travel far from their release sites during the summer. When they regained their flight feathers, they began moving to other lakes in the area. In October, during the waterfowl season, three of the swans were shot, one died and the other two had to have their wings amputated and were returned to the Minnesota Zoo. In December, one swan was found dead on a lake and another was killed by a car near Frazee, MN. By December 31, the remaining 17 birds had moved to several areas in central Minnesota and central Iowa.



Bio Tech Hanson preparing to release one of the trumpeter swans on Struss WPA, Becker Co. LP 4/87.

15. Animal Control

The number of beaver colonies declined significantly on district WPA's. In a few cases it was the result of lower water levels, but in most cases, the decline was the result of increased trapping pressure. The decline in beaver numbers also brought welcome relief from beaver dam removal in ditches, culverts, structures and streams on area WPA's. To illustrate the decline, in each of the previous two years about 100 "problem" beaver were removed through force account or contract trapping. In 1987, only one problem beaver was removed by the same methods. Minor beaver dam removals were conducted on less than ten WPA's.

Although planned for, district staff were not involved in a predator removal program in 1987. The environmental assessment that addressed this activity for all Minnesota wetland districts has not been approved by the Minnesota DNR.

H. PUBLIC USE

1. General

A broad spectrum of local residents received information about WMD activities. Eleven news articles, covering such topics as prescribed burning, Take Pride in America, nest basket project, Conservation Reserve Program, predator control and the 50th anniversary of the Pitmann/Robertson Program, were released to 23 local news media sources.

A feature article about purple loosestrife was written by the Detroit Lakes Tribune in June.

Two newsletters, covering a variety of topics, were mailed to approximately 2,000 landowners, local officials, and government agencies.

Wildlife films from the station's film library were popular with area schools and organizations.

One hundred and fifty National Wildlife Federation Wildlife Week packets were mailed to local schools in February. The National Wildlife Week slide/tape program "Let's Clear the Air" was viewed by students at several local schools.

The "Take Pride In America" theme was included in newsletters, news releases and exhibits.

6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations

A wetland exhibit was displayed at the Becker County Farm and Home Show on January 24 and at the Clay County Conservation Days Meeting on January 28 to promote the Conservation Reserve/Wildlife Management Agreement Program.

The wetland exhibit was displayed at the Hawley Rod & Gun Club show on April 25 and 26.

District staff manned a booth in the newly constructed natural resources building at the Becker County Fair on August 27-30. A total of 34 individuals, businesses, organizations, and agencies contributed to the construction of the building which was built with \$16,000 in donated funds. On August 29, the building was dedicated by Minnesota DNR Commissioner Joe Alexander. An estimated 17,600 people visited the building during the four days of the fair. The 50th anniversary of the Pitmann/Robertson Program display was incorporated into the exhibit along with videos on steel shot, the Refuge System, wildlife restoration, and Take Pride In America.



The wetland district display in the new Natural Resources Exhibit Building at the Becker County fairgrounds. LP 8/87.

8. Hunting

Based on cursory observations made during enforcement activities, waterfowl hunter use was at or slightly less than the low levels of 1986. Many wetlands were dry by October and consequently duck numbers were down. The largest concentration of ducks, geese and hunters was in the Hitterdal area of Clay County. An estimated 350 hunters were on district WPA's for the waterfowl opener. Hunter use tapered off dramatically after the second weekend. Most commonly bagged birds were mallard, blue and green-winged teal, wood duck and Canada geese.

Deer hunter use of WPA's continued to be high, as these areas provide most of the fall cover available for whitetails. Hunter success was good according to local Minnesota DNR registration stations. Bow hunter use of WPA's also continued to increase. Some WPA's may be getting "too much" use by deer hunters and hunter conflicts are developing. Another problem is the presence of permanent tree stands on WPA's. Removal is sandwiched in with other field activities.

The Minnesota DNR conducts a moose season every two years. No formal census of moose hunters was conducted during the 1987 season. However, data on moose kills was obtained for both the White Earth Reservation and DNR seasons. Of the four moose taken

during the reservation season, all were taken on or near the Nelson Prairie WPA in Mahnomen County. Fifteen additional moose were taken on or near WPA's in Clay, Mahnomen and Polk Counties during the State season.

Pheasant numbers increased and hunting pressure was considerable with most hunters getting a rooster or two. District pheasant hunting occurs primarily in Clay County. Ruffed grouse numbers were also up and hunter interest increased. Hunting for other small game species such as gray partridge, rabbits, squirrels, etc. was minimal. Most WPA's are used by coon and fox hunters.

10. Trapping

Trapping occurs on all WPA's in accordance with state regulations. Fur prices were higher on most species and resulted in increased trapper use. Unfortunately, with the increased use, there is an increase in vehicle trespass and other illegal trapping related activities.

11. Wildlife Observation

Use of WPA's for wildlife observation and photography is difficult to determine. However, public contacts and tracks indicate that they are utilized quite extensively during certain times of the year. Peak wildlife observation periods occur during spring waterfowl migration, peak brood rearing, and prior to the waterfowl and deer seasons.

17. Law Enforcement

a. Public Use

Most of the organized fish/wildlife related enforcement is done during the waterfowl season. This year patrol occurred the first weekend of the duck season. This is the first year the State of Minnesota required the statewide use of steel shot for waterfowl hunting. One hunter was discovered with lead shot in possession and a Field Information Report was submitted to the Senior Resident Agent.

Four commercial leech trappers were charged with trespass and unauthorized take for activities on WPA's (see "Other Economic Uses", Section J.2 for more information).

b. Encroachment

Pipeline repairs by the Midwestern Gas Transmission Company on the Lofgren and Hoykens WPAs in Clay County resulted in damage to upland cover in 1986. The Lofgren area was leveled by Midwestern Gas and seeded by the district. The Hoykens WPA still needs minor repairs.

The north and west boundaries of the Nelson WPA, Clay County, were surveyed and reposted because of boundary sign damage by adjacent farming. Several rock piles were located on the WPA after the reposting. Tom Bjorndahl, adjacent farmer, agreed to bury these rocks.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

1. New Construction

a. Seed Cleaning/Storage Building

A contract was awarded Hammers Construction, Perham, Minnesota, to build a 60' X 120' metal building at WMD headquarters. Amount of the contract is \$86,400. The building will house the native grass seed cleaner, a seed storage bin and serve as a drying facility for harvested grass seed. In addition, equipment such as tractors and trucks currently parked outside during the winter will be stored in the building. Construction was nearly complete at the end of the year with completion expected in late January, 1988.



Construction of this new 60'x120' storage building will get equipment out of the snowbanks and thunderstorms, and provide a place for native seed storage and cleaning facilities.

TA 12/87.

b. Wetland Restorations, WPA

This year will be remembered as one of the best years for earth work activities in this district. There had been so much precipitation the past two years, that even drained wetlands did not go dry, and thus restoration efforts were hampered. However, in 1987, ground conditions were perfect for construction.

One water control structure was built on the Arneson WPA in Becker County. However, most restorations were either excavations to create a wetland, or a combination of excavation and ditch filling to recreate a wetland. There were 80 wetland improvement projects on district WPA's.

Most of the construction was contract work. However, one of the wetlands constructed on Moren WPA was mitigation for partial wetland filling done by the township during road construction adjacent to the Farrell WPA in Polk County. Grove Park Township paid for this construction. In addition, the Hawley Rod and Gun Club paid for \$1,000 of the construction work done at Korell WPA in Clay County. The \$3,000 needed for materials and earth work to construct the water control structure at Arneson WPA was donated by the Becker County and Cormorant Lakes Sportsmen's Clubs. In addition the Cormorant Lakes Sportsmen's Club donated another \$2,500 to complete construction of nine additional wetlands on Arneson WPA.



Eighty wetland restoration projects were completed on district WPA's in 1987. This dam (and plumbing) under construction on the Arneson WPA, Becker County, was paid for by two local sportsmens clubs. LH 7/87.



Small dam with overflow pipe on the Arneson WPA, Becker County paid for by a local sportsmens group. A combination of spring water and a cloud burst filled it to culvert level in just a few days. Borrow area under water. LH 7/87.

1987 WPA WETLAND RESTORATIONS DETROIT LAKES WMD

WPA NAME	COUNTY	DITCHES FILLED	WETLAND EXCAVATION	TILE BREAKS	STOP-LOG CONTROLS	OVERFLOW STRUCTURE	TOTAL
Arneson	Becker	6	2		1	1	10
Tattie Exchange	Clay	5	3				8
Rushfeldt	Clay	3		3		5	11
Korell	Clay	19	7				26
Sandy Lake	Mahnomen	5	2				7
Moren	Polk	1	4				5
Poplar River	Polk		13				13
Totals		39	31	3	1	6	80

c. Wetland Restorations, WMA

The Wildlife Management Agreement (WMA) leases on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands gave the Service an opportunity to restore previously drained wetland habitat on these farms. The wetlands restored will remain in place for the term of the WMA lease (usually 10 years). After that time, the landowner may, if he chooses, remove the restoration structure without being in violation of the 1985 Farm Bill. These restorations are considered by USDA to be "man-made" and therefore, removal is not "swambusting". Eleven landowners permitted wetland enhancement efforts, and 45 wetlands were restored.

Unlike restorations done on WPA's, nearly all CRP/WMA restorations were done by simple ditch blocks or earthen dams. Wetland basins were not deepened during construction. This method was used so that with minimal expense, landowners could, at a later time, remove the ditch plugs, and once again have a functioning drainage system. Two wetlands, on the Service wetland easement of Godfred Halland (MH 73x), were constructed using permanent techniques -- ie. deepening the basins and filling the ditches entirely. These wetlands are now a permanent part of the wetland easement.

Construction was accomplished with a new D6-D dozer transferred from Chautauqua Refuge in Illinois. The dozer came equipped with three foot wide tracks which made it ideal for working in or around wetlands. Dozer operators included Bill Watts from Chautauqua, Virgil Erickson from Agassiz, Clark Milligan from Swan Lake and our own staff. We appreciate the efforts and commitments to the resource exhibited by the operators from these refuges.



New dozer from Chautauqua Refuge for wetland restoration work on private land. Operators included this Missouri gentlemen from Swan Lake who kept complaining about not having enough clothes along for MN summers!! JG 9/87.



(Above) One of sixty (60) wetlands restored on private land by district efforts. (Below) Dozer Operator Virgil Erickson, on loan from Agassiz Refuge, discusses restoration of drained wetland on landowners CRP field.
JG 8/87.



CRP/WMA WETLAND RESTORATIONS
DETROIT LAKES WMD

<u>WMA Landowner</u>	<u>County</u>	<u># of Restored Basins</u>	<u>Acres Restored</u>
Braton, Sam	Clay	2	1.4
Braun, Felix	Becker	9	12.2
Eggermont, Al	Becker	4	4.8
Ellison, Glen	Becker	5	4.8
Gandrud, Donald	Becker	1	3.6
Hall, Ted	Mahnomen	4	7.2
Halland, Godred	Mahnomen	2	1.1
Hillstead, Earl	Clay	5	3.6
Knutson, Alvin	Clay	1	3.5
Ruona, Ron	Becker	4	4.4
Wilt, Richard	Mahnomen	<u>8</u>	<u>9.0</u>
Total		45	55.6

d. Wetland Restorations, Other

In addition to wetland restorations accomplished on WPA's and CRP lands, Biological Technician Hanson assisted two landowners with engineering and contracting of 15 wetland restorations funded by those landowners.

The neighbor east of Poplar River WPA in Polk County liked what he saw during WPA construction. Subsequently, Hanson worked with him to stake and have the same contractor accomplish three restorations on his land. The construction cost the landowner (Milton Brumwell) \$440.00.

A landowner in Section 17, Lake Park Township, Becker County, completed 12 wetland restoration projects. Hanson assisted with staking locations, hiring a contractor, setting culverts and gaining funds from the Cormorant Lakes Sportsmen's Club (\$1,000.00) to help defray cost of construction. The landowners (Bruce and Cindy Paakh) spent \$5,000.00 of their own money to accomplish the restorations.

e. Rustad Lake WPA - Predator Exclusion Fence

Construction of a predator exclusion fence was finally completed during the fall on Rustad Lake WPA. The contractor initiated construction two years earlier. Time delays due to periods of non-performance and poor construction requiring several re-works delayed the completion date. The fence encloses 60 acres of upland nesting habitat seeded during spring, 1986. Ducks Unlimited was responsible for construction of the fence which will be used by NPWRC as part of their Small Unit Management Project. Following the study, the fence will be operated by the WMD.

f. Other

A number of minor projects were completed. One ditch crossing was built on Anderson WPA, Clay County to provide access to an area of cropland scheduled for grass seeding in 1989. Two approaches providing access across road ditches were constructed, one each on Arneson and Tatlie Exchange WPA's. A total of three pole gates were installed on Tessman, Arneson and Korell WPA's. Boundaries on six WPA's were delineated using on-line-markers (OLM) along 3.42 miles of boundary.

2. Rehabilitation

Small ditch plugs previously constructed to restore five wetlands on Rushfeldt WPA were rebuilt to repair washouts.

Three approaches were rebuilt and graveled.

3. Major Maintenance

The headquarters office and two-stall garage were painted. Bids were solicited and the job completed by a local painter.

4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement

Locally harvested native grass seed was cleaned at the seed cleaning facility located at Tamarac NWR. Seed was cleaned for all Minnesota WMD's and Valley City WMD, N.D. A total of 50,000 pounds of bulk seed was processed yielding 44,000 pounds of cleaned seed. The species of seed cleaned included switchgrass, big bluestem, Indiangrass and sideoats grama.

The addition of an extension specialist position created a need for an additional vehicle. To meet this need a vehicle was transferred from the Morris WMD. Orders for two replacement pickup trucks were submitted to replace compact pickup trucks. Due to the age and mileage of the motor fleet, at least two replacements will be required each year during the next several years.

5. Communications Systems

Progress toward completing a radio system in cooperation with Tamarac NWR that will provide communication in all parts of the WMD continued. The Refuge purchased a duplexor unit to complete the base station equipment located at the Refuge. The WMD has purchased three new radios for vehicles and purchased items needed to convert the remaining mobile units so they can access the new system.

6. Computer Systems

The Map-based Information Management System (MIMS) pilot project was completed in December. In this pilot project, a map-based information management system was developed using an Apple Macintosh Plus computer with Business Filevision, a commercially

written visual data base program. Management information and habitat maps for twenty Waterfowl Production Areas were entered into this system. Time required for data base organization, user training, data entry, and file updating was monitored. Map detail, display options, and the ease of map entry and modification were evaluated. This data base management system proved to be easy to use, and allowed habitat or wildlife information to be graphically displayed on detailed, multi-level maps. This system is easy to learn, flexible, affordable and can be used to assist wildlife managers in planning, documenting, and evaluating management practices.

Three demonstrations explaining the capabilities of MIMS were given to field personnel in Region 3 and 6. A demonstration was also given to Regional Office staff. This pilot project was also presented at the Computer Workshop portion of the 49th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on December 6.

Further evaluation of improvements to MIMS and the evaluation of several other microcomputer geobase information systems is necessary before a system is selected for use in the Minnesota Wetland Complex.

A Macintosh II with 19 inch color monitor was purchased for the district using regional year end funds. This work station will be used to test GIS software improvements and their applicability to wetland district management.

Two IBM Personal System 2 computers were purchased during the year. These microcomputers are equipped with 80 megabyte hard disk drives, printers (one letter quality, one dot matrix), color monitors, one streamer tape backup unit and the following software: MSDOS 3.3, Word Perfect, Lotus 1-2-3, R-base, Microsoft Chart, and Crosstalk. Total cost of hardware and software was \$17,146 and funded by ARMMS. A training program was arranged through the Detroit Lakes Area Vo-Tech Institute to train the staff to use these different programs. Cost will be \$1,200.

7. Energy Conservation

The total gallons of gas and diesel fuel used was 13% more in FY 87 as compared with FY 86 but 17% less than the goal assigned. The primary factors increasing fuel usage from the previous year were:

- increase in motor fleet by one vehicle to meet need of an additional position.
- greatly expanded activity in Farm Bill program including restoring 45 wetlands with Service equipment.

8. Other

A number of projects were accomplished usually in conjunction with other work involving construction activity. A total of ten debris piles were buried on five WPA's. Approximately 0.45 miles of fence

were removed from Korell WPA. A total of 44 parking lots was mowed prior to the hunting season to improve appearance and encourage use of the lots rather than adjacent roads.

An effort was made to catch up on a backlog of WPA reposting. This year 34 WPA's were reposted along their entire boundary and 103 WPA's were reposted along roadside boundaries. An annual effort requiring considerable labor, an estimated 27 man days were spent reposting this year.

J. OTHER ITEMS

1. Cooperative Programs

a. Watershed Districts

Coordination with three watershed districts of the wetland district working area occurred for various cooperative efforts.

Recommendations were submitted for mitigation of lost habitat resulting from the proposed Winger dam on the Sand Hill River, Polk County.

Private petitions for ditch cleanouts and improvements required some cooperative action for four ditches potentially affecting WPA's. Cleanout of Becker County Ditch 9 was accomplished through the Lee Marshes WPA in 1986; however, leveling of spoil was delayed until this year. The watershed district placed spoil on one side of the ditch to permit water retention on a major portion of the originally drained wetland.

A March public hearing was attended on Mahnomen County Ditch 3 (Project 27) to ensure protection of five wetland easements in Popple Grove and Lake Grove Townships. Following considerable coordination, work began on Mahnomen County Ditch 3, Lateral B (Project 34) in sections 23 and 36. Although no easement wetlands were involved, ditch realignment and culvert placement offered protection to wetlands lying along County Road 113. Independent action of area farmers led to expanded ditch work south of the Moore Lake WPA which eventually led to the Corps of Engineers stopping the work.

A petition for an improvement/realignment of Becker County Ditch 15 near the Spring Marsh WPA and the proposed Hamden Slough Refuge outlet was filed and meetings held. Preliminary watershed district field checks were made and considerable landowner opposition has surfaced. Work on the lower stretches of Ditch 15 may influence later upstream improvements which could affect implementation of the Hamden Project. The Buffalo/ Red River Watershed District is receptive to the Hamden Slough Project and its potential benefits for water retention and watershed protection. Preliminary survey and feasibility work on Pierce Lake has been postponed.

Three cooperative efforts involved consideration of water retention, all with the Buffalo/Red Watershed District. A Buffalo River retention site, affecting the Donley/Tillman WPA, Becker County offers excellent mitigation opportunities. Several marsh development opportunities bordering the project, plus prairie pothole restoration are considerations. The watershed district made a formal right-of-way request by letter on February 23, 1987 although coordination goes back to 1982.

Two projects involving separate parcels of the Haugtvedt WPA, Clay County were active in 1987. The watershed district did a 1986 feasibility and engineering survey, with drawings, for a marsh development on the north parcel. D.U. is considering funding construction which would provide marsh habitat with a five acre nesting island on a small tributary of Whiskey Creek. Watershed problems there and on Whiskey Creek would be eased and complimented by a potential joint project on Haugtvedt and Julsrud WPA, Ottertail County. Through the Fergus Falls WMD, D.U. completed survey and feasibility work through a consultant (KBM). Meetings led to additional survey needs to address the concerns of affected landowners.

b. Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture is made up of a number of agencies with resource conservation responsibilities. The Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District has been authorized by Congress through the 1985 Food Security Act to work closely with USDA's agencies who have land management responsibilities related to wildlife and wildlife habitat -- specifically, wetland habitat.

The agencies of USDA within the Detroit Lakes WMD are: Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), Soil Conservation Service (SCS), Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), and the County Extension Service.

Working with USDA has involved six different offices of each of four USDA services/agencies and it has included 1 to 4 programs with each. The details of cooperative accomplishments with USDA are presented in Sections C, E, and I.

c. Minnesota DNR

The Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program required similar efforts as in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This wildlife cover program for erodible soils of Minnesota required inputs on procedures and priority-setting, and recommendations on upland cover and wetland restorations. Staff assisted as members of screening committees for counties, assisting Soil and Water Conservation Districts which have regulatory authority for the program. Reduced efforts occurred in 1987, Clay County being the most active in RIM participation.

Considerable support was provided to the State's Non-Game Wildlife Program effort to release trumpeter swans in Becker County, historic range of the species. Numerous planning and coordination meetings preceeded the April 21 release of 11 pairs (Section G.12).

Other cooperative efforts with the MN DNR included sharing of information, equipment and technical advice, often times on similar resource efforts. A special use permit was issued May 12 to the fisheries section to rear walleye fry on Doran Lake WPA, Clay County to meet special needs of the Ely, MN Fisheries Headquarters. The cooperative development of the Natural Resources Building at the Becker County Fairgrounds included \$16,000 of donated funds and contributed efforts from 34 individuals, businesses, organizations and agencies.

d. Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Ducks Unlimited maintains their interest in Handen Slough Refuge, Becker County for major developments on any project which might develop.

There were no new water developments proposed for WPA's and none were ready for construction in 1987. The following site feasibility and design work has been completed for projects for future D.U. water development efforts:

1. Ulrich (Becker) and Nelson Prairie (Mahnomen) - survey/design completed (ARMM's) through Enviro Sciences, Inc.; Ulrich requires acquisition; Nelson Prairie is low priority.
2. Haugtvedt (Clay) - Buffalo/Red Watershed District completed through Houston Engineering; awaiting D.U. scheduling.
3. Haugtvedt (Clay)/Julsrud (Ottertail) - D.U. through KBM; only survey done; a joint Fergus Falls and Detroit Lakes WMD project. Landowner meetings were held.

Indirectly, through the NPWRC's Small Unit Management Study, D.U. has completed construction of an electric predator exclusion fence on 60 acres of the Rustad Lake WPA, Clay County (Section I.1.e).

A total of 175 fiberglass duck nesting baskets provided by D.U. were placed in WPA wetlands late in 1986. Checks for usage were made and reported to D.U. as a requirement of this cooperative effort (Section G.3).

e. White Earth Reservation

A special use permit was issued to the Council to rear walleye fry on three WPA's between May 1 and October 1. Permit 23966 allowed releases of fry on Krebsbach and Paul Jr. WPA's in Mahnomen County and White Earth WPA in Becker County.

The surfacing of the leech bait trapping controversy will necessitate more future cooperation with the White Earth Reservation. Due to treaty rights, special consideration has been given in the past to reservation members. Non-Indians have initiated a test case involving illegal leech trapping, leading to a Regional policy which would involve permitted/regulated bait trapping by White Earth Band members.

f. Utilities and Transportation

Requests for a variety of right-of-way (ROW) permits required considerable cooperative effort with various agencies, local governments and public utilities. Appropriate coordination on some of those projects occurred with the St. Paul Field Office.

ROW requests for public utilities included a power line re-route on Brandy Lake WPA in Becker County. The Ottertail Power Company project will require an environmental assessment.

Most cooperative efforts involved public transportation needs, ROW requests coming from two counties and three townships. Five involvements, two of which required environmental assessments, required significant staff time for coordination.

Five road projects requiring cooperative efforts included:

1. Polk County Road 35 - formal ROW request; major impact on Hanson WPA; recommend no permit issuance.
2. Becker County Road 16 - complaint of wetness tied to earlier cooperative effort; formal ROW request for wetland alteration on Shay WPA; habitat mitigated.
3. Grove Park Township Road - prior construction filled wetlands on Farrell WPA, Polk County; wetlands mitigated on Moren WPA.
4. Spring Creek Township Road - prior construction along Spring Creek WPA, Becker County; vertical backslope leveled and seeded under special use permit.
5. Detroit Township Road - complaint of high water level in Detroit Mountain WPA wetland; agreed to lower one-half to one foot for road maintenance with private landowner who controlled outlet.

Last year the MN DOT proposed to improve Trunk Highway 32, Clay County and it was thought that minor wetland impacts to two WPA's (Hoykens and Gjerve) would occur. Hoykens was dropped as a borrow site and no further Service involvement was required.

One cooperative effort not involving public lands considered Clay County's need for a new landfill site. Section 11 of Spring Prairie

Township containing native prairie was proposed. Concerns led to the involvement of the MN DNR and The Nature Conservancy in an effort to preserve it.

Although this section summarizes cooperative involvements for utility and transportation needs, more detail can be found in Section D.4.

2. Other Economic Uses

The ribbon leech (Nepheleopsis obscura) has become a very popular fishing bait in recent years. Increased demand has created a market offering substantial profits to leech trappers and retail bait dealers.

Leeches are most abundant in Type IV wetlands which are also very important to waterfowl production. Bait dealers usually ring the perimeter of emergent vegetation of a marsh with leech traps. These traps are checked up to twice daily by boat during the nesting season. The disturbance of leech trapping to over-water nesting waterfowl and marsh birds can be severe. Commercial leech trapping is not permitted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on State Wildlife Management Areas or by the Fish and Wildlife Service on Waterfowl Production Areas because of its conflict with waterfowl production.



While floats on the Borgrud WPA indicate illegal leech traps, main concern over this increasing problem is waterfowl disturbance during the breeding season as traps are checked twice daily. SK 5/87.

On May 29, 1987 Refuge Officers Steve Kallin and Leslie Peterson investigated complaints of commercial leech trapping by non-tribal members on Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) located within the White Earth Indian Reservation. Service policy prohibits commercial leech trapping except by tribal members within the White Earth Reservation under historic treaty rights.

Non-tribal members Ronald Aanerud and his daughter and son-in-law Paul and Rhonda Morinville, were involved in illegal leech trapping on two Waterfowl Production Areas in Mahnommen County. It was immediately apparent to the officers, and confirmed by Mr. Aanerud, that this leech trapping operation was staged in order to serve as a test case to challenge historic Indian treaty rights.

A total of 205 leech traps were seized from the Aanerud's, and each were charge with violating 50 CFR 27.21 (unauthorized collection) and 50 CFR 26.21 (trespass). The case is pending before the courts.

Another commercial leech trapping operation was discovered on the Moren WPA in Polk County. Eighty-two leech traps were seized and and the trapper was charged with the same violations as above. The trapper is making partial payments toward a \$500 fine.

3. Items of Interest

After spending one year in the Region 3 Mid-Level Manager Development Program, John Lindell transferred to Rice Lake NWR on November 22. Beginning in October, 1986 his training included a wide variety of workshops, formal training (internal and external) and work assignments. Work in two Regions (3 and 6) and the Regional and Washington offices broadened his experience. John had served as the easement enforcement biologist on the district since September, 1982.

Steve Maneval, temporary tractor operator for several years following his start as a MN CEP worker in 1983, received his 10-year Service pin.

Tours of the Wetland Division are frequent because the Minnesota wetlands program has been a hub of activity for acquisition, wetland and cover development, field studies (D.U. and MCP), management and research (SUMP). ARW John Eadie and Tom Follrath toured the Division in early April, viewing Hamden Slough Refuge and other district programs.

Four district staff were recommended for Special Achievement Awards as the result of their 1987 work accomplishments. John Gunderson, Larry Hanson, Leslie Peterson, and Steve Kallin were subsequently recognized in 1988 for excellent work in the areas of wetland protection and restoration. Through their combined efforts, 214 wetlands were restored on public and private lands, protection efforts strengthened and Farm Bill efforts expanded.

Total staff effort put forth was about 0.8 FTE (\$31,000) generating habitat interest on more than 17,000 acres of private land; 45 wetlands were restored on Conservation Reserve lands.

The following training was completed:

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Christen, Kallin, Peterson, Lipke, Atkins	How to Get Results With People	January	8
Atkins	Law Enforcement	February	40
Lipke	Advanced Refuge Academy	March	120
Kallin, Peterson	Law Enforcement	March	40
Gunderson, Peterson	First Aid	June	8
Hanson	Wetland Workshop	June	16
Peterson	Assertiveness Training for Professionals	July	8
All	CSRS/FERS Workshop	August	8
Christen	Stress Management	August	8
Gunderson	Vegetative Seeding Workshop	September	16
Atkins, Kallin, Lipke	Wildlife Disease	September	16
Peterson	Wetland Management	September	24
Kallin, Atkins	Firearms Qualification	September	4
Peterson	Public Use Workshop	October	40
Kallin, Christen	Computer Training	October	8
Christen, Atkins, Gunderson, Lipke, Kallin, Peterson, Hanson	Computer Training (IBM)	December	2
Kallin	Workshop on Computer Applications	December	8

4. Credits

Lipke: C(1,2,3a,c), D(1-3), E(1), J(1,3), K
 Atkins: A, D(5b), E(3,5,7,10), I(a,e,f,2,3,4,5,7,8)
 Kallin: D(5a), F(4,5,7,9,13), H(17), I(6), 5(2)
 Peterson: B, E(6), F(8), 6(12), H(1,6,11)
 Hanson: F(2), 6(2-8,10,15), H(8-10), I(b,c,d)
 Gunderson: C(3,b,d), E(7)
 Christen: Assembling

K. Feedback

Of all the plans and planning completed at the field level, little is as important to the organized functioning of a field station as annual work planning. This effort details what will be done and how it will be accomplished. Timely completion of this task just prior to the beginning of the fiscal year is important. Prerequisites for annual work planning are receipt of work advices and a budget.

It is imperative that certain actions get underway early in the fiscal year to ensure an organized approach to accomplishing objectives. Some of these actions include submission of advanced procurement plans, requisitions, requests for hiring temporary personnel, development of contracts, etc.

The past two years, it has been 4-5 months into the fiscal year before budgets reached the field. The effect is to begin the year managing by "best guess", delay important fiscal decisions and amend previous submissions. Receipt of budgets has occurred at the beginning of the field season when the focus of attention should not be on hurried planning but rather accomplishing the objectives of the annual work plan. Timely receipt of budgets or at least a reliable planning allowance would do much to organize the function of the field office and to some extent the Regional Office.

Concern expressed in the 1981 Feedback section about key issues important to the future of acquisition included: "continued easement enforcement, in lieu of taxes, and the noxious weed issue". Shortage of acquisition funds has limited our progress in some years since that time.

The following quote was taken from the 1982 Annual Narrative Report:

"Working relationships with the citizens and local governments have been bolstered by continued communication, an improving record on cover improvement and corresponding weed control, plus significantly increased in lieu of tax payments to the counties due to reappraisals. However, the FWS is not in a position to be opportunistic in the acquisition of fee area roundouts, or more widespread easement activity around WPAs. It is unfortunate that the pendulum cannot swing upward for all of the factors affecting acquisition success at the same time."

In 1987, funds were available for new acquisition, and weeds and lack of respect for wetland easements were not issues. What was the issue? - low (below the 100% level) Revenue Sharing payments and a steady downward trend since 1982 (91-77-74-64-60%). The end result? Becker County, where most willing sellers of land are, and where Hamden Slough NWR is proposed, has decided to not certify any fee tracts for Service acquisition efforts. A second county has stated, "short Revenue Sharing payments" as a reason in their not certifying a Mahnomon County wetland easement. Easements do not even diminish local government taxing capabilities. Government does not present a very convincing argument that wetlands and acquisition are important values/needs when it will not provide 100 percent Revenue Sharing payments. Riding this pendulum is getting wearying. Full support is needed now if we are to continue acquisition on the prairies.

In 25 years one gets accustom to changing priorities and learns "flexibility", accepting new jobs and expanding roles, and willingly. We have done a lot of new and exciting things in 1987, but not without a lot of sacrifice by, and stress to employees. More understanding, support and forgiveness relative to less important matters sure would have made the job easier, and more enjoyable.

On a positive note, the seed cleaning/equipment storage building just finished is testimony to good support for a field station need. Historically, the district has used a continually diminishing inventory of Job Corps buildings on the Tamarac NWR for its native grass seed drying and cleaning operations. A plan to move one of those buildings, a gymnasium to the WMD Headquarters, was changed upon a Regional commitment to transfer the building to the Frazee School District. A subsequently funded ARMMS project resulted in a facility at the Headquarters site for about \$87,000.

The efficiency to our native seed harvest operation will be greatly improved, no longer will we turn and dry seed at three sites, some 15 miles from the Headquarters area. In spite of the inefficiency, the 1987 harvest of 12 ton of cleaned seed, provided savings of about one quarter million dollars. Lots of improved wildlife cover on WPA's will occur over the next several years from that effort. Four other Service field stations have also used the "cleaner" and other agencies benefitted as well. District equipment will also now be sheltered. Thanks for the support.

Birds

Waterfowl Production Areas

Minnesota



Birds of Waterfowl Production Areas

Minnesota

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began the Small Wetlands Program in 1962. Since that time, some 125,000 acres of wildlife habitat have been preserved. These areas are known as Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA's). They are scattered throughout western Minnesota in a 28-county area. The average size is 200 acres for approximately 700 WPA's, but areas range in size from 30 to 2,000 acres.

WPA's represent a rich collection of wetlands, prairie, forest and other upland habitat combinations. Most areas are open throughout the year for bird watching and other nature-oriented recreation.

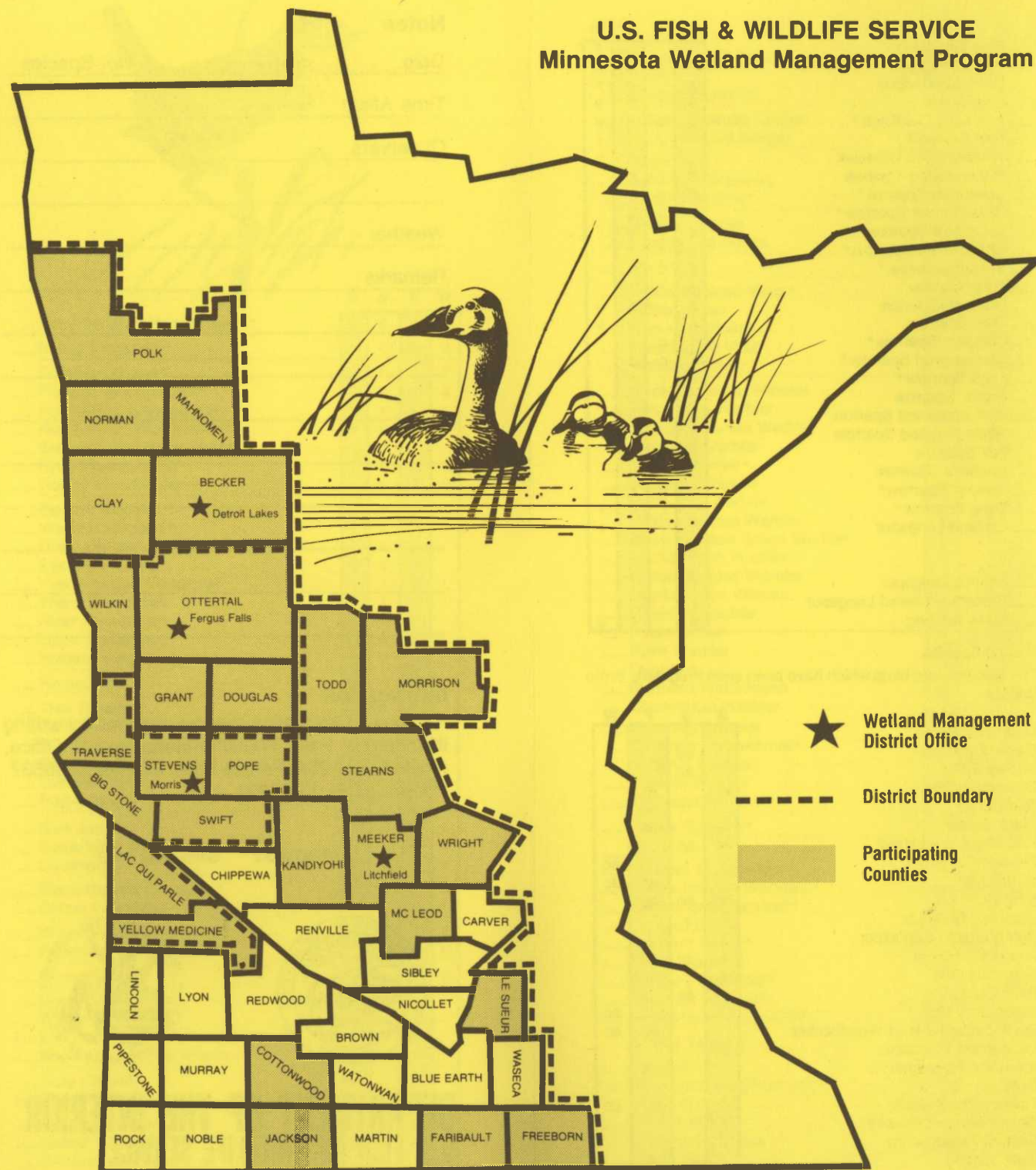
The following list of 266 bird species has been developed based on existing records for western Minnesota, and upon the knowledge of local and visiting ornithologists. This field list is arranged by order (solid lines) and family (dotted lines) according to the latest American Ornithological Union (AOU) "Checklist of North American Birds." Good birding!

S - Spring	March-May
s - Summer	June-August
F - Fall	September-November
W - Winter	December-February

a - abundant	present in large numbers
c - common	likely to be seen
u - uncommon	not always seen
r - rare	present only in some years
ac -accidental	seen at intervals of 2-5 years

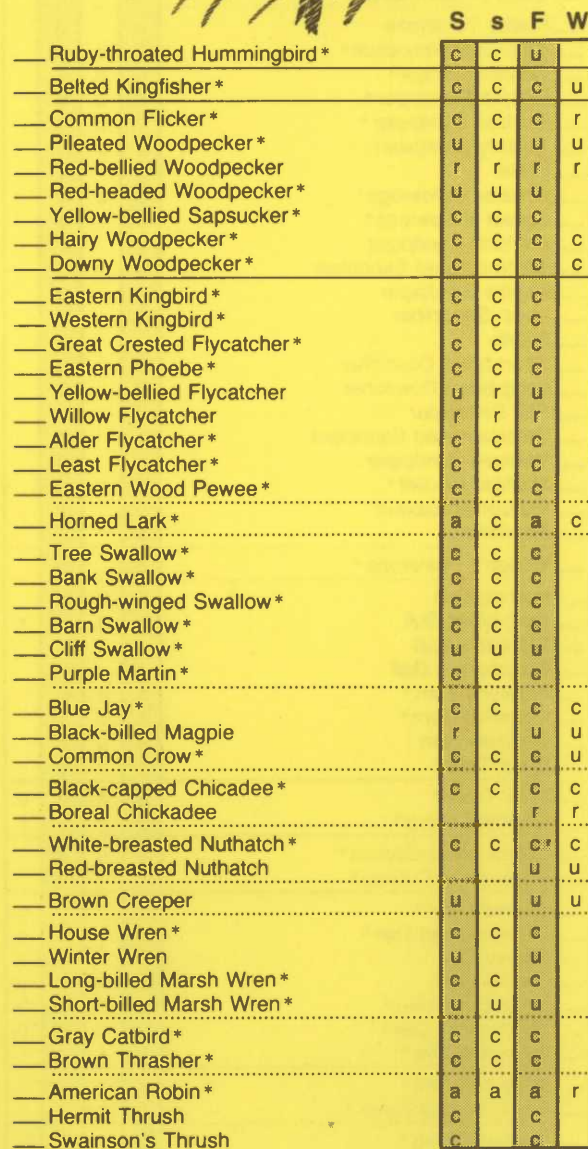
* Nests locally

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE Minnesota Wetland Management Program



	S	s	F	W
Common Loon *	c	u	c	
Red-necked Grebe *	u	u	u	
Horned Grebe	u	c	c	
Eared Grebe	u	r	r	
Western Grebe *	u	u	u	
Pied-billed Grebe *	c	c	c	r
White Pelican	u		u	
Double-crested Cormorant *	c	c	c	
Great Blue Heron *	c	c	c	r
Green Heron *	c	c	u	
Cattle Egret	r	r		
Great Egret *	c	c	u	
Black-crowned Night Heron *	c	c	c	
Least Bittern *	c	c	c	
American Bittern	c	c	c	
Whistling Swan	c		c	
Canada Goose *	c	c	a	c
White-fronted Goose	r	r	r	
Snow Goose	c		c	
Mallard *	a	c	a	u
Black Duck	r		u	
Gadwall *	u	u	c	
Pintail *	c	u	c	
Green-winged Teal *	u	u	c	
Blue-winged Teal *	c	a	a	
American Wigeon *	c	u	c	
Northern Shoveler *	c	c	c	
Wood Duck *	c	c	c	
Redhead *	c	c	c	
Ring-necked Duck *	c	u	c	
Canvasback *	c	c	c	
Greater Scaup	u		u	
Lesser Scaup *	a	c	a	
Common Goldeneye	c		c	
Bufflehead	c			
Oldsquaw	r		r	
White-winged Scoter			r	
Ruddy Duck *	c	c	c	
Hooded Merganser *	u	r	u	
Common Merganser	c		c	
Red-breasted Merganser	u		u	
Turkey Vulture	r			
Goshawk			r	u
Sharp-shinned Hawk	c	r	c	r
Cooper's Hawk	c	r	c	r
Red-tailed Hawk *	c	c	c	
Broad-winged Hawk	c	c	c	
Swainson's Hawk	u		u	
Rough-legged Hawk	u			r
Golden Eagle	r		r	r
Bald Eagle	u		u	r
Marsh Hawk *	c	c	c	r
Osprey	r	r	r	
Merlin	u	u	u	
American Kestrel *	c	c	c	u
Ruffed Grouse *	c	c	c	c
Greater Prairie Chicken *	u	u	u	u

	S	s	F	W
Ring-necked Pheasant *	c	c	c	c
Gray Partridge *	c	c	c	c
Sandhill Crane	u		c	
Virginia Rail *	c	c	c	
Sora *	c	c	c	
Yellow Rail *	r	r	r	
American Coot *	a	c	a	r
Semipalmated Plover	u		u	
Piping Plover	u		u	
Killdeer *	a	a	a	r
American Golden Plover	c			
Black-bellied Plover	c		c	
Ruddy Turnstone	u		u	
American Woodcock *	c	c	c	
Common Snipe *	c	c	c	
Upland Sandpiper *	u	u	u	
Spotted Sandpiper *	c	c	c	
Solitary Sandpiper	c	c	c	
Willet	u			
Greater Yellowlegs *	c	c	c	
Lesser Yellowlegs *	a	r	a	
Pectoral Sandpiper	c		c	
White-rumped Sandpiper	u		u	
Baird's Sandpiper	c		u	
Least Sandpiper	c		c	
Dunlin	u		u	
Short-billed Dowitcher	u		u	
Long-billed Dowitcher	u		u	
Stilt Sandpiper	u		u	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	c		a	
Western Sandpiper	u		u	
Marbled Godwit *	c	c	u	
Hudsonian Godwit	u		r	
Sanderling	u		u	
Wilson's Phalarope *	c		u	
Herring Gull	u	u	u	
Ring-billed Gull	a	a	a	r
Franklin's Gull	a	a	a	
Bonaparte's Gull	c		c	
Forster's Tern *	c	c	c	
Common Tern *	c	c	c	
Caspian Tern	u	u	u	
Black Tern *	a	a	a	
Rock Dove *	a	a	a	a
Mourning Dove *	a	a	a	r
Yellow-billed Cuckoo *	u	u	u	
Black-billed Cuckoo *	u	u	u	
Screech Owl *	u	u	u	u
Great Horned Owl *	c	c	c	c
Snowy Owl	u		u	u
Barred Owl *	u	u	u	u
Long-eared Owl *	c	c	c	u
Short-eared Owl *	u	u	u	u
Saw-whet Owl *	r	r	r	r
Whip-poor-will	r	r	r	
Common Nighthawk *	c	c	c	
Chimney Swift *	c	c	c	



	S	s	F	W
— Pine Grosbeak			r	r
— Hoary Redpoll			u	u
— Common Redpoll	c		c	c
— Pine Siskin	u	r	u	u
— American Goldfinch *	c	c	r	r
— Red Crossbill			c	u
— White-winged Crossbill			u	u
— Rufous-sided Towhee	u	r	u	
— Savannah Sparrow *	c	c	c	
— Grasshopper Sparrow *	u	u	u	
— LeConte's Sparrow *	u	u	u	
— Sharp-tailed Sparrow *	r	r	r	
— Vesper Sparrow *	c	c	c	
— Lark Sparrow	r	r	r	
— Dark-eyed Junco	a		a	u
— Tree Sparrow	c		c	c
— Chipping Sparrow *	c	c	c	
— Clay-colored Sparrow *	c	c	c	
— Field Sparrow *	r	r	r	
— Harris' Sparrow	c		c	
— White-crowned Sparrow	u		u	
— White-throated Sparrow	c		c	
— Fox Sparrow	c		c	
— Lincoln's Sparrow	u		u	
— Swamp Sparrow *	c	c	c	
— Song Sparrow *	c	c	c	r
— Lapland Longspur	c		c	r
— Smith's Longspur	r	r	r	
— Chestnut-collared Longspur	r		r	
— Snow Bunting	u		c	c

The following are birds which have been seen irregularly in the WPA's:

	S	s	F	W
Little Blue Heron*		r		
Cattle Egret		ac		
Snowy Egret		ac		
Cinnamon Teal	ac		ac	
Surf Scoter			ac	
Black Scoter			ac	
Red-shouldered Hawk	ac	ac		
Ferruginous Hawk	r	r	r	ac
Gyr Falcon			ac	ac
King Rail	ac	ac	ac	
Common Gallinule	r	r		
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	r		r	
American Avocet	r		r	
Glaucous Gull	r		r	
Barn Owl*		ac		
Great Gray Owl				ac
Black-backed 3-toed Woodpecker			ac	ac
Olive-sided Flycatcher	r			
Vermilion Flycatcher			ac	
Gray Jay				r
Townsend's Solitaire				ac
Golden-winged Warbler	r			
Eastern Meadowlark	r			
Lark Bunting	r		r	

Notes

Date _____ No. Species _____

Time Afield _____

Observers _____

Weather _____

Remarks _____

Information

Additional information may be obtained by writing the Fergus Falls Wetland Management Office, Route 1, Box 26A, Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56537. Phone: (218) 739-2291

RF-32580-2 September 1979



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

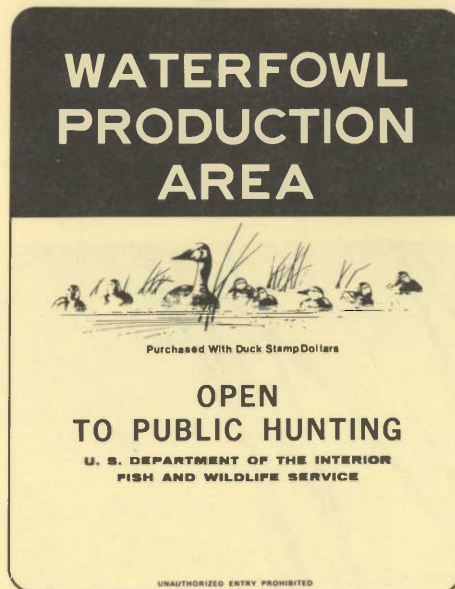
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A Message to Hunters

Using Waterfowl Production Areas



YOU ARE ON A



Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) are public lands purchased by the Federal government. The money comes from the Duck Stamp you bought. WPAs, scattered through the western prairie areas of Minnesota, are all that remain of a vast sea of grasslands interspersed with marshes. They are dedicated to the perpetuation of this country's waterfowl heritage.

In almost every case, WPAs are open to public hunting of upland and big game as well as waterfowl. These areas serve as a reminder of the concern felt by the American sportsman for the future of this once vast resource.

Waterfowl must have their basic needs met for them to survive. Most important is habitat for courting, nesting, feeding and resting during migration. And they need older, experienced birds in the adult population to nest and reproduce successfully in the spring.

Minnesota waterfowl need your help. 1) Waterfowl habitat must be protected from drainage and damage. Today's economics makes drainage of wetlands more likely than ever. Misuse of wetlands by a few hunters and others is causing public problems for those agencies responsible for wetland acquisition and management. 2) Vegetation is damaged by vehicles on WPAs. This



damages the grassy nesting habitat that has been purchased just for waterfowl production! 3) Excessive hunting pressure on some WPAs, or in certain locales, creates an overkill of locally produced ducks, especially hens. This means nesting next spring may not be as successful in producing lots of ducklings since there are fewer hens.

What can you do? Know the rules for a start—they are listed on the other side of this leaflet. But a true sportsman does more than just obey the law. For instance, make sure you are on the right side of the boundary. Let's not cause any problems for our neighbors. That will hurt our efforts to preserve needed wetlands for waterfowl production.

Be careful not to crush or beat down the vegetation. Tire tracks destroy the nesting cover and frequently encourage weeds to grow. They may also help lead predators to nesting hens. And that means fewer ducklings for future hunting.



Quality hunting is more than just birds in the bag. If this WPA is full of hunters, try another one with less hunting pressure on the birds. Respect the few WPAs that are closed to waterfowl hunting. Remember that a strong local duck population, protected from heavy gunning pressure, will produce more ducks for future years.

With more hunting pressure being placed on these fragile areas, it's the sportsman's responsibility to help us acquire and take care of these areas.

Turn in violators. They are stealing from all of us.

And of course, clean up after yourselves. Money spent on repair and clean-up is money taken away from the wildlife.



REGULATIONS

- All motor vehicles, including snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles, are prohibited except in designated parking areas.
- Hunting is subject to all applicable state and federal laws. Steel shot must be used in accordance with current regulations.
- Firearms are permitted only during open hunting seasons.
- Do not pick or destroy any living vegetation.
- Littering is prohibited.
- Camping and overnight use is prohibited.
- Fires are prohibited-use matches with care.
- Contact me for information and free county maps of WPAs. I want to hear your suggestions.

Rollin Siegfried

Rollin Siegfried
Fergus Falls Wetland
Management District
Route 1, Box 76
East Highway 210
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
Tel. 218/739-2291

Alfred L. Radtke

Alfred L. Radtke
Morris Wetland
Management District
Route 1, Box 208
Mill Dam Road
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Tel. 612/589-1001

Howard A. Lipke

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Detroit Lakes Wetland
Management District
Route 3, Box 47D
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
Tel. 218/847-4431

Matthias A. Kerschbaum

Matthias A. Kerschbaum
Litchfield Wetland
Management District
305 North Sibley
Litchfield, MN 55355
Tel. 612/693-2849

TIP

**TURN IN POACHERS
CALL**

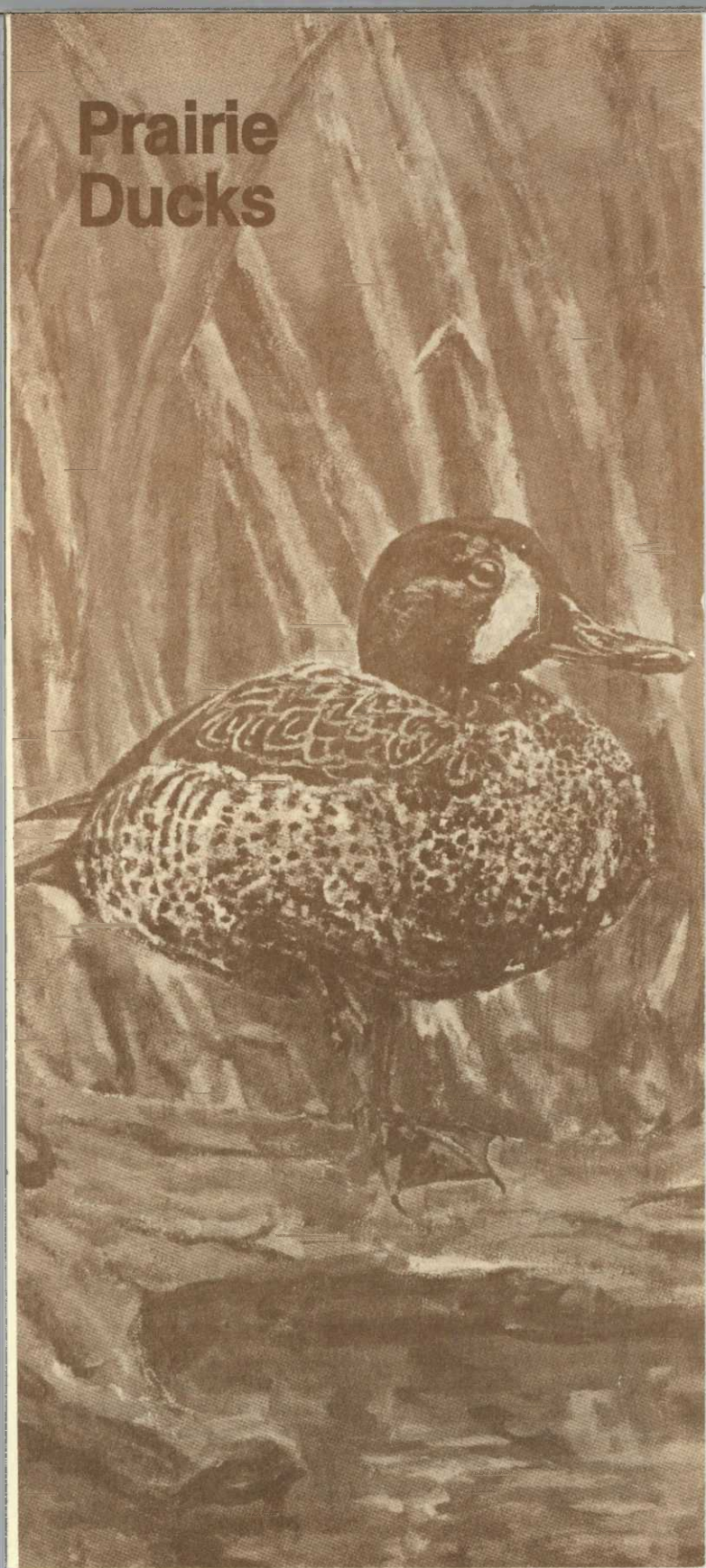
800-652-9093

**OR ONE OF THE MANAGERS
LISTED ABOVE**

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.



Prairie Ducks



Prairie Ducks

Fifteen species of ducks commonly nest in the prairie pothole region. Most abundant are mallard, pintail, and blue-winged teal. American wigeon, redhead, canvasback and ruddy duck are also common nesters.

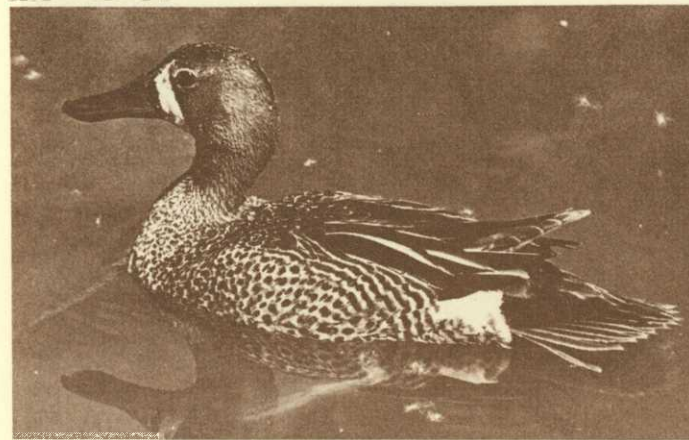
If we aren't worried about being too "scientific," we can divide prairie ducks into two groups—surface-feeders and divers.

Surface-feeding ducks, also called **dabblers** or **puddle ducks**, prefer smaller, shallow marshes, lakes and ponds. They feed by skimming the surface of the water at the shore's edge or by "tipping," tail up, in shallow places, reaching down for foods at the mucky bottom.

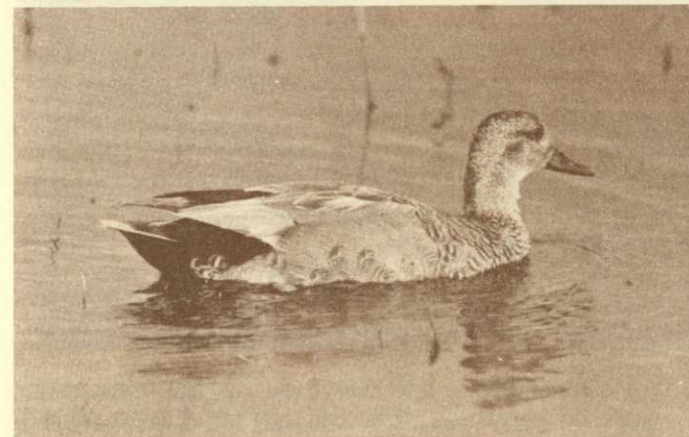


These surface-feeding ducks take flight directly from the water's surface, some species leaping several feet into the air. Their legs are set farther forward than those of other ducks, so they can maneuver on the ground fairly well. This makes them versatile ducks, capable of using various habitats—tipping in marsh shallows, moderate "dives" to underwater tubers, and food excursions ashore. They eat submerged and above-water aquatic plants, aquatic and land insects, nuts and seeds, farm crops, grasses and weeds.

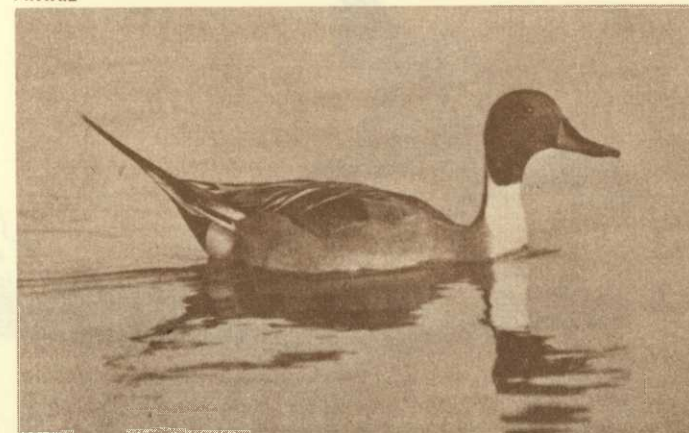
BLUE-WINGED TEAL



GADWALL



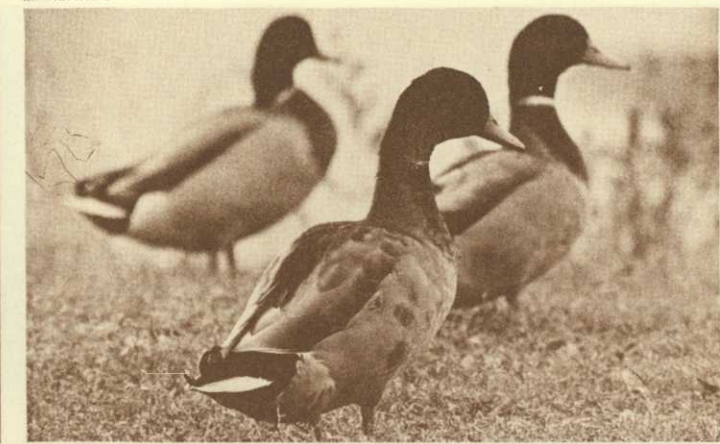
PINTAIL



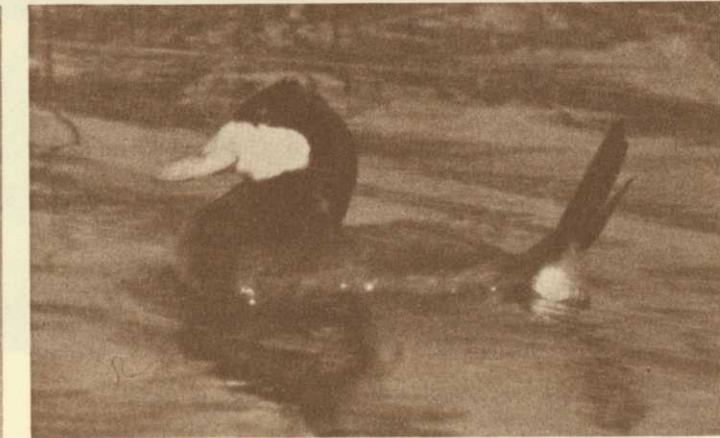
As a group, most surface-feeding prairie ducks choose to nest in grassy, upland cover, within several hundred yards of a marsh. They also use hayfields or clumps of brush.

Nest construction accompanies the process of egg laying and incubation. The hen lays in a depression in the ground, then bends and tugs at tall weeds

MALLARDS



RUDDY DUCK



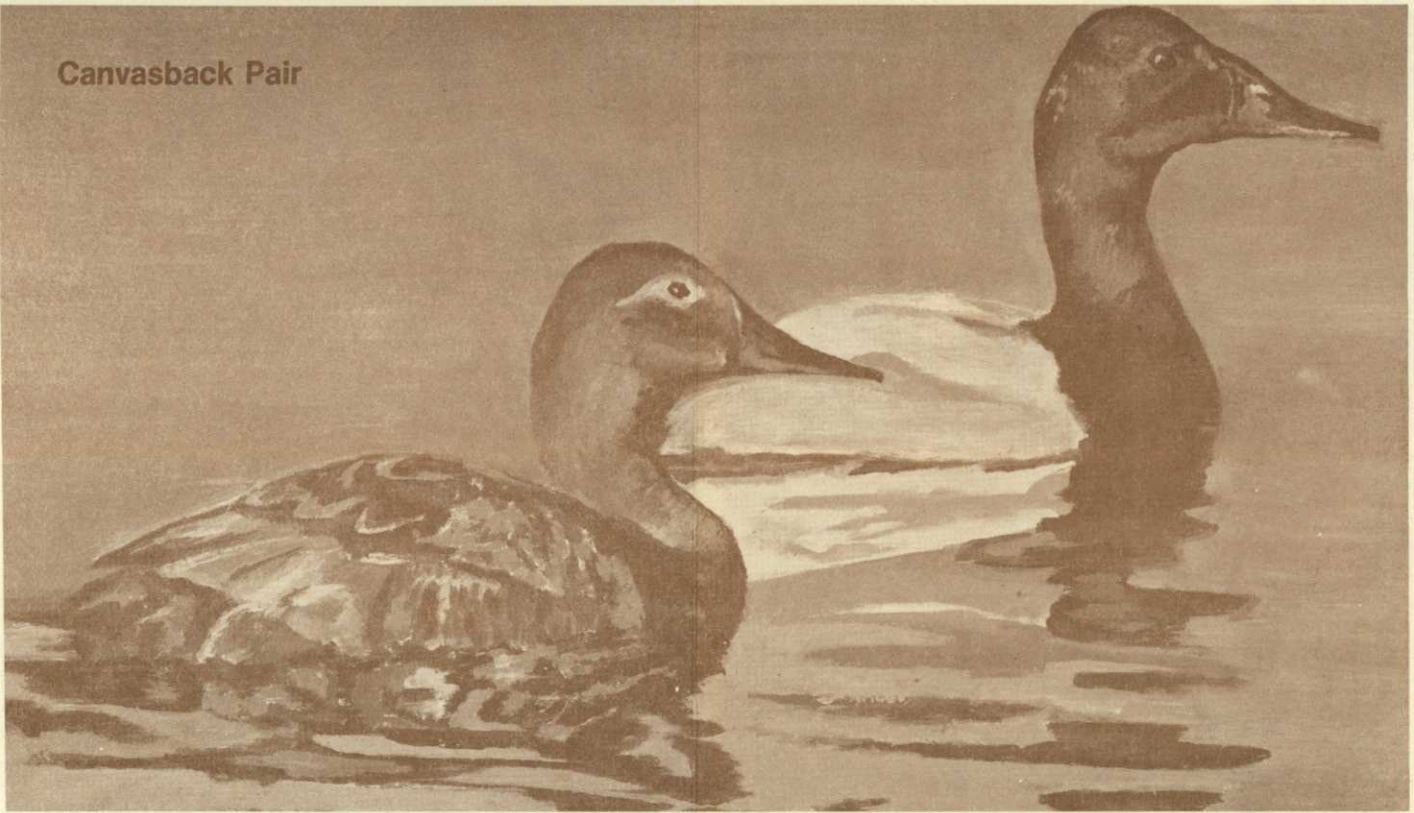
NORTHERN SHOVELER



and grass that are within her reach. Nests are usually well concealed by the middle of the incubation period.

Surface-feeding ducks common in the Minnesota prairie region are mallard, gadwall, pintail, blue-winged teal, and shoveler.

Canvasback Pair



Diving ducks have specified habitat needs—they are not as adaptable as the dabblers. They dive underwater to feed, and are aided by larger feet and shorter legs which are set farther to the rear of their bodies than the legs of dabblers. Diving ducks must “skitter,” or run, over the water’s surface to take flight. Leg position also makes them awkward on land, which they do not frequent as often as their dabbler relatives.

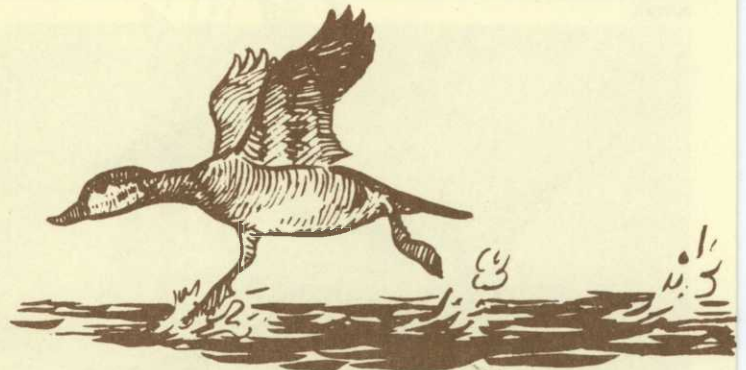
Divers feed mainly on aquatic foods, both plant and animal. Their diets include seeds, tubers, other plant parts and aquatic animal life.

Many divers nest over the water in clumps of reeds or cattails. Unlike the surface-feeding ducks, divers have their nest constructed before they start to lay eggs.

Diving ducks common in the Minnesota prairie region are canvasback, redhead and ruddy duck.

Although a **ruddy duck** dives underwater to feed on plants just like other diving ducks, it really belongs to a distinct group most closely related to tropical masked ducks. Its stubby legs are placed so far back on its body that it is almost helpless on land. Ruddy ducks nest in over-water reeds and, unlike

the other dabbler and diving ducks, the male stays with the hen throughout the egg incubation period.

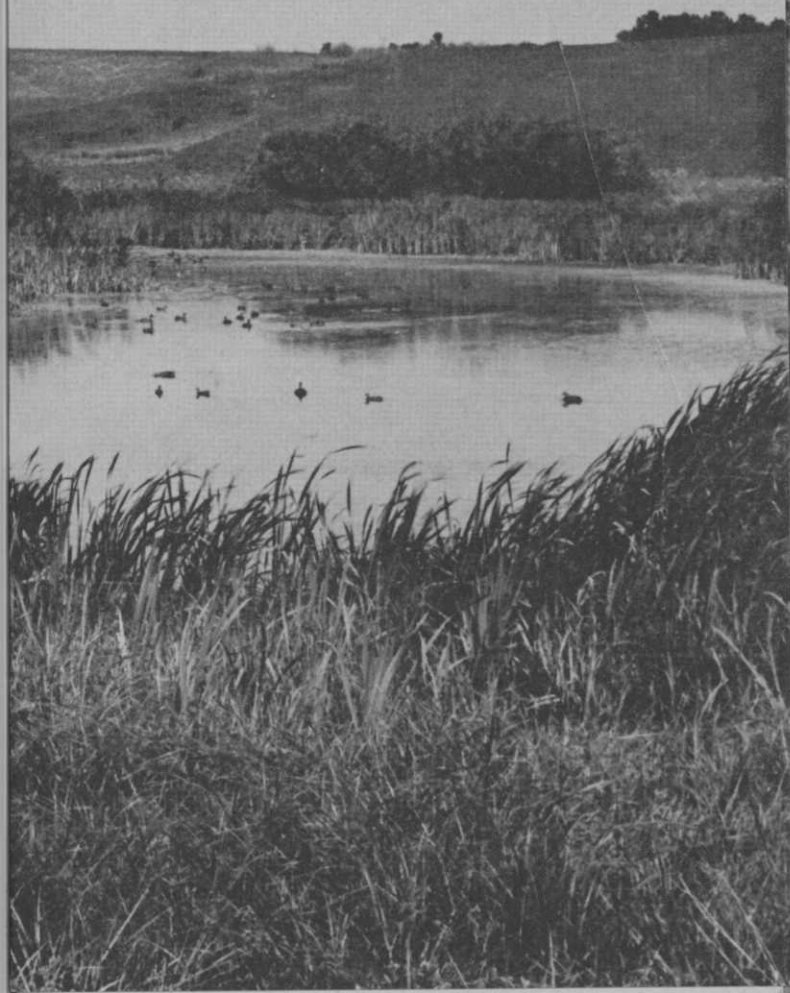


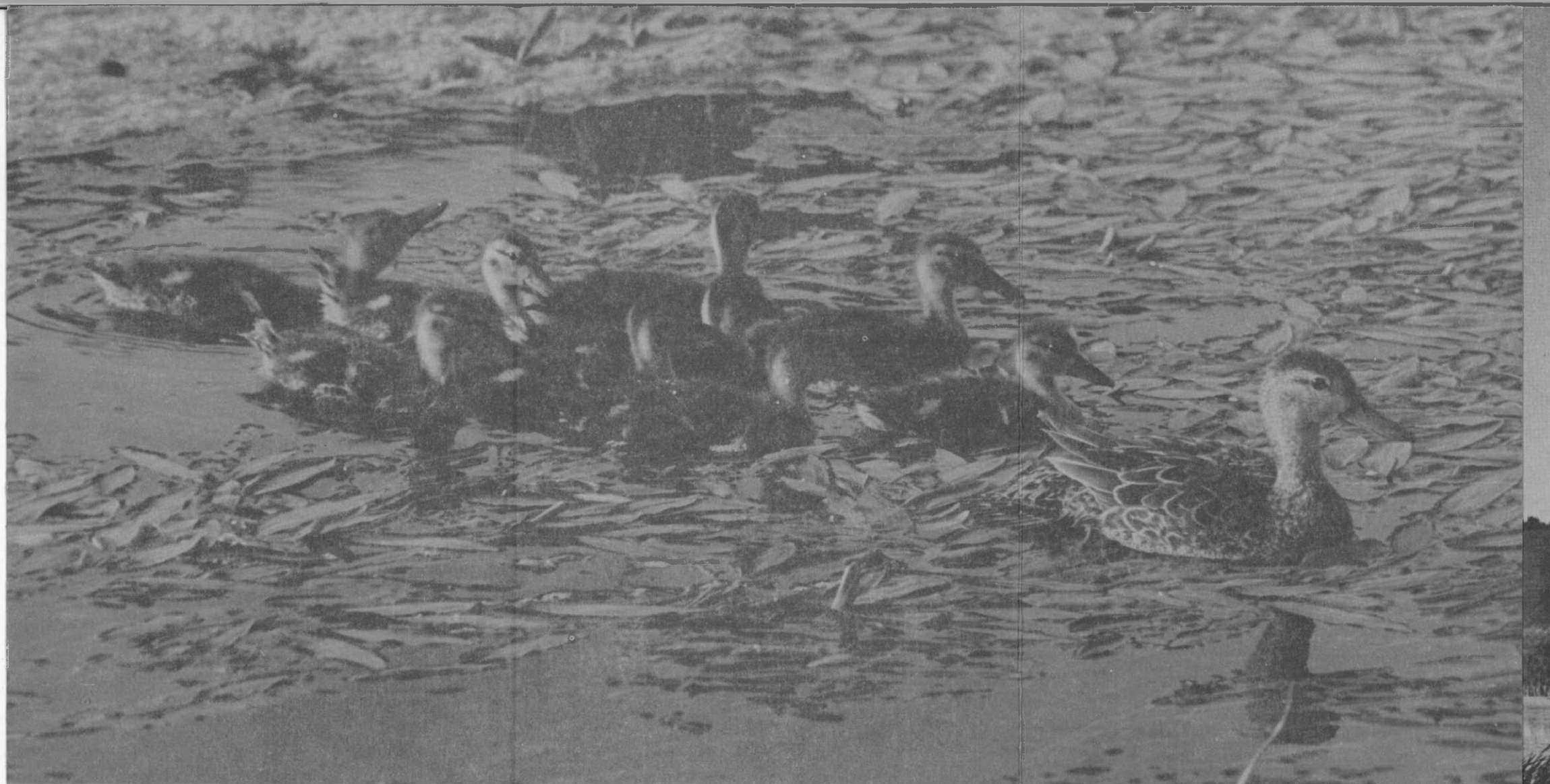
As the Nation’s principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Waterfowl Production Areas Minnesota





WPA wetlands can vary in size from less than a tenth of an acre to one hundred or more acres of water area. Ranging from temporary sheet water which lasts only a few days in early spring to permanent lakes, marshes and potholes, a variety of wetlands meets the varying breeding, nesting and migration needs of many waterfowl species. One marsh usually cannot supply all the requirements of a nesting pair of ducks for the complete production cycle — from courtship to nesting, egg incubation, and raising ducklings to flight stage. Waterfowl biologists have learned that a complex or collection of wetlands, of varying sizes and depths as found in the Prairie Pothole Region, is needed to provide the food, cover and solitude needed by breeding ducks.

WPAs DO MORE THAN RAISE DUCKS

Scientists are just starting to learn about the importance of regional wetland systems — that collection of marshes waterfowl need to breed successfully. Recent studies have examined the benefits to man from flood control, groundwater recharge, pollution and sediment filtration, shoreline erosion protection, soil evaporation rate reduction. All these can affect an area's crops, industry, drinking water, and general quality of life. Although research results are not in yet, these studies suggest there may be significant rewards in preserving wetlands — benefits that go far beyond wildlife preservation.

Wetlands are one of the most productive kinds of wildlife habitat. Besides prairie ducks, they are home to many other kinds of birds such as rails, terns, kingfishers, herons, sandpipers and egrets. The excellent cover in the surrounding upland grass is important for deer, upland game birds, hawks, and many smaller birds such as larks, wrens, and bobolinks. Furbearers including weasels, mink, fox and muskrat are common in WPA habitat. When connected to lakes or streams with fish populations, wetlands may also be important fish spawning areas, especially for northern pike.

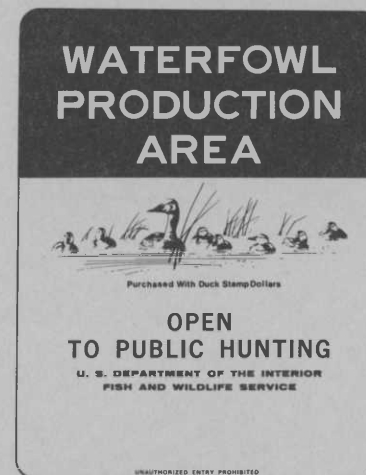


The highly fertile soils in western and southwestern Minnesota are a result of glaciers and centuries of decomposed, deep-rooted, tallgrass prairie plants. This creates prime breeding grounds for prairie ducks and productive agricultural acres.



A bird's-eye view of western Minnesota reveals a landscape pitted with thousands of small marshes. This is the famous Prairie Pothole Region. It stretches northwest into the grasslands of Canada and is the most important nesting ground for ducks in North America. This is where you will find an important Federal wetland preservation program aimed at producing more waterfowl.

WHAT ARE WPAs?



This sign marks the boundary of a Waterfowl Production Area.

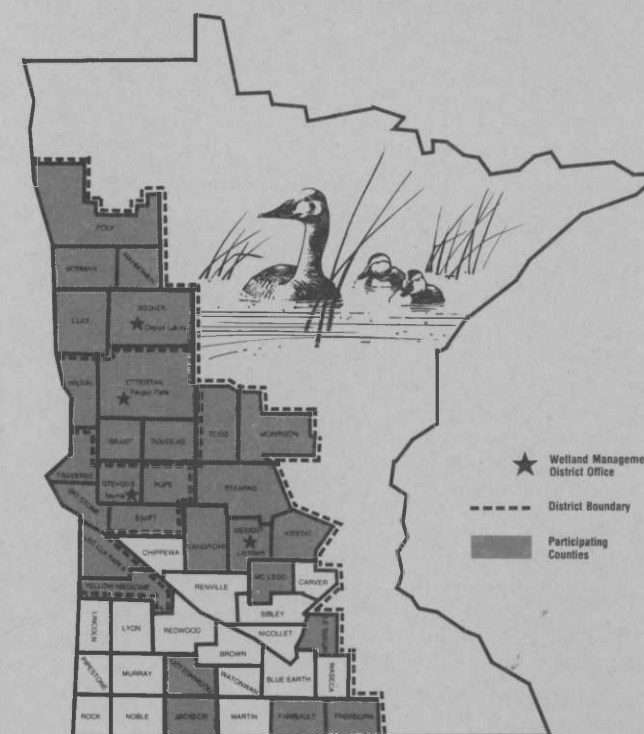
Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) are primarily prairie wetlands with associated uplands managed to provide nesting areas for waterfowl. Drainage and cultivation of many small wetlands prompted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to begin a program to acquire small wetlands in 1962. This program preserves high quality nesting areas for declining waterfowl populations. These valuable prairie wetlands are bought from willing landowners who, in many cases, want their marshes preserved and managed for this purpose. Acquisition money comes from the sale of "Duck Stamps" to waterfowl hunters. Today, some 125,000 acres of wildlife habitat has been preserved in western Minnesota under this Federal program. There are 700 WPAs located in 22 countries.

WPA management involves a variety of activities, depending on the property's soils, topography and past history. Management is aimed at

encouraging the most favorable wetland and upland food and cover for waterfowl production.

Drained wetlands are restored by plugging ditches or building small water control structures. On the uplands, native grasses, legumes and introduced grasses are seeded to provide dense nesting cover for ducks and other wildlife. Native grasses may be managed by controlling burning, haying or grazing. Sometimes uplands are leased to farmers for cultivation with the agreement that they will leave part of the crop standing for winter feed and cover for resident game.

WPAs ARE AN IMPORTANT NATIONAL RESOURCE



Countless thousands of pothole ponds and marshes were left by the glaciers over a broad band of northern grasslands. This is called the Prairie Pothole Region and it covers 300,000 square miles. 50% of the ducks in North America are raised each year in this region, even though it contains only 10% of the continent's wetlands. It is here that fertile wetland waters and soils which provide abundant, high protein food for your growing ducklings.

WPAs ARE FOR PEOPLE



Whether you are a hunter, trapper, birdwatcher, photographer, or family looking for open space to hike, WPAs are great places to observe and enjoy wildlife and the outdoors.

WPAs are open in the fall to public hunting, except where occasionally posted otherwise. Waterfowl, upland game birds and big game may be hunted and furbearers trapped in accordance with Federal and State laws.

Nature study and appreciation on WPAs are popular activities for individuals, families and school groups. Bird watching, marsh investigation, identification of remnant native prairie grass, or wildlife population studies offer exciting entry to the complex world of prairie wetlands. Some WPAs have interpretive trails and leaflets to help visitors learn more about wetland wildlife and ecology.

General recreation activities such as hiking and cross-country skiing are also welcome on WPAs. Each season of the year offers a different experience of wildlife and vegetation life-cycles — in the solitude of open prairie spaces.



SOME IMPORTANT RULES TO FOLLOW

All motor vehicles including snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles, are prohibited unless specific areas are posted as open to this use. Please use designated parking areas.

Be careful not to crush or beat down the vegetation. Tire tracks destroy duck nesting cover and may help lead predators to nesting waterfowl.

Respect the neighbors' private property. Make sure you are on the correct side of the boundary line.

Hunting and trapping are subject to all applicable Federal and State laws. Firearms are permitted only during open hunting seasons or as authorized by State regulations.

Camping and overnight use is prohibited.

Fires are prohibited.

DO YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Each of the four District Offices, shown on the map, is assigned to manage WPAs in several counties. They have special leaflets which you will find useful such as bird lists, hunting regulations, and maps.

The District staff may also have specialists in the areas of wildlife, soils or botany who would be pleased to help answer questions or suggest WPAs for specific study pursuits or interests.

Interpretive displays and leaflets at some of the offices may help your understanding of prairie wetlands, waterfowl, and wildlife management.

★ **Detroit Lakes**
R.R.#3, Box 47 D
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
(218) 847-4431

★ **Morris**
Route 1, Box 208, Mill Dam Road
Morris, MN 56267
(612) 589-1001

★ **Fergus Falls**
Route 1, Box 76
East Highway 210
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
(218) 739-2291

★ **Litchfield**
305 N. Sibley
Litchfield, MN 55355
(612) 693-2849

We would like to meet you. Unlike other public lands with easily defined boundaries and entrance roads, our WPAs are spread over many counties, and are usually in remote areas. Because of this, we often do not know who our WPA visitors are; where they have come from; what activities they do on WPAs; and if their visit was rewarding. If you do not have time to stop at one of our Wetland Offices, write a note and let us know about your visit. Tell us what you saw and suggest how we can make your next WPA visit more enjoyable.

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K. Feedback

Of all the plans and planning completed at the field level, little is as important to the organized functioning of a field station as annual work planning. This effort details what will be done and how it will be accomplished. Timely completion of this task just prior to the beginning of the fiscal year is important. Prerequisites for annual work planning are receipt of work advices and a budget.

It is imperative that certain actions get underway early in the fiscal year to ensure an organized approach to accomplishing objectives. Some of these actions include submission of advanced procurement plans, requisitions, requests for hiring temporary personnel, development of contracts, etc.

The past two years, it has been 4-5 months into the fiscal year before budgets reached the field. The effect is to begin the year managing by "best guess", delay important fiscal decisions and amend previous submissions. Receipt of budgets has occurred at the beginning of the field season when the focus of attention should not be on hurried planning but rather accomplishing the objectives of the annual work plan. Timely receipt of budgets or at least a reliable planning allowance would do much to organize the function of the field office and to some extent the Regional Office.

Concern express in the 1981 Feedback section about key issues important to the future of acquisition included: "continued easement enforcement, in lieu of taxes, and the noxious weed issue". Shortage of acquisition funds has limited our progress in some years since that time.

The following quote was taken from the 1982 Annual Narrative Report:

"Working relationships with the citizens and local governments have been bolstered by continued communication, an improving record on cover improvement and corresponding weed control, plus significantly increased in lieu of tax payments to the counties due to reappraisals. However, the FWS is not in a position to be opportunistic in the acquisition of fee area roundouts, or more widespread easement activity around WPAs. It is unfortunate that the pendulum cannot swing upward for all of the factors affecting acquisition success at the same time."

In 1987, funds were available for new acquisition, and weeds and lack of respect for wetland easements were not issues. What was the issue? - low (below the 100% level) Revenue Sharing payments and a steady downward trend since 1982 (91-77-74-64-60%). The end result? Becker County, where most willing sellers of land are, and where Hamden Slough NWR is proposed, has decided to not certify any fee tracts for Service acquisition efforts. A second county has stated, "short Revenue Sharing payments" as a reason in their not certifying a Mahnomon County wetland easement. Easements do not even diminish local government taxing capabilities. Government does not present a very convincing argument that wetlands and acquisition are important values/needs when it will not provide 100 percent Revenue Sharing payments. Riding this pendulum is getting wearying. Full support is needed now if we are to continue acquisition on the prairies.

In 25 years one gets accustomed to changing priorities and learns "flexibility", accepting new jobs and expanding roles, and willingly. We have done a lot of new and exciting things in 1987, but not without a lot of sacrifice by, and stress to employees. More understanding, support and forgiveness relative to less important matters sure would have made the job easier, and more enjoyable.

On a positive note, the seed cleaning/equipment storage building just finished is testimony to good support for a field station need. Historically, the district has used a continually diminishing inventory of Job Corps buildings on the Tamarac NWR for its native grass seed drying and cleaning operations. A plan to move one of those buildings, a gymnasium to the WMD Headquarters, was changed upon a Regional commitment to transfer the building to the Frazee School District. A subsequently funded ARMMS project resulted in a facility at the Headquarters site for about \$87,000.

The efficiency to our native seed harvest operation will be greatly improved, no longer will we turn and dry seed at three sites, some 15 miles from the Headquarters area. In spite of the inefficiency, the 1987 harvest of 12 ton of cleaned seed, provided savings of about one quarter million dollars. Lots of improved wildlife cover on WPA's will occur over the next several years from that effort. Four other Service field stations have also used the "cleaner" and other agencies benefitted as well. District equipment will also now be sheltered. Thanks for the support.