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TREMPEALEAU NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Trempealeau, Wisconsin

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Calendar Year 1988

U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wildlife Refuge System

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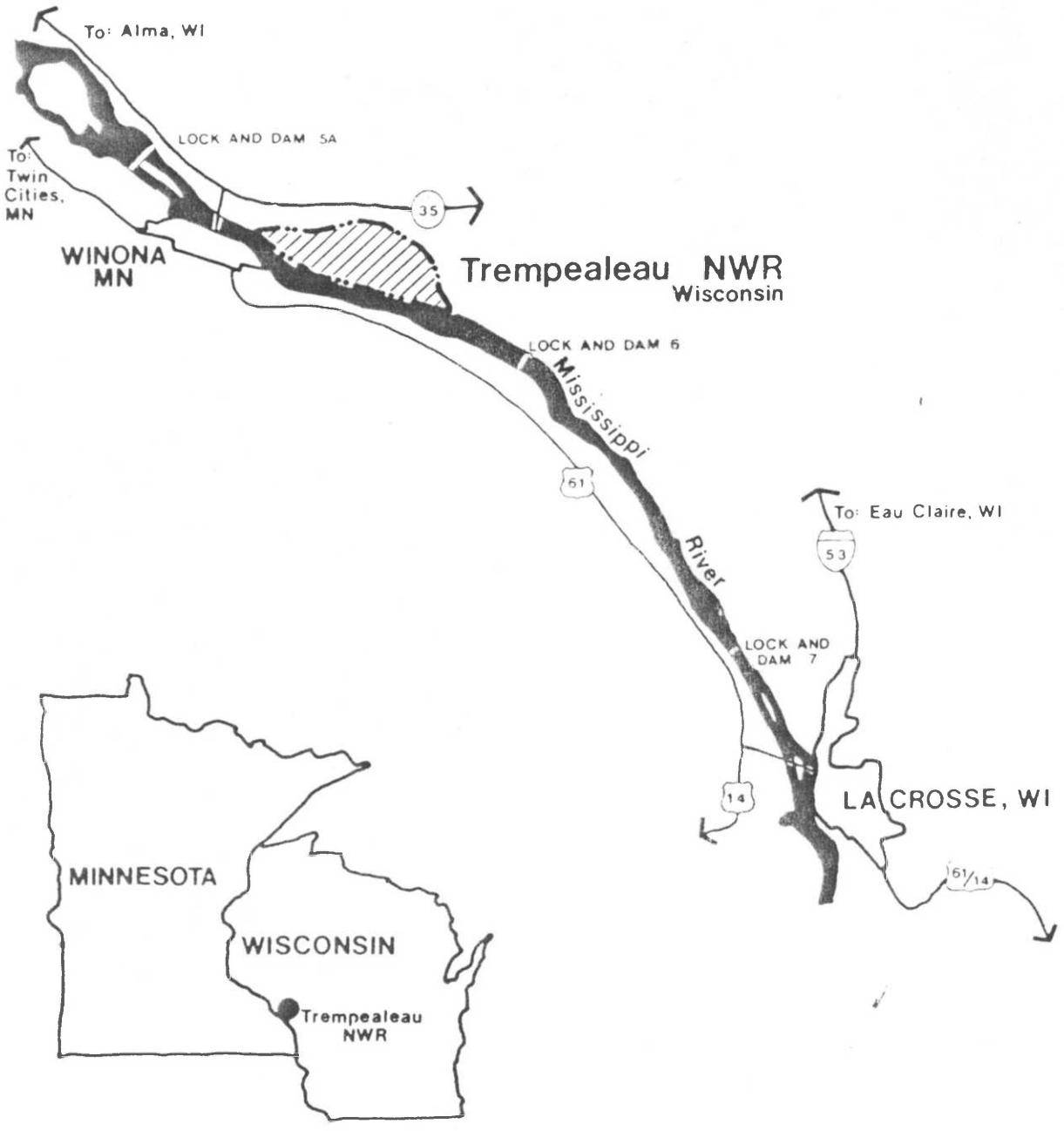
Robert F Bartel	4/12/89	James R. Lennartson	4/18/89
Refuge Manager	Date	Complex Supervisor	Date
Edward S Crozier	4/21/89	John R. Eadie	5/1/89
Wildlife Associate Manager	Date	Regional Office Approval	Date

Location


To: Alma, WI
LOCK AND DAM 5A
To: Twin Cities, MN
35
WINONA MN
Trempealeau NWR
Wisconsin
LOCK AND DAM 6
Mississippi River
61
To: Eau Claire, WI
53
LOCK AND DAM 7
14
LA CROSSE, WI
61/14
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
Trempealeau NWR

INTRODUCTION

1. Location

The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge is located in southwestern Trempealeau and southeastern Buffalo Counties, Wisconsin. La Crosse, Wisconsin, a city of about 50,000 people, lies about 25 miles to the south. Winona, Minnesota, located just across the Mississippi River, has a population of about 25,000. Trempealeau Refuge adjoins both Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and Perrot State Park lands.

2. Topography

Trempealeau Refuge lies within the floodplain of the Mississippi River flanked by forested bluffs rising 400 feet above the valley floor. The refuge includes a 700-acre centrally located upland portion consisting of rolling sand prairies with scattered groves of oaks and planted pine plantations. This upland portion is surrounded by a large shallow lake created by railroad dikes and barrier dikes built around the turn of the century. These dikes protect the Trempealeau pool from floodwaters from the adjacent Mississippi and Trempealeau Rivers.

3. History and points of Interest

Prior to 1979 the refuge pool which includes nearly all of the significant wetlands on the property was owned and managed by the Delta Fish and Fur Corporation. The operation included commercial harvest of both rough and game fish, furbearer trapping, waterfowl hunting leases, and cash-crop farming and cattle grazing in bottomland areas.

The Mississippi River Valley in the refuge area has a rich and varied history. Small river towns are unique with many residents making a portion of their living through commercial fishing and furbearer trapping. The river provides a tremendous resource for recreationists engaged in fishing, hunting, boating, camping, sightseeing, etc.

4. Purpose for Establishing the Refuge

The original 706.9 acre portion of the Trempealeau Refuge established by Executive Order in 1936 was set aside as "a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife." With purchase of the former Delta Fish and Fur Farm in 1979 under Land and Water Conservation Act funds, the purposes of the refuge were broadened to provide for public educational and recreational benefits.

Strategically located within the Mississippi River migration corridor, Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge will become more important as a resting and feeding area for waterfowl as surrounding habitats on private lands are altered or destroyed.

5. Size and Acquisition

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge includes 5,617 acres under existing ownership. The former Delta Fish and Fur Farm consisting of 4,778 acres, was purchased from Dairyland Power Cooperative for the sum of $876,000. An additional 132 acres were acquires through a land exchange with Dairyland Power for FWS property adjacent to their Alma, Wisconsin power plant.

6. Refuge Habitats

A breakdown of the acreage of the major habitat types on the refuge is as follows:

Habitat Type	Acres
Open Water	1,350
Marsh and aquatics	2,470
Wetland shrub and wet meadow	490
Upland forest	280
Bottomland forest	590
Upland shrubs	110
Grassland	320
Developed land	7
	5,617

7. Physical Facilities

Refuge headquarters is located on the property. Facilities include a combination office and shop building, three-stall garage, storage barn, and pumphouse.

8. Master Plan

A Master Plan for the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge was approved by the Director in April, 1983. A list of refuge projects from the Master Plan was submitted to the Corps of Engineers (COE) for possible funding under the Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program. All of the projects were prioritized along with the Service, State and COE projects during pool by pool work group meetings. At year end, one large project to compartmentalize the main pool still ranked high enough to warrant continued planning.

A. HIGHLIGHTS

RM Bob Bartels received a $500.00 Special Achievement award for work on Farm Bill Activities (Sec. E.1). ARM Jim Kline received a $250.00 Special Achievement Award for supervising construction of Challenge Grant Observation Deck. (Sec. E.1).

RM Bartels spent a good deal of time off refuge working on various provisions of Service involvement in 1988 Farm Bill (Sec. F.7).

For the third year a pair of bald eagles attempted to nest in a cottonwood tree on the refuge. They successfully raised a young, a first for the refuge. (Sec. G.2).

A youth waterfowl hunt was held one weekend in October (Sec. 4.8b).

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Table 1. Precipitation and Temperature Data 1988

Month	Precipitation (in inches) Precipitation	Normal	Snow	°F Max.	Min.
January	.97	1.02	16.5	46	-39
February	.25	.97	7.5	49	-27
March	1.91	2.02	2.0	62	6
April	3.23	2.60	2.0	77	15
May	1.53	4.15		95	28
June	2.66	4.87		102	35
July	2.30	3.98		101	46
August	4.60	3.72		103	41
September	5.23	3.23		92	36
October	.93	2.07		76	4
November	3.22	1.61	5.25	58	6
December	.77	1.13	4.75	46	-19
Annual Totals	20.60	31.37	38.00	103 (Extremes)	-39

The year began with moderate daytime temperatures and a significant amount of snow cover. By late February only a trace of snow remained. Precipitation was within the normal range until mid May. Then for 34 consecutive days there was no precipitation. Finally, on June 19, .43 inches was received. The below normal precipitation received during May, June, and July provided little relief as the temperatures soared from the mid 90's to the 103° range. Above normal precipitation was received in August and September. The first measurable snowfall in the fall was .25 followed by 3.25 inches in late November. Only 2.75 inches of snow remained on the ground at the end of the year. In spite of the dry year the refuge entrance road was flooded from March 1-14 and again March 26-28.

C. LAND ACQUISITION

3. Other

A land exchange proposed with Dairyland Power Cooperative and Upper Mississippi Refuge involving a management lease on the upper farm road had not been approved at year end. All parties agreed in

principle, but Regional Realty personnel were working on some title technicalities.

D. PLANNING

2. Management Planning

The Search and Rescue Plan was revised and approved.

3. Public Participation

A public meeting was held for interested trappers to discuss the new trapping fee system.

5. Research and Investigations

Dr. Ray Faber of St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota, continued work on nesting ecology of the double-crested cormorant rookery and black tern nesting population.

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

Maintenance worker Alan Rife accepted the maintenance position at Sherburne NWR, Minnesota and transferred effective July 25.

Joe Reid of northern Michigan entered on duty October 11, 1988 to assume the vacant maintenance worker position.

Refuge Manager Bob Bartels received a $500 Special Achievement Award for his time and efforts on the Farm Bill Program.

Assistant Refuge Manager Jim Kline received a $250 Special Achievement Award for supervising construction of the Challenge Grant observation deck.

Refuge personnel participated in a variety of training during the year as follows:

Course	Date	Hours	Staff Member
Law Enforcement Refresher	2/29 - 3/4	40	Bartels Kline
Step Test	1/26		Bartels Kline Rife
Pesticide Application Certification	12/19	8	Kline Rife
CPR Refresher	May	4	Bartels Kline Rife Medema
Computer Training	November	8	Bartels Medema

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge Staff

4-89 RFB

2. 3. 5. 1.

1. Robert F. Bartels, Refuge Manager, GS-11 PFT; EOD 3-1-87
2. James E. Kline, Refuge Manager (Assistant), GS-9, PFT; EOD 10-2-83
3. Alisa J. Medema, Secretary (Typing), GS-5, PPT; EOD 10-3-82
4. Allan W. Rife, Maintenance Worker, WG-7, PFT; Transferred 7-25-88
5. Joseph A. Reid, Maintenance Worker, WG-7, PFT; EOD 10-11-88

3. Other Manpower Programs

Randy Lilla of Vermilion College at Ely, Minnesota was employed as a work-study student from July 5 through September 13. Randy assisted the refuge staff on a variety of projects. However, his main task was woodduck banding. Randy also spent several weekends with the Wisconsin and Minnesota DNR wardens observing their patrols of the Mississippi River. Law Enforcement was his major course of study.

4. Volunteer Programs

Volunteers performed a variety of tasks such as wildlife surveys, landscaping and lawn mowing, nesting studies, woodduck banding, deer surveys, deer browse study, and leafy spurge study, etc.

This year, 47 individuals donated 817 work hours to our program. A volunteer recognition and potluck supper was held December 6 for interested volunteers who donated 10 or more hours. Each volunteer received a volunteer certificate. Special recognition was given to Bea Stellpflug as she received a 250 hour lapel pin (267 accumulative hours). Volunteers with less than 10 hours were sent a thank you letter for their contribution of time and efforts.

5. Funding

The breakdown of funding at the beginning of FY88 was as follows.

Basic Operations and Maintenance (1261 & 1262)	$132,200
April - Reduction for FERS	- 4,000
	128,200
1988 Additions:	
Computer System (Sec. I.6.)	10,000
Challenge Grant (Sec. I.1.)	2,000
Fire Equipment (Sec. I.4.)	1,300
Total FY 1988 Funding	$141,500

Figure 1 displays the distribution of the base funds. Without the welcome additions such as those received this year, there are very few discretionary dollars to handle even normal maintenance activities.

6. Safety

Station safety meetings were held monthly on a variety of topics. Station safety officer Kline furnished visual aids for each meeting and staff members took turns leading the discussions. The only accident of the year occurred when maintenance worker Rife sustained a severe back sprain while dismounting the farm tractor. The injury required chiropractic treatment and Mr Rife was off work for several days.

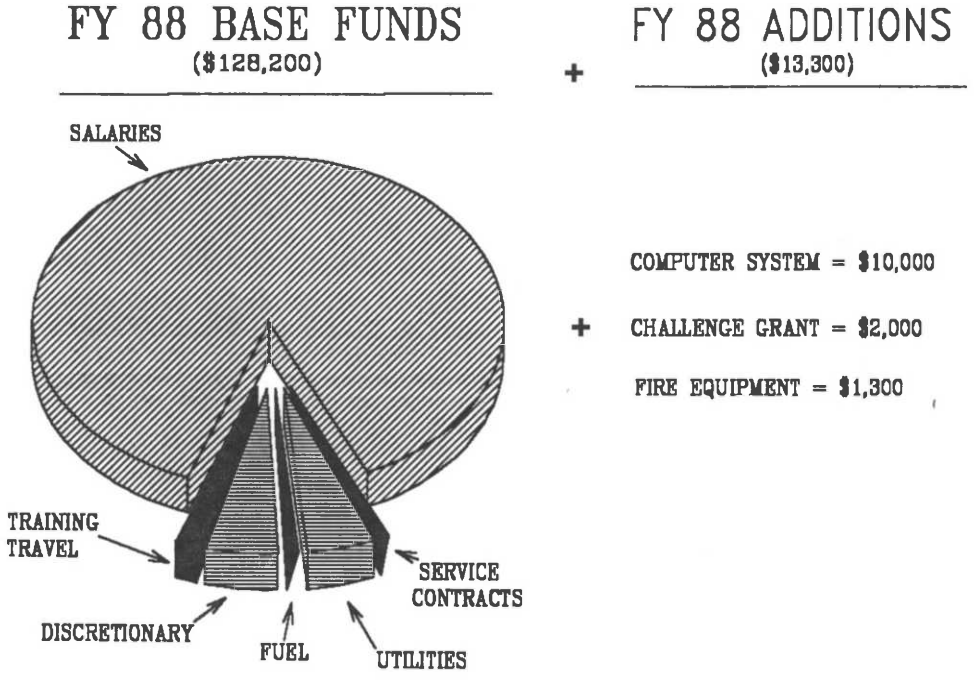


Figure 1. Distribution of Base Funds

7. Technical Assistance - Farm Bill

Refuge Manager Bartels was deeply involved in Region 3's Farmland Initiative, with 10% of his total man days spent on this activity. Trempealeau NWR was assigned a four county area of western Wisconsin in which to be the Farm Bill Contact station. Individual areas of involvement within these counties were as follows.

Farmer's Home Administration

There were 22 FmHA inventory farms within the assigned counties. All of the farms were field checked for wetlands and other significant resources. Conservation Easements to protect wetlands and riparian habitat were proposed and accepted on seven of the properties. One property had three restorable wetlands.

Conservation Reserve Program

In cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) in the four county work area, all of the 1,729 CRP contacts were office screened for restorable wetland basins. From the screening 94 contract areas were field checked for wetland restoration potential. In the end, none were found. This are of western Wisconsin is coulee country in a driftless area. Therefore, farm land qualifies for CRP due to excessive soil loss from steep slopes. Consequently, no restorable drained wetlands basins were located on CRP land.

Swampbuster

RM Bartels consulted with SCS District Conservationists on 12 wetland determinations for questionable areas. In addition Bartels was the Service representative reviewing 19 commenced determinations with respective county ASCS board. In only two instances did the county board reject the Service recommendations.

8. Other

May was a busy month for refuge staff relative to Regional Office staff visits and inspections.

Bonnie Shires and Tom Kelly, Personnel Management, conducted position audits of the four staff positions on Trempealeau NWR.

Mike Willett, CGS, conducted a review of the previous three years' procurement documents. No major discrepancies were noted. Two minor oversights were immediately corrected.

John Ellis and Jay Hammernick (new Division 1 Refuge Supervisor and assistant) and Jan Eldridge (Division 1 Biologist) made a familiarization visit to the refuge. This was their first official visit and it was good to get them on the ground.

Refuge Manager Bartels attended the Region 3 Project Leaders meeting at Agassiz NWR, Minnesota, in August.

Revenue Sharing Checks were presented to local township treasurers in April 1988. The majority of these funds cover Trempealeau Refuge lands located in Trempealeau and Buffalo Townships.

Revenue Sharing payments during the last five years are summarized as follows:

FY Year	Trempealeau	Buffalo	Total
1987	$3,947	$2,188	$6,135
1986	$4,020	$2,229	$6,249
1985	$4,308	$2,223	$6,531
1984	$6,507	$3,220	$9,727
1983	$6,582	$3,346	$9,928

The FY 87 revenue payments are only 59% of the full entitlement.

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

2. Wetlands

There is very little control capability for water level management available at Trempealeau NWR. All intake or discharge of water through the water control structure is gravity flow and is dependent on the level of the adjacent Trempealeau River. Therefore, it is never possible to completely dewater the refuge pool. Excess water can only be discharged until the level of the adjacent river is reached. The refuge pool receives water through precipitation, dike seepage, and the flow of several artesian springs in addition to any intake from the river.

Table 1, column A.1 lists the water level elevations of the refuge pool during 1988. The maximum pool level fluctuation was 24 inches, from a high of 645.8 feet MSL in early 1988 to a low of 643.8 feet MSL in August. Water was discharged for only 21 days during the year. This occurred in early spring after ice out. However, water levels gradually receded due to evaporation during the hot,dry spring and summer. Then as temperatures decreased in the early fall, seepage and artesian flow gradually raised the pool water level.

Overall, the drought conditions of 1988 actually benefited the emergent and submergent aquatic plants in the refuge pool. The gradual lowering of the water levels to a record low in August enabled an excellent crop of wild rice and annuals such as smartweed (Polygonum sp.) and beggarticks (Bidens sp.) to become established in the perimeter areas. The lower pool levels allowed better light penetration and encouraged submergent aquatic plant growth. Then the gradual rise in water levels in early fall flooded the annual plants and made them available for migrant waterfowl (See Figure 2 and Figure 3 in Sec. G.3). Consequently, the drought conditions of 1988 provided a very successful partial drawdown beyond the capabilities of the water control system.

8-88 RFB

Excellent marsh condition in late summer.

The following table shows the actual and planned water levels for 1988:

Table 1. Actual and planned water levels for 1988.

	Water Surface Elevations for 1988	Planned Elevation for 1988
Date	Water Surface Elevations*	Water Surface Elevations
Jan. 1	645.8	644.5
Jan. 15	645.8	644.5
Feb. 1	645.8	645.0
Feb. 15	645.8	645.0
Mar. 1	645.7	645.3
Mar. 15	645.4	645.3
Apr. 1	644.56	645.5
Apr. 15	644.8	645.5
May 1	644.5	645.2
May 15	644.4	645.2
Jun. 1	644.2	645.0
Jun. 15	644.4	645.0
Jul. 1	643.9	644.6
Jul. 15	643.9	644.6
Aug. 1	643.8	644.2
Aug. 15	643.8	644.2
Sep. 1	644.0	644.2
Sep. 15	644.2	644.2
Oct. 1	644.2	644.2
Oct. 15	644.2	664.2
Nov. 1	644.3	644.5
Nov. 15	644.5	644.5
Dec. 1	644.5	644.5
Dec. 15	644.5	644.5

* readings expressed in feet above mean Sea Level (MSL).

5. Grasslands

Grassland management consisted of limited black locust control and prescribed burning (see Section F.9).

Approximately 60 acres of former grassland areas covered with black locust were cut with the Region's hydro-axe during the fall of 1986. During the summer of 1987, the resprouting locust was broadcast sprayed with Garlan 4 herbicide. Treatment was a 75% success. It became evident that sprouts on hydro-axed areas that had previously been larger locust trees resprouted after the Garlan 4 treatment. Sprouts on mowed areas that were originally smaller locust saplings were controlled. The larger trees had a greater residual root mass and spot retreatments with Garlan are required to keep these areas from being reinvaded. Due to a shortage of personnel during the summer, only two acres of resprouting locust were treated in 1988. The effort will continue in 1989.

8. Haying

The co-op farming agreement with Herman Sura of Fountain City, Wisconsin, continued. Mr. Sura cuts hay on a 10 acre field on the west boundary of the Refuge. The field is conterminous with a field owned by Dairyland Power cooperative, and farmed under contract by Mr. Sura.

9. Fire Management

The annual prescription burn proposal called for treatment of 51 acres of grassland. The objectives of this burning were to enhance the populations of warm season prairie grasses and forbes, and to set back cool season exotics.

As in 1987, the Service's Basic Fire Management Training class was held in La Crosse, WI. The class then uses the refuge to conduct their field practical burning exercise. This year they burned 24 of the 51 acres scheduled. This is a real benefit to the refuge.

The response of the warm season grasses was excellent after the prescription burns. Ideal burning conditions and the drought probably combined to set back exotic cool season grasses and stimulate the warm season prairie grasses.

5-88 RFB

Grassland prior to burn.

5-88 RFB

Fire Management class receives final briefing.

5-88 RFB

Beginning the burn.

5-88 RFB

A successful prescription fire.

10. Pest Control

Refuge staff has been battling small infestations of purple loosestrife since 1986. This year was no exception.

Although the drought conditions benefitted the overall marsh conditions (Sec. F.2.), there was a negative aspect. The exposure of small mudflat areas in the southwest corner of the main pool near the active purple loosestrife infestation enabled new seedlings to become established. A very intense two-day effort was made to treat these trouble areas with herbicide in an attempt to keep the spread in check.

Two Wisconsin DNR wardens donated two days of their time and the use of their airboats to transport refuge personnel to the relatively inaccessible sites to spray loosestrife. We certainly appreciated their assistance.

Purple Loosestrife is a problem that isn't going to go away!!

G. WILDLIFE

1. Wildlife Diversity

Wildlife diversity at Trempealeau NWR is maintained through grassland management and limited water level manipulation of the refuge pool. Numerous varieties of wildlife claim the refuge as their home at one time or another during the course of the year.

2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

The peregrine falcon is seen on rare occasion on the refuge as a migrant only. None were observed in 1988.

Bald eagles are common visitors to the refuge throughout the year. The eagle population usually peaks in early spring and early fall during their migration periods. A maximum of 19 birds were observed in mid-March and 31 during the middle of November.

For the third consecutive year, a pair of bald eagle occupied a nest in a cottonwood tree in the western portion of the refuge. The previous two attempts had been unsuccessful, but this year the pair fledged a single eaglet. This is the first recorded bald eagle produced on Trempealeau NWR.

5-88 RFB

Bald eagle nest in cottonwood tree.

6-88 RFB

Young bald eagle in nest.

On June 1, Wisconsin DNR provided an experienced tree climber and eagle bander. The climber scaled the tree and lowered the young eagle to the ground where it was banded. While on the ground, a veterinarian from the Minnesota Raptor Rehab Center took a blood sample as part of a study on nesting eagles in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The young eagle was then hoisted back into the nest.

6-88 RFB

Maintenance worker Rife and young eagle.

In mid-June the young eagle was observed flying to and from the nest. The bird had departed the nest by the end of June.

3. Waterfowl

The first indication of spring migration was the arrival of 700 Canada geese and about 8,900 ducks in late March. Canada geese reached a peak of 700 in March 30 and ducks peaked at 9,500 in early April.

Approximately 200 Canada geese and 1,700 ducks (mostly woodducks) used the refuge throughout the summer months.

The beginning of fall migration was evident in mid-September with the sighting of 600 Canada geese and 8,000 ducks. Fall migration was well underway by October 14 with 23,000 ducks and 19,000 coots. The duck population peaked October 28 with 31,200 and Canada geese on October 3 with 1,930.

Tundra swans were abundant from late October to early December with a peak of 3,600 on November 25.

Total waterfowl use days for 1988 were 1,622,190; an increase of 53% from 1987.

Due to the 1988 drought conditions there were virtually no wetland areas outside of the Mississippi River corridor available. The available water and excellent wetland habitat conditions produced at Trempealeau NWR (Sec F.2.) provided a very important feeding and resting area for the 1988 fall flight of waterfowl. The importance of Trempealeau NWR as well as the whole Mississippi River system becomes even more apparent during a drought year such as 1988.

10-88 RFB

Excellent marsh conditions attracted fall flight waterfowl.

Figure 2 demonstrates that the mean waterfowl use days by month during the 1988 fall period was roughly double that of the same period in 1987. Tundra swan use in the fall increased from a peak population of 300 birds in 1987 to 3600 in 1988 (Figure 3).

The estimated waterfowl production for 1988 is as follows:

Canada Geese	30
Mallard	250
Blue-winged teal	150
Woodduck	760
other ducks	20

4. Marsh and Water Birds

Double-crested cormorants were first sighted March 30. By April 11, 150 adults were observed near the rookery with nest building underway. On May 14, 50 birds were observed on nests. Dr. Ray Faber of St. Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota checked the rookery on June 4 and found 75 nests and 140 young.

Due to low water levels, it was not possible to reach the rookery in late summer. However, at least 50 additional young were observed with a spotting scope. Thus, the overall cormorant production was approximately 190.

Pied-billed grebes, great blue heron, common egret, and green heron were common visitors throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

American coots were once again the most abundant marsh and water bird. A peak population of 39,000 occurred during October. Coot use days totaled 1,059,000 for the year.

Total use days for marsh and water birds excluding coots totaled 118,270.

5. Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns, and Allied Species

Ring-billed gulls are the most dominant species in the group. On March 30, 300 gulls were observed and on October 21, the population peaked at 1,500 birds.

Other species in this group that use the refuge frequently but in small numbers are Caspian tern, black tern, common tern, Forster's tern, and killdeer. Total use days for this group were 55,640.

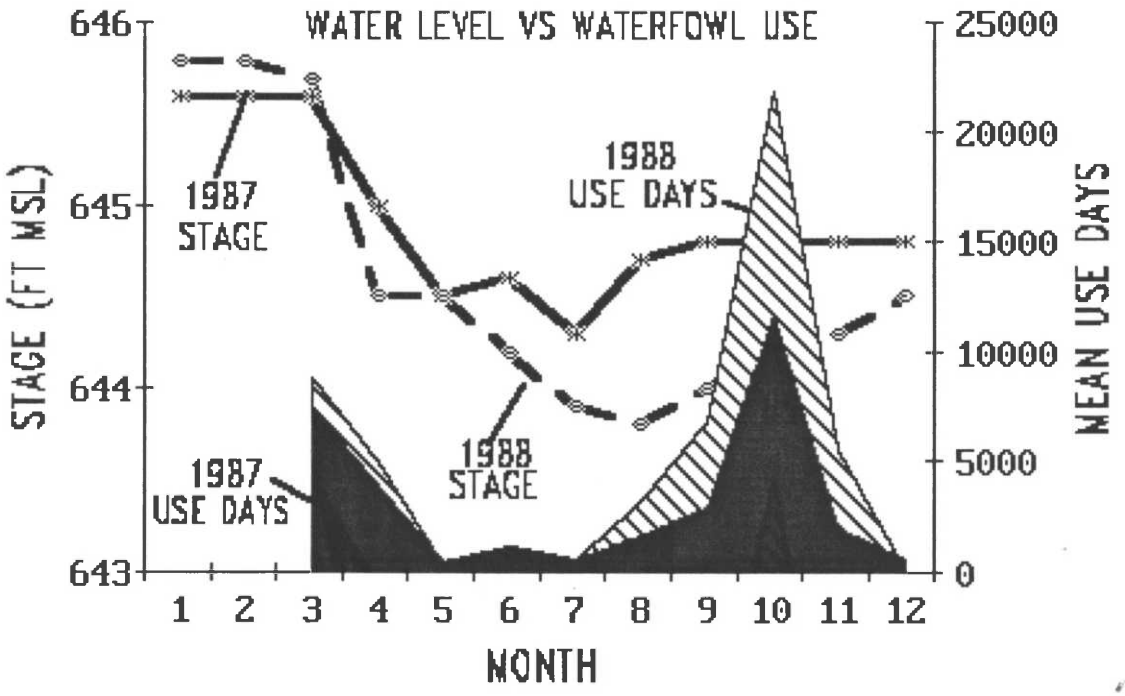

WATER LEVEL VS WATERFOWL USE
STAGE (FT MSL)
MEAN USE DAYS
MONTH
646
645
644
643
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
1987 STAGE
1988 USE DAYS
1988 STAGE
1987 USE DAYS

Figure 2.

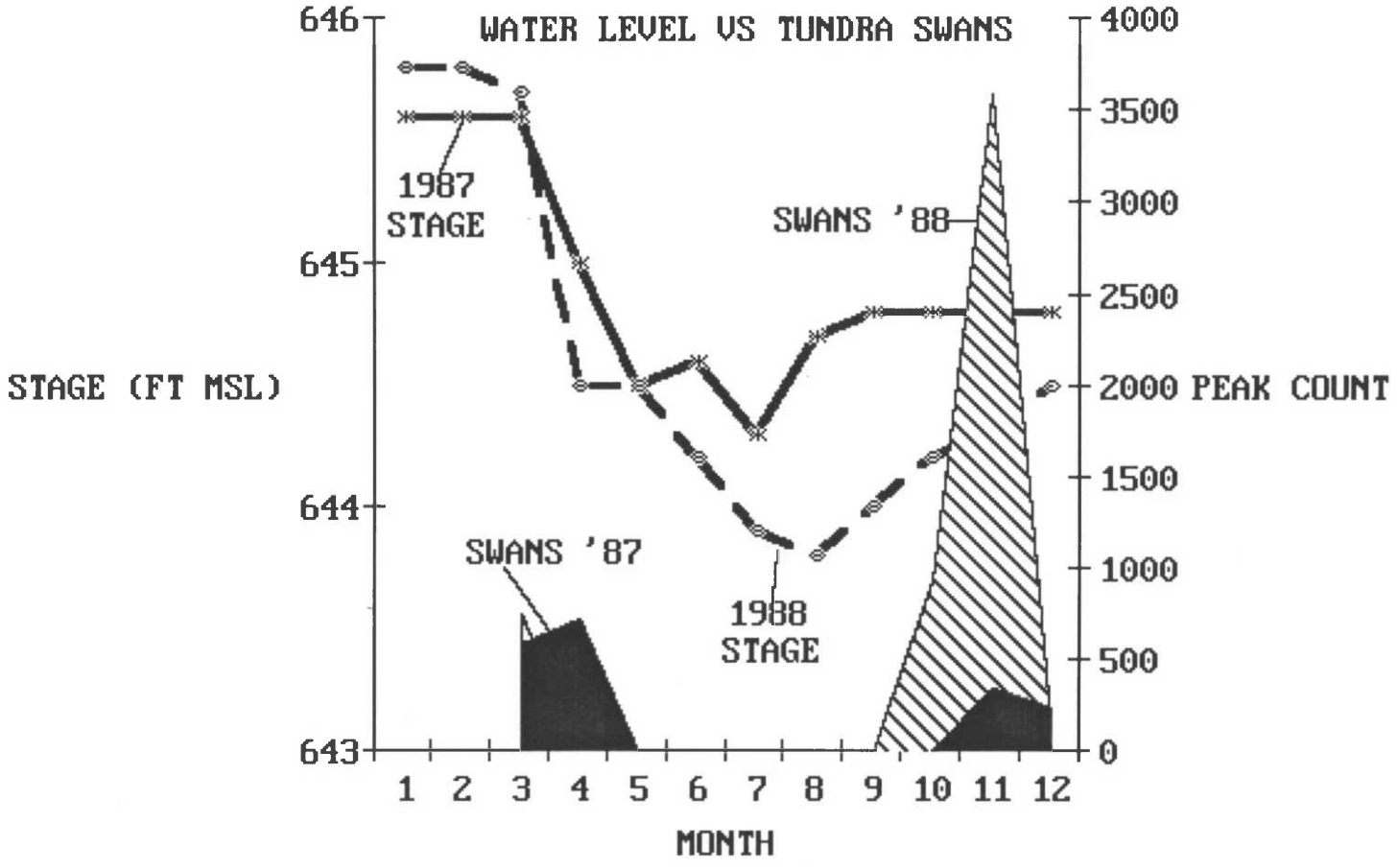

WATER LEVEL VS TUNDRA SWANS
STAGE (FT MSL)
646
645
644
643
4000
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
PEAK COUNT
1987
STAGE
SWANS '88
SWANS '87
1988
STAGE
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
MONTH

Figure 3.

5-88 RFB

Nesting Killdeer.

Dr. Ray Faber of St. Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota, conducted a black tern nesting study on the refuge from May 26 through July 15, 1988. He located 27 black tern nests of which 15 had known outcomes. Twelve of the 15 nests lost their eggs with no evidence of cause. The remaining 3 nests contained 1 egg each with 3 black terns fledging. Dr. Faber located three Forster's tern nests during his black tern study. He estimated that there were possibly 5-6 nests in total. Hatching success for them is unknown.

6. Raptors

Raptors using the refuge frequently are bald eagles, osprey, red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, American kestrel, marsh hawk, great-horned owl, barred owl, and screech owl.

One pair of osprey constructed a nest in one of the nesting platforms erected in 1985. Periodic nest observations by volunteers documented production of one osprey.

Total raptor use days were 12,100.

7. Other Migratory Birds

The annual mourning dove coo count was conducted on the 20-mile route in Buffalo County on May 24. A total of 30 doves and 236 calls were heard.

In 1987, 23 bluebird houses were erected and monitored by a refuge volunteer. A total of 22 boxes were used in 1987 by bluebirds with 81 birds fledged. In 1988, 17 boxes were used with 92 young fledged.

8. Game Mammals

The white-tailed deer population has remained stable at approximately 175 animals. Evening vehicle counts were run weekly from mid-September through early December. The average count from the surveys was 60 deer. These vehicle counts only provide trend data, not an estimated population.

11. Fisheries resources

No commercial fishing was conducted during the year.

12. Wildlife Propagation

the Associated Sportsmen's Clubs of Trempealeau County raised pheasants in the rearing facilities near headquarters. A total of 5,000 day-old chicks from the State Game Farm at Poynette were delivered on June 2. All birds were released on August 9 at nine weeks of age on State and private lands in Trempealeau County.

Following a number of meetings with Associated Clubs officers in 1986, a new special use permit was negotiated which specifies a 20% reduction in the operation and facilities beginning in 1988. The permit will expire as of December 31,1992, by which time all pheasant rearing facilities must be removed from the refuge. The pheasant rearing schedule through the permit expiration date is as follows:

Year	No. of Birds
1987	5,500
1988	5,000
1989	4,000
1990	3,000
1991	2,000
1992	1,000

16. Marking and Banding

Woodduck banding was conducted from August 8 through September 8. Pre-baiting began in early to mid July in hopes of drawing birds to the site before the wild rice crop reached full head in late July. We experienced a minor problem as several "woodies" would be in the trap and a large number would be on the site but not enter through the throats. After several strategies were tried, a minor modification was made to the trap and the remaining 1/3 of our quota of 150 woodducks was reached in early September.

A breakdown of age and sex is as follows:

AHYM	AHYF	HYM	HYF
35	14	83	46

Total birds banded was 178

H. PUBLIC USE

1. General

Trempealeau Refuge is open to the general public year round for wildlife viewing, hiking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, bicycling, fishing, and certain types of hunting. A decrease in environmental education activities is primarily the result of large reductions in school budgets. The following table shows public use over the last five year period.

	Public Use Visits				
	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Nature trail	1,700	2,000	1,600	2,190	1,610
Wildlife drive	24,800	32,800	28,400	44,650	43,900
Waterfowl hunting	*	*	50	50	50
Deer hunting - gun	40	40	50	60	40
Deer hunting - bow	60	70	30	20	70
Trapping	700	500	1,000	1,240	920
Fishing	1,400	4,400	4,000	1,640	1,500
Other	200	300	200	50	50
Total Visits	28,900	40,110	35,330	49,900	48,140

* no season

2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students

Several area schools conducted outdoor classes on the refuge. The following is a list of the schools and type of activity.

Trempealeau 5th grade - Outdoor nature studies;
Trempealeau 5th grade - Winter survival simulation;
Trempealeau 2nd grade - Outdoor nature studies;
Winona - Madison 5th grade - Outdoor workshop;
Winona 5th & 6th grade - Outdoor workshop;
Winona Middle School - Outdoor workshop;
Holmen Middle School - Outdoor workshop;
Galesville Girl Scouts - Outdoor workshop;
Elder Hostel (senior citizens) St. Mary's College - Outdoor nature study;
Winona University - Adult bird ID class

4. Interpretive Foot Trails

The nature trail, approximately a 1.5-mile loop, focuses primarily on woodland habitat. Several marshy areas are in close proximity to the trail allowing the visitor a chance to view waterfowl as well as deer and other mammals while on foot.

5. Interpretive Tour Routes

The wildlife drive was open the entire year except when the entrance road was flooded preventing public entry and during a two day deer hunt in mid-November. The public enjoys using the interpretive wildlife drive particularly for deer watching during the evening and on weekends.

8. Hunting

a. General

The four types of public hunting programs as described in the Master Plan have been implemented. The refuge was opened to gun deer hunting in the fall of 1982; deer archery and small game hunting in 1984; and youth waterfowl hunting in 1986.

b. Waterfowl hunting

This was the third year that the Trempealeau Refuge was open to limited waterfowl hunting. Hunting took place during one weekend of the Wisconsin season on an area of about 900 acres on the west end of the refuge. Twelve young hunter, 12-17 years of age who possessed a hunter safety certificate, were selected by a random drawing from 15 applications. Nine youth were accompanied on the hunt by their fathers and two were accompanied by a sponsor from the Ducks Unlimited chapters. Youths, parents, and sponsors were required to attend an orientation session at refuge headquarters on Saturday, October 15. Their orientation included waterfowl identification, safety, a review of federal and state regulations, as well as hunter ethics.

Special regulations for the hunt included required use of steel shot, the hunting of ducks and coots only (no geese) and ½-day hunting from sunrise to noon. Each youth was permitted to hunt one day only of the weekend, October 22 or 23.

A total of 94 ducks were harvested during the weekend. Hunter overall success was 1.9 birds per day with an 11% reported crippling loss. Species taken were mallard, wigeon, gadwall, green-winged teal and ring-necked duck.

Due to the summer drought, water levels in the hunting area were extremely low making it difficult for boat travel.

10-88 LHB

D.U. sponsor and young hunter check in with Mgr. Bartels

A debt of gratitude goes to the two sponsors who donated their time to provide guidance for the youth during the hunt. Sponsors for 1988 were:

Bob Bott, DU Onalaska Chapter, La Crosse, WI.
Dave Linderud, DNR Wildlife Manager, Alma, WI.

c. Deer hunting

the two-day, gun deer hunt was held on November 19 and 20. A total of 30 permits were issued through the State's hunter's choice selection process. The age and sex breakdown of the harvest was as follows:

	Male	Female	Total
Fawn	2	4	6
Yearling	5	3	8
Adult	7	3	10
Total	14	10	24

The largest deer taken was an 8-point buck weighing 152 pounds field dressed. One 10-point buck was taken, but only field dressed at 145 pounds.

This was the fifth year for the late season archery deer hunt. A total of 122 applications were received for the 30 permits selected at a public drawing at refuge headquarters on October

28. Thirteen of the 30 did not hunt, probably because they had filled their tag prior to the late season. Only two deer were reported to have been taken.

d. Small game hunting

The area west of the Green Bay and Western Railroad grade was opened to the hunting of ruffed grouse, pheasant, cottontail, and squirrel. Hunting pressure was very light.

9. Fishing

This was the fifth year that Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge has been open to public fishing. Bullheads continued to provide the majority of the catch. A few nice stringer of large northern pike were taken, but these were few and far between. Many limits of yellow perch were taken through the ice, both in the main pool and from backwaters of the Trempealeau River near the east end of the wildlife drive. Fishing pressure is extremely light, and has declined from previous years.

10. Trapping

The refuge was again open to the trapping of furbearers. There are 10 trapping units: one senior citizen and nine adult. Trapping units were awarded on October 15 by an open bid system. This was the first year of the bid system, and bidding went quite smoothly. The bids for muskrat trapping ranged from $175 to $425 per unit, totalling $2,510 for the nine units. The senior citizens unit was awarded with no charge.

There are three beaver trapping units with only 20 beaver units allowed to be harvested. The bids for these units ranged from $125 to $150, totalling $405. Total trapping revenue was $2,915.

Harvest results for the last five refuge trapping seasons are as follows:

	Number of Animals Harvested				
	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Muskrat	2,166	1,369	2,410	3,453	2,419
Mink	14	2	2	16	8
Raccoon	4	1	35	22	32
Beaver	54	60	41	39	54

11. Wildlife Observation

In addition to deer observation while using the wildlife drive, wildlife observation is accomplished through hiking, cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, and bicycling.

17. Law Enforcement

The year was very quiet relative to the number of violation notices issued. Three cases involved vehicle trespass on road posted to no vehicles. Two individuals were apprehended collecting archaeological materials consisting of pottery pieces and worked stone chips. They were cited under 50CFR 27.62.

The display case at the entrance kiosk was vandalized in early summer. No one was apprehended for the offense.

6-88 RFB

Vandalism to kiosk.

Manager Bartels and Assistant Manager Kline attended a 40-hour law enforcement refresher training the latter part of February at the Wisconsin State Patrol Academy at Ft. McCoy, Sparta, Wisconsin.

Manager Bartels and Assistant Manager Kline requalified with the service revolver on approved courses of fire in February and September.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

1. New Construction

A handicapped accessible observation deck was constructed near the nature trail entrance overlooking the main refuge pool. The deck was a design by Dave Schaffer, Region 3 Landscape Architect.

The completion of the deck was a very interesting and exciting cooperative effort. The Mississippi Sportsmens Association of Winona, Minnesota, indicated a desire to donate funds for a project at the refuge. R.M. Bartels met with the group three times to arrange the project. The initial meeting was to show the blueprints of the deck and photos of similar decks already constructed in Region 3. During the second meeting a cost estimate for the lumber and hardware was presented. The final meeting was on the proposed construction site.

The group agreed to buy and donate the building materials estimated to cost $2,000. This enabled the refuge to receive a matching $2,000 Challenge Grant from Region 3. Due to fluctuations in lumber prices, the final material bill was $2,516. However, the Sportsmens group agreed to fund the entire amount.

The other cooperator was a crew from the Wisconsin Conservation Corps, who provided the labor to build the structure. Refuge personnel performed the preliminary site preparation, installing the blacktop walkway, and putting all the finishing touches on the deck. The Region Sign Center in Winona, Minnesota, made a sign to identify cooperators.

8-88 JEK

WCC crew building deck.

10-88 RFB

Finished deck.

A ribbon cutting and dedication was held on October 16 to recognize groups involved. This was a very worthwhile project and a welcome addition to the refuge.

10-88 LHB

WCC Representative, Jerry Boone
Refuge Manager Bartels
Mississippi Sportsmens President Jerry Cordes

3. Major Maintenance

The deteriorated tile roof on the storage barn was replaced with asphalt shingles. The asphalt shingles were left over from a major 1980 YACC roofing project of all refuge headquarters buildings.

Insulated windows for the office/shop, and siding for all buildings were purchased. Replacement of all shop windows and re-siding the buildings was an action item identified in the 1987 refuge operational inspection. Work will be done during the summer of 1989 utilizing a Wisconsin Conservation Corp work crew.

A two inch concrete cap was poured on the office sidewalk to prevent melting snow from pooling and freezing creating unsafe conditions, as well as improving handicapped accessibility.

4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement

The 4x4 pickup replacement that was funded in FY87 arrived September 26, 1988. It is a welcome addition to Trempealeau's "tired" vehicle fleet.

The pump unit on the Western fire unit was replaced with a pump from Wajax Fire Equipment Co with Fire Funding. The design of the Western Unit required constant replacement of seals. It was felt to be more

cost effective to replace the pump than continually replace ceramic seals. In addition, the manual hose reel was replaced with an electric re-wind reel.

5. Communications Systems

Three Midland 40 watt wideband mobile radios and two Bendix King portable radios with two desk top and three vehicle chargers were purchased. These units now give us reliable communications among refuge personnel and with local law enforcement agencies.

6. Computer System

An IBM PS/2 Model 60 computer with a Hewlett Packard LaserJet Series II printer was purchased. All computer components were received by mid September and assembly completed by the first part of October. The staff is gradually becoming more proficient at using the computer and the word processor, data base, spreadsheet, and graphics software packages. This tool is enhancing the overall management of the refuge. This was a purchase well worth the dollars spent.

J. OTHER ITEMS

1. Cooperative Programs

The refuge participated in a number of programs to assist other FWS units and other government agencies as follows:

- mourning dove coo count (FWS);
- mid-winter eagle survey (FWS);
- weather station (National Weather Service);
- gypsy moth trapping (National Forest Service).

3. Items of Interest

Assistant Manager Kline attended a two day wildlife disease workshop at the National Wildlife Health Lab at Madison, WI.

R.M. Bartels attended the following Farm Bill meetings:

Wetland Restoration Workshop	Twin Cities, MN
Farm Bill Workshop	Madison, WI
Wisconsin Farm Bill Coordination Meeting	Necedah NWR, WI

R.M. Bartels attended the Region 3 Non-Game Workshop in August and present a summary of non-game work at Trempealeau NWR.

R.M. Bartels attended three meetings of the Mississippi Sportsmen's Association, Winona, MN to finalize plans for receiving their donation of $2,000 worth of lumber to build an observation deck.

R.M. Bartels represented the refuge at the opening dedication of the Wisconsin DNR Great River Bike Trail.

4. Credits

The narrative was a joint effort of the entire staff. Special thanks to Ann Prochowicz who typed and assembled the report.

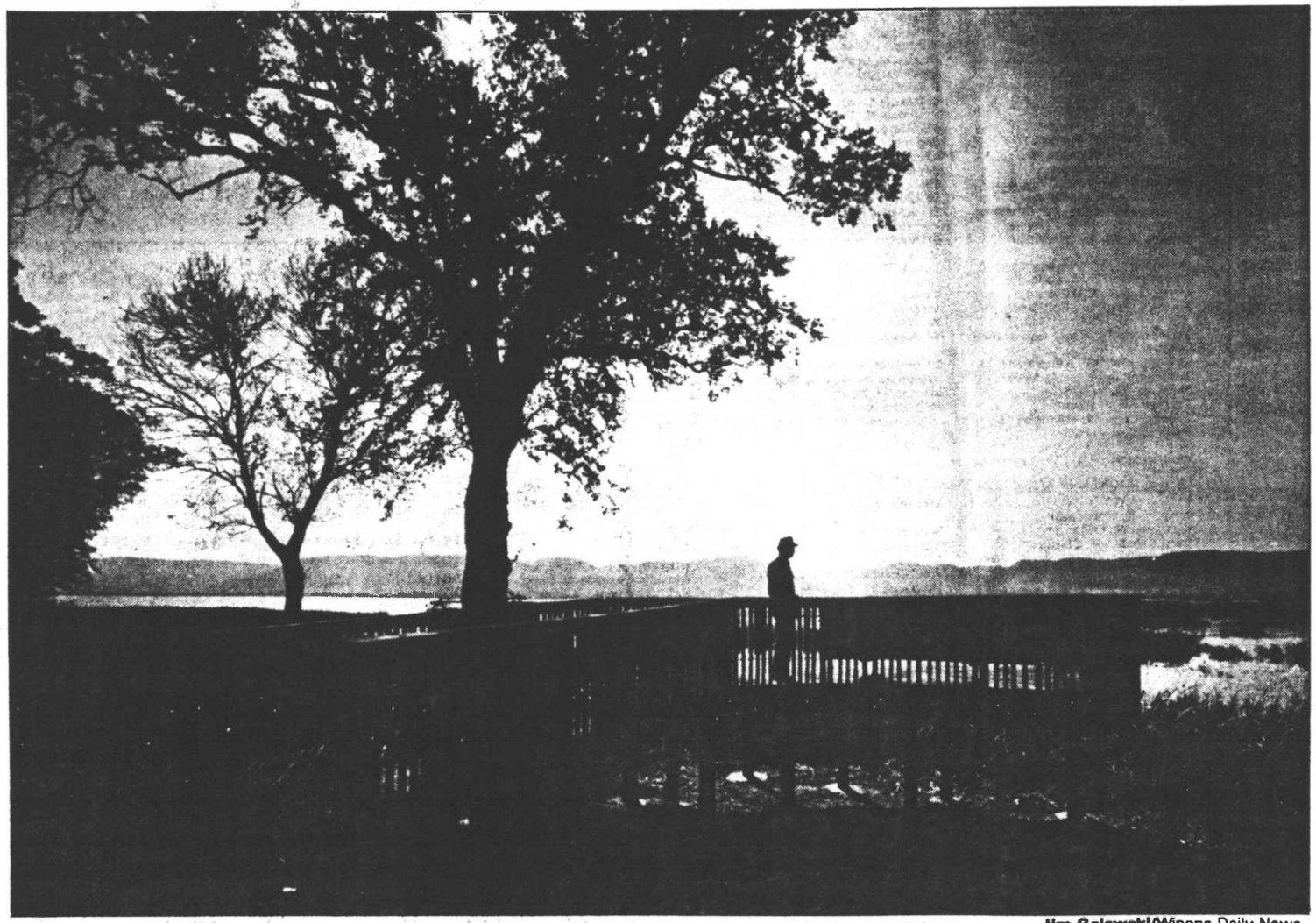
K. FEEDBACK

Computer

I think the Refuges and Wildlife computer support staff has done a tremendous job of bringing field stations into the computer age. Many of us (particularly myself) were starting the learning curve at ground zero. The support staff exhibited a phenomenal amount of organization and patience in teaching us "old dogs" new tricks. It's a tremendous tool and already depended upon heavily.

Farm Bill

This year's work on the Farm Bill was certainly busy. Whew! This area of western Wisconsin didn't produce any restorable wetland basins on CRP land, and the amount of effort that went into screening these contracts with no results was discouraging. However, overall, I have a good feeling about what was accomplished. Farm Bill was new to everyone and we all learned. I know several wetland areas in this part of the state were preserved, and this is the bottom line for me. The cooperative efforts with the Wisconsin DNR, SCS, ASCS, and FmHA in our assigned counties has certainly extended the refuge's and Service's reputation as a resource agency. On the down side, I'm not sure this station can sustain the same level and pace of activity this next year. We seemed to accomplish most everything required this year, but the old rubber band was stretched pretty tight!



Jim Galewski/Winona Daily News

Bob Bartels, manager of the 6,000-acre Trempealeau (Wis.) Wildlife Refuge, stands on the new observation deck built with money donated by the Winona-based Mississippi Sportsmens Assocation.

Winona group assists with observation deck

Trempealeau refuge gets lookout spot

By Tom Wilkowske
Winona Daily News

TREMPEALEAU, Wis. — Lots of people — including the handicapped — will be able to get a little closer to nature, thanks to a partnership of area agencies and the Mississippi Sportsmens Association of Winona.

The Winona group donated $2,400 in charitable gambling proceeds and the Wisconsin Conservation Corps and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided labor to construct a 14-by 22-foot observation deck at the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge.

The deck will be dedicated in a ceremony at 2 p.m. today at the refuge.

Bob Bartels, manager of the 6,000-acre refuge, said he approached the sportsmen's group last winter with plans for the deck. The group's money enabled the deck to qualify for a federal matching grant under the Interior Department's "Take Pride in America" program, he said.

"It's a real partership," Bartels said. "I think they need a real pat on the back for doing this kind of thing."

Jerry Cordes, secretary-treasurer, says the group is glad to accept the pat. "That's what our organization is about, wildlife," he said, adding that the deck is much like one at the Weaver Bottoms near Minneiska, Minn., "but this one is out in the water more."

> "That's what our organization is about, wildlife."
> **Jerry Cordes**

Bartels said the summer's drought helped provide solid ground so builders could extend the deck further out into the marsh than would ordinarily have been possible. "The thing was pushed out a little farther so you get a real good view up and down the main pool," he said.

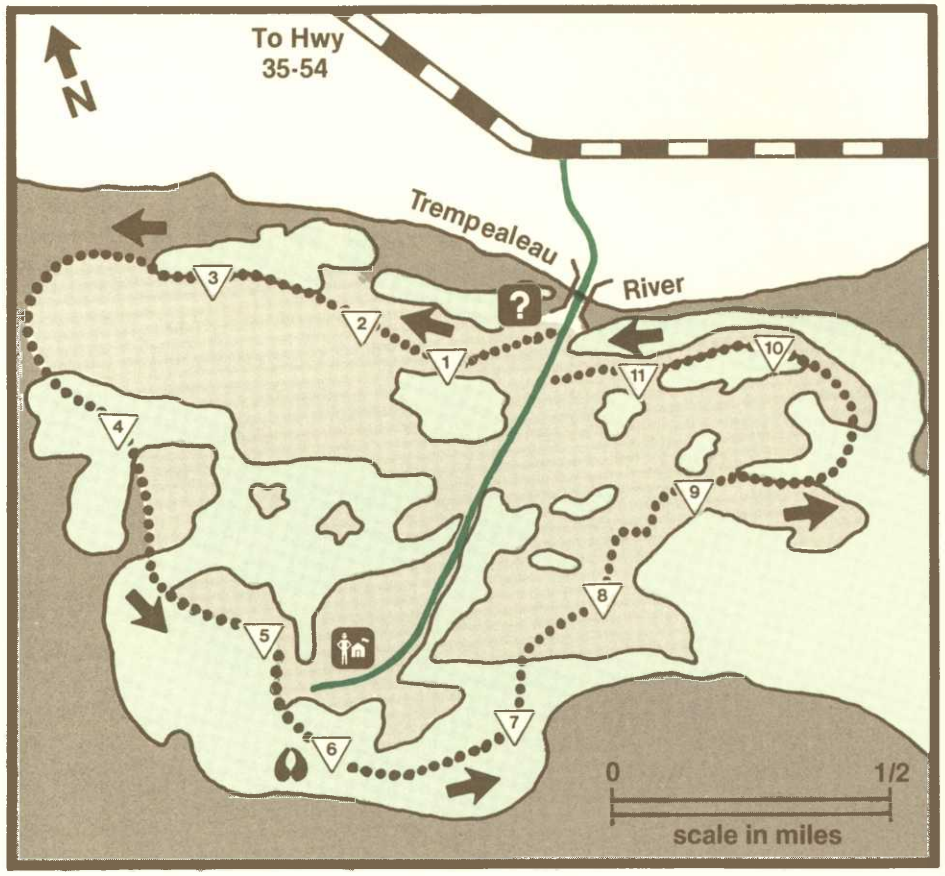
Sights at the refuge include a view of Winona from the Wisconsin side, Canada geese, coots, ringnecked gulls and other assorted waterfowl, Bartels said.

Cordes added: "It's fun to go over there later on in the evening, you see all the deer."

To get to the deck, enter the refuge from Wisconsin Highway 35, take the first right and follow the refuge auto tour around about two miles past the information posting area on the gravel road, Bartels said.

Prairie's Edge Wildlife Drive

TREMPEALEAU NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



Legend

Wildlife Drive	.....	Information	?
Numbered Stations	1	Headquarters	
Nature Trail		Entrance road	
Prairie		Bridge	
Marsh		Township Road	
Forest			

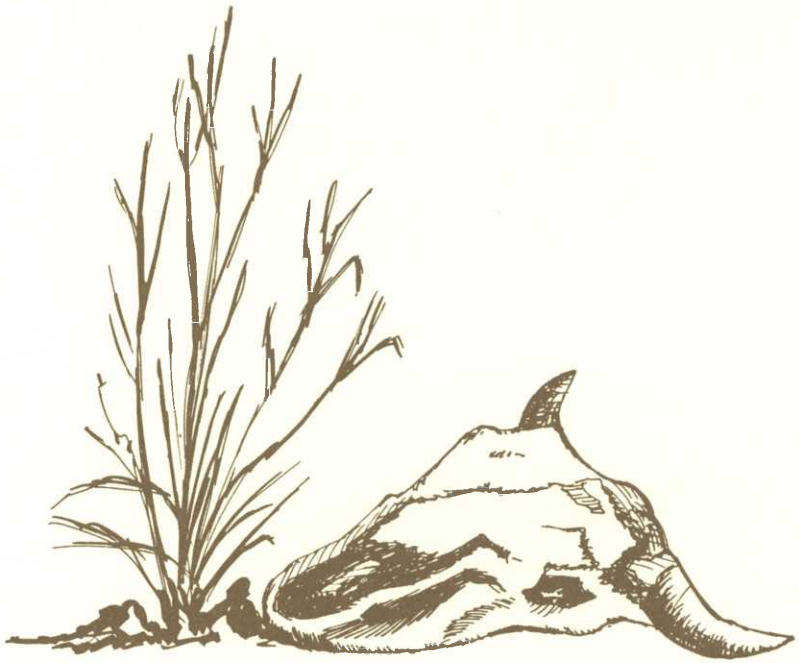
Welcome to Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge and the Prairie's Edge self-guiding wildlife drive. This four-mile drive will acquaint you with three major plant communities of the refuge: sand prairie, backwater marsh, and hardwood forest.

Use this booklet as your personal guide. The numbered stations along the way correspond to those in this leaflet.

You will increase your chances of sighting wildlife by taking your time, driving slowly and keeping your eyes open. Concentrate on movements. You might see a bounding deer, soaring hawk or a ruffed grouse hurrying along the ground. Also, look for signs indicating the presence of wildlife, such as tracks, nests, dens, or deer rubs. Stop and listen for bird calls and other natural sounds.

Remember, all forms of wildlife within the refuge are protected. Please be considerate and do not litter or drive off the road.

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.



1 Ancient Sand Dunes

This rolling sand prairie was formed when an old route of the Trempealeau River deposited sand and silt along the floodplain of the Mississippi River. Blowing winds piled the sand and sediment into large dunes which formed the present rolling terrain. Grasses became established and stabilized the moving sand, creating a vast sea of grass.

Indians regularly set fires to these grasslands to drive game and to clear land for campsites. This burning stimulated new and more vigorous grass growth and prevented woody plants from encroaching on the prairie.

Once the area was settled, prairie fires were controlled because they were a threat to homes and fields. In the absence of fire, forest communities gradually replaced the natural prairie.

Indian Grass

Switch Grass

2 Prairie Restored

When Trempealeau Refuge was established in 1934, much of this area was forested. Efforts to reestablish a prairie community on the refuge began over ten years ago when oak-wilt disease began killing many oaks. Removing the infected trees by cutting and burning was the only known method of controlling the virus (notice the charred oak stumps to the left). The land was then seeded with native grasses to regain a part of our past.

3 A Diversity of Grasses

Few examples remain for us to experience a native prairie. Most areas that were once prairie are now being cultivated, grazed or have evolved into forests.

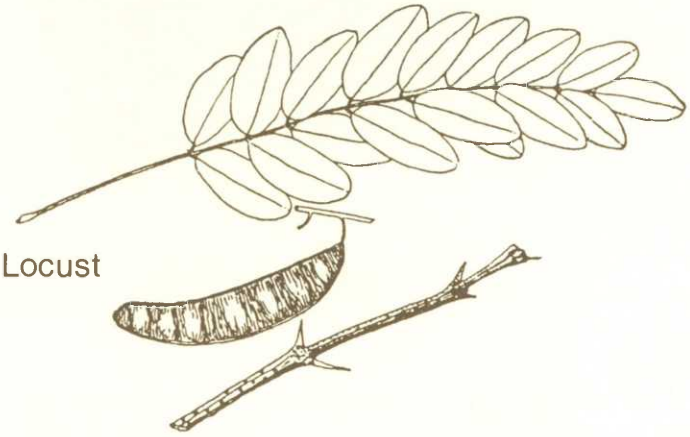
Many prairie grasses, such as big bluestem, Indian grass and switchgrass can grow to heights of six feet. Other grasses, which tend to grow shorter and in drier soils, include side-oats grama and little bluestem. We invite you to become familiar with some of the native grasses located next to the parking area.

4 Tree Immigrants

Do you think these pine trees occurred naturally in this area? Actually, they are native to more northern forests and were planted here years ago. Evergreens reproduce slowly and do not encroach on the prairie.

These pines provide a year-round windbreak, food and cover for a variety of wildlife. Their seeds are often eaten by songbirds and small mammals.

Notice the absence of needles on the lower branches. This boundary, or "browse line", indicates the height reached by deer feeding on the lower pine needles when more preferred food supplies were scarce. In the past, periodic overpopulations of deer combined with severe winters, have caused the formation of this browse line.

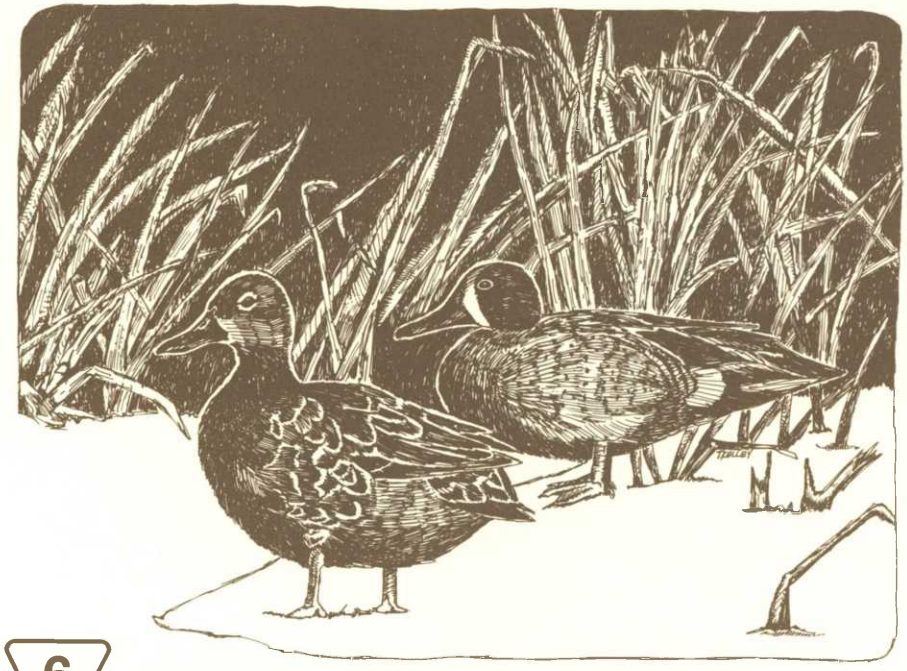


Black Locust

5 Prairie Invaders

Can you see that this thick grove is composed largely of one tree species? These are black locust trees, introduced to this area in the 1930's to reduce erosion during spring flooding. Unlike pines, the black locust is a serious threat to the prairies since it grows rapidly on poor soil and sends shoots up from the roots.

Careful management, including controlled burning, cutting, and the use of ecologically safe herbicides, is necessary to prevent black locust from encroaching on the prairie.

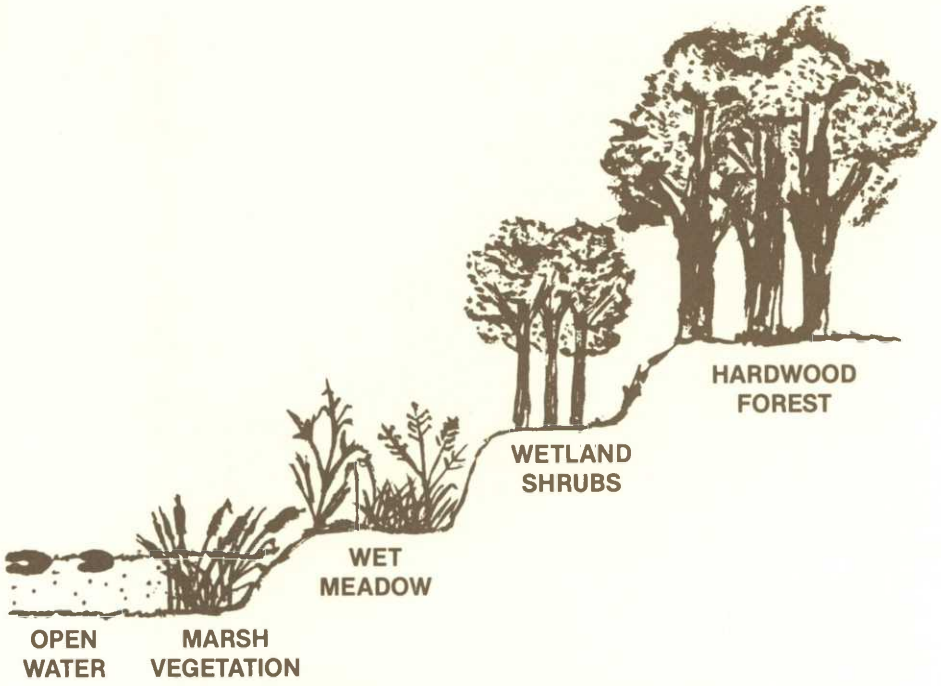


6 Wetland Riches

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge was established primarily to provide food and habitat for waterfowl. The majority of the refuge lands are backwater wetland areas isolated from the Mississippi River by a large railroad dike. This dike, visible far across the marsh, protects these wetlands from the river's tremendous sediment load and extends their life by hundreds of years.

Each spring and fall, thousands of ducks, geese, swans and other migratory birds stop here to rest and feed. The marsh provides a plentiful supply of roots, leaves and seeds from aquatic plants to help fuel the birds' long journey between nesting and wintering grounds. Many ducks, as well as bitterns, black terns and double-crested cormorants, nest here and remain through the summer.

If you hike the 1/2 mile trail to the right of the parking area, you may spot a beaver or one of the many herons and egrets that spend the summer feeding in the shallow waters.



7 Bottomland Succession

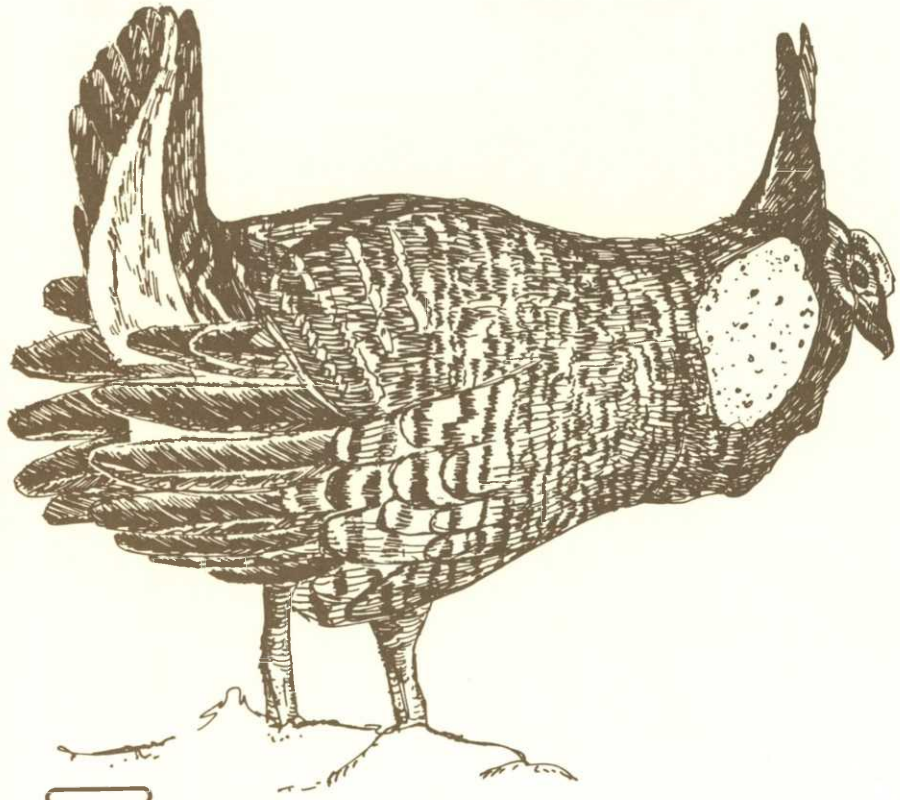
All living things, including plant communities, continually age and change in a predictable way. In the orderly progression of plant communities, called "ecological succession", each community modifies the environment and prepares the way for the next.

In these water areas the major sediments come from decaying plants and animals, local runoff and windblown material. A backwater area filling in with sediment becomes shallow, allowing a marsh community to form. Marsh plants, like cattail and sedge, will add much organic matter as they die and decompose, creating a soil layer suitable for the growth of woody shrubs. These shrubs will provide a shady spot favorable for tree seedlings to take root. In time, a hardwood forest will stand where you may now see ducks and muskrats swimming.

8 The Special Edge

The transition zone between two different plant communities is called an ecotone, or "edge", be biologists. Edges are particularly attractive to wildlife since they provide a variety of food sources from both plant communities.

This shrub edge between prairie and forest is particularly attractive to songbirds, small mammals and white-tailed deer. In addition to food, the thick vegetative growth provides protection from predators and harsh weather. Edges are a good place to look for wildlife.



9 Prairie Past

Imagine how you might have experienced life on the prairie long ago, living among the native Americans or early explorers. On vast prairies of native grasses, at times growing taller than your head, you might have seen large herds of elk and buffalo followed by wolves in search of food.

The distant horizon often resounded with the early morning "booming" dance of the prairie chicken. This was a very different world from the one we see today.

10 Woodland Oasis

Once a prairie has evolved to a forest community, native grasses and prairie animals disappear. Then, woodland inhabitants move into the area where they can survive beneath the cool, shaded canopy of leaves.

Often a woodland pothole develops. This creates a secluded oasis for painted turtles and leopard frogs, while nearby tree cavities provide nesting sites for colorful wood ducks.

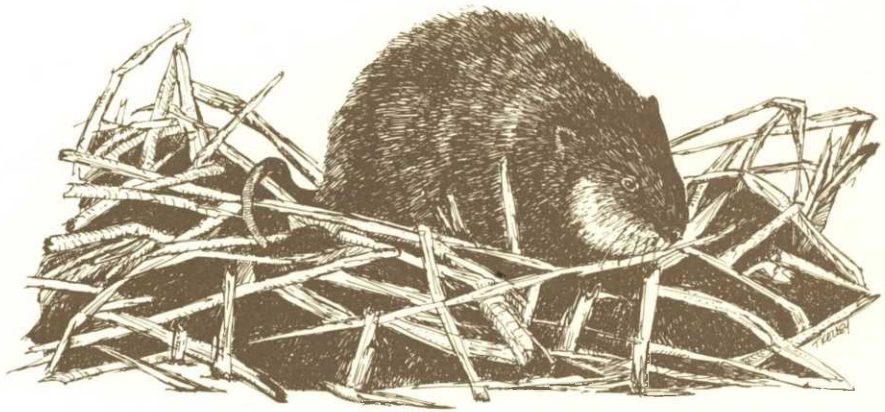
11 Floodplain Forest

When one community replaces another, progress is made by attaining that plant community which is most adapted to new conditions.

The bottomland hardwood forest you see around you is best suited to survive in this portion of Trempealeau Refuge.

The shallow root systems of the silver maple, river birch, and ash trees you see enable them to remain tolerably dry, and allow them to flourish despite spring flooding and wet soil conditions.

Along this slough the emergent pondweeds and sedges provide habitat for a variety of small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Raptors which frequent this floodplain forest include the red-shouldered hawk and barred owl.



How The Plant Communities Interact

Notice how the three communities you have seen today interact with each other to create a whole system. The interaction of the hardwood forest with the prairie and marsh provides productive edges allowing for greater varieties and numbers of wildlife.

Many animals, including man, utilize several plant communities during their lifetime. Stability in animal populations is insured by the variety of plant communities available.

All three communities on the Trempealeau Refuge are managed to provide quality habitat for wildlife and an interesting experience for visitors.

This completes our wildlife drive. Thank you for being our guests—we hope you have enjoyed it. If you have no further use for this booklet, please "recycle" it by placing it in the box provided at the end of the tour route.

For further information you may contact:

Refuge Manager
Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge
Route #1 Box 326
Trempealeau, Wisconsin 54661
(608) 539-2311

RF-32578-10-10/85

Hunting Regulations

	AREA A	AREA B	AREA C
SMALL GAME			
Ruffed Grouse Pheasant Cottontail Gray & Fox Squirrel	STATE SEASON	CLOSED	CLOSED
BIG GAME			
Deer-Archery (special permit)	Late (December) Season Only	Late (December) Season Only	CLOSED
Deer - Shotgun (Hunter's Choice Permit-61B)	First two days only	First two days only	First two days only
WATERFOWL	Special Regulations (Consult Refuge Manager)	CLOSED	CLOSED

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- Hunting for the above species is permitted only on the open portions of the refuge as delineated on the map. This area is designated by signs as open to hunting.
- All other species are protected and may NOT be killed.
- All State regulations are in effect and will be enforced.
- Only portable tree stands may be used and must not be left overnight.
- Overnight camping and fires are prohibited.
- All vehicle travel is prohibited except on designated roads and parking areas. All motorized vehicles unlicensed for highway travel are prohibited on refuge lands.
- Railroad rights-of-way in and adjacent to the refuge are private property and are not covered under these regulations.
- Report all accidents and injuries to Refuge Headquarters, Route 1, Trempealeau, Wisconsin or phone 608/539-2311.

QUALITY HUNTING DEPENDS ON YOU

PLEASE RESPECT ALL REGULATIONS AND HAVE A GOOD HUNT!

RF32578-7/85

Trempealeau

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

HUNTING MAP & REGULATIONS

HUNTING MAP

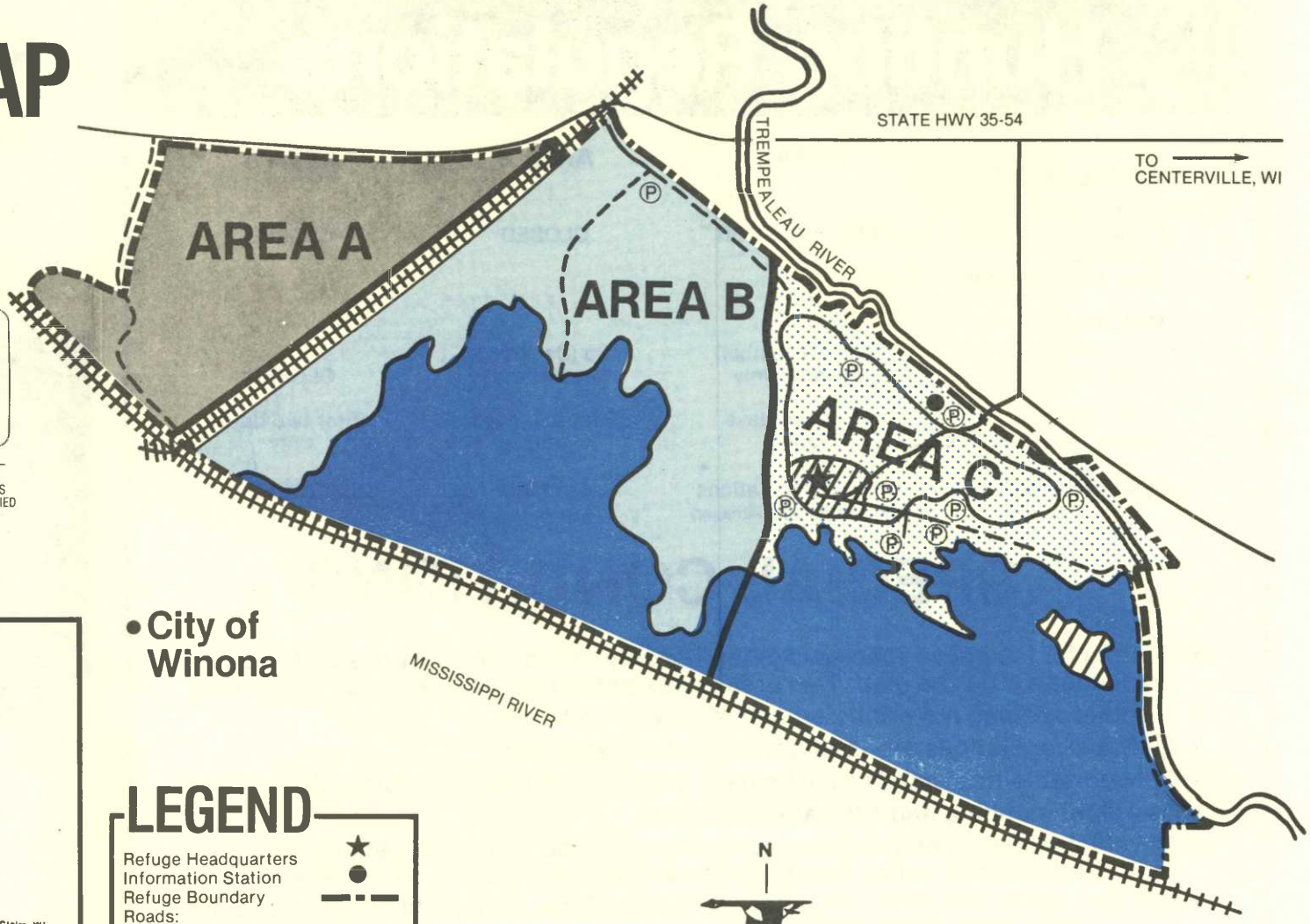
REGULATIONS ON BACK SIDE OF MAP

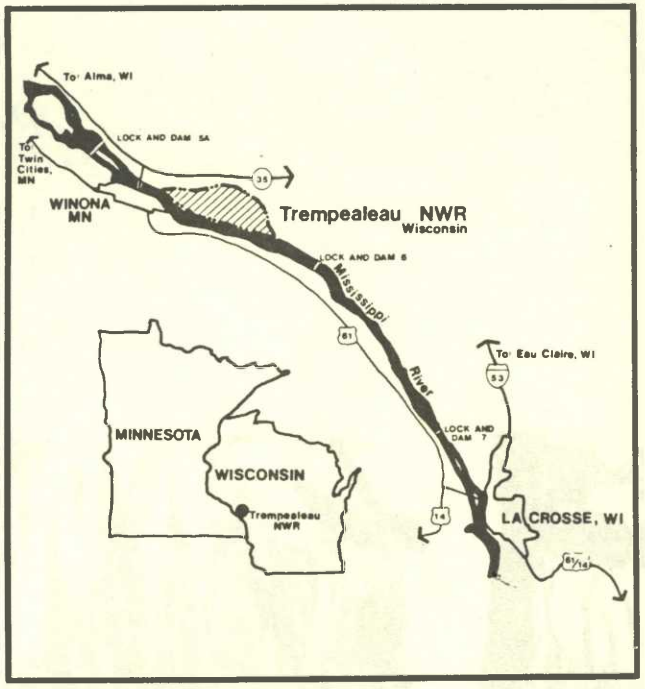
REFUGE SIGNS — KNOW THEIR MEANING

REFUGE BONDARY SIGN

AREA OPEN TO HUNTING AT SPECIFIC TIMES

SANCTUARY AREA — OFF LIMITS TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED





• **City of Winona**

LEGEND

- Refuge Headquarters
- Information Station
- Refuge Boundary
- Roads:
  - Vehicle Travel
  - No Vehicle Travel
- Parking Areas
- Closed to All Hunting
- Area A:
  - Open Hunting-Small Game
  - Deer by Permit
- Area B:
  - Deer by Permit
- Area C:
  - Deer by Permit
- Impoundments & Lakes
- Railroad Dikes

N

S

SCALE IN MILES

0 1 2

TREMPEALEAU
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

PUBLIC USE INFORMATION

Welcome to the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. The information that follows is designed to make your visit more enjoyable. Refuge staff are available to assist you at headquarters should you need further information. Enjoy your visit.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, administered by the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, was established in 1934 to provide habitat for migratory birds, especially waterfowl. The original 700-acre refuge was expanded in 1979 with acquisition of the former Delta Fish and Fur Farm. Trempealeau Refuge now contains more than 5,600 acres of marshes, bottomland hardwoods and upland grasslands and forest.

Management practices are directed toward maintaining and improving conditions for all types of wildlife native to this area.

PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

The refuge is open to the public year round, seven days a week, DAYLIGHT HOURS ONLY. Watch for signs at the refuge turn-off on State Highway 35-54 indicating closed periods when the entrance road is flooded.

The following recreational activities are allowed:

Wildlife Viewing

A five-mile, one-way auto drive offers excellent opportunities for viewing wildlife, particularly during early morning and evening hours. White-tailed deer are usually seen throughout the year.

Hiking

A self-guided nature trail, approximately 1-mile in length, is located about mid-way around the wildlife drive. This trail features interpretive panels high-lighting plants and animals found in the area. Several miles of dikes and service roads closed to public vehicles are also open for hiking. These are posted with signs indicating "Foot Traffic Only".

Fishing

Portions of the main refuge pool are open to public fishing. Certain sections of the pool are seasonally posted to protect sensitive wildlife areas -- watch for "Closed Area" signs. A boat launching site with parking facilities is located near Kiep's Island about 1-mile east of headquarters. Only hand-powered craft and boats equipped with electric motors may be used. The boat fishing season runs from the first Saturday in May to freeze-up, and all current Wisconsin State regulations governing inland waters apply. Bank fishing is permitted at the boat landing area and from the Trempealeau River dike north of Trempealeau Mountain. This dike can also be reached by hiking from a parking area east of headquarters or by boat via the Trempealeau River. Bullheads dominate the catch, however, northern pike and yellow perch are present. Ice fishing is also permitted in season. Contact refuge headquarters for further information on fishing opportunities.

Hunting

Portions of the refuge are open to small game hunting and archery and gun deer hunting by special permit. Maps showing open areas and details on refuge hunting programs are available at headquarters.

Snow-shoeing, Cross-Country Skiing

These activities are permitted on the entire refuge in season. There are no groomed ski trails on the refuge, however, several miles of groomed trails are maintained at nearby Perrot State Park.

Bicycling

Bicycling is allowed on the wildlife drive and on all refuge roads closed to public vehicle travel.

Mushroom, Nut and Berry Picking

Collecting of mushrooms and wild fruits for personal use is permitted.

RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES

The following refer to a few of the more commonly asked questions. Further information may be obtained by contacting the refuge headquarters.

Firearms

Firearms are prohibited unless being used in conjunction with an authorized refuge hunt. This also applies to archery equipment and other types of wildlife harvest equipment.

Plants, Animals

No plants, animals, artifacts, or any other feature may be removed from the refuge except as stated under PERMITTED ACTIVITIES above.

Camping

Overnight camping on the refuge is prohibited. Camping facilities are available nearby (Perrot State Park and others).

Vehicle Access

Motorized vehicles licensed for highway travel are permitted on the entrance road, wildlife drive and other roads not posted for foot traffic only. Off-road vehicles, including snowmobiles, trail bikes and all-terrain vehicles are not allowed on any portion of the refuge.

Domestic Animals

Dogs and other pets must be on a leash and under control while on the refuge. Horses are prohibited.

Information, Office Hours

The refuge headquarters, located three miles southwest of Centerville, Wisconsin, is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday throughout the year. Visitors may stop for information or call 608-539-2311, or write, Refuge Manager, Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, Box 326, Route 1, Trempealeau, Wisconsin 54661.

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