

# Annual Report

## 1949

## ANNUAL SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Construction.

During the year covered by this summary, three construction projects were undertaken on the refuge. Late in the summer of 1948 a 135 rods of refuge fence extending from a point immediately opposite the southwest corner of the recreation grounds along the east road out of refuge headquarters was torn down and moved roughly 60' feet south of its present location and then reconstructed. This fence moving project was accomplished to make room for the construction of a new road paralleling the old road but following a natural high ridge which forms the back bone of Indian pass that separates Hillebrands and Spring lakes. This road is being constructed under project number 5246. This new road grade averages about 5.5 feet higher than the old road which because of its low location, was always blocked with snow in winter months.

Actual work of constructing the new road began October 28 and excluding time out for bad weather and numerous break downs, it continued until November 30 at which time the frost line had reached a depth of 8" inches and operations were suspended for the winter months. During this period a total of 7,128 cubic yards of earth were placed on the grade and the fill work was about 70% completed. Work was begun again in late April but mechanical failures in the tractor and power take-off forced suspension of all work soon after it began. Operations on this project were then held up until after the end of the report period and a new power take-off unit could be obtained.

The preliminary work for this project consumed a great deal of time as some timber and brush had to be removed from the road site and since the ridge on which the grade was being constructed was a mass of large glacial boulders, moving them provided a formidable project.

During the period an old WPA warming shack that was standing near the Hillebrands storage yard was dismantled and the lumber along with some other salvage on hand, was used to build a winter garage size 10x18 feet. When completed this building was given 2 coats of paint and moved to a location near the east end of the refuge bordering the road into headquarters. It is planned to use this building for storing a refuge truck during the winter months at a point nearest a county road that is occasionally opened by county snow plows. The road into refuge headquarters from the present location of the garage is frequently blocked with snow for periods from 2 to five months and unless some vehicle is left beyond this snow barrier, mail, supplies and emergency transportation to the outside would not be available for refuge personnel.

### Maintenance.

Very heavy snows during the winter of 1947-1948 did so much damage to refuge boundary fences that this work was only partly

completed at the end of last seasons report period. Much of this repair labor was accomplished in the summer months of 1948. Broken wires bent and broken posts were the rule along much of 34 miles of government fence. These fence troubles along with horses from the Sisseton Reservation and stray stock from the country side gave personnel a sizeable herd job until this repair work was completed. The next important work item was repairs to refuge roads, trails and dikes, culverts had to be cleaned, wash outs repaired in the road and trail system, and gravel, clay and rock hauled for the wash outs and repairs made to muskrat and beaver damage to dikes. The main entry road from headquarters court to the gate was resurfaced with 42 cubic yards of sized gravel and some low spots were patched in the court and drive ways.

Weed control operations were begun early in July with a borrowed power sprayer and 37 acres of canadian and sow thistle patches were covered in the recreation grounds and wooded areas near refuge headquarters. All but two of the buildings at refuge headquarters were retrimmed and the doors repainted. The recreation area was mowed free of weeds and a number of loads of wood were hauled for the convenience of picnicens and garbage hauled and ashes cleaned from the fire places. All refuge roads and trails were mowed free of weeds twice during the season and weeds and grass were mowed around headquarters buildings on innumerable occasions. Ventilating holes were cut in the concrete foundation of the Hillebrands storage building and the holes screened to keep out rodents. Considerable time was spent during the report period repairing and maintaining government equipment and minor repairs were made to buildings and fixtures.

Early in May 460 feet of 6 foot temporary snow fence was removed from the recreation grounds and then installed again in October of the same season. This high snow fence is particularly difficult to install as it has to be so heavily braced and guyed to withstand the terrific winter winds blowing off the lake that it normally requires the labor of 2 men for three days for installation. During the severe winter months refuge personnel spent considerable time in snow removal work, hauling feed and grit to the refuge goose flock and wood for heating the service building and shop.

#### Economic Use.

A complete revision was made of the Master Economic Use Plan for the refuge and was completed during the period. Work in this phase of refuge administration has increased immeasurably with the addition of new lands for this purpose. Acreage included under both haying and cooperative farming agreements is now the greatest in refuge history and cash income from this and other economic use sources has increased in proportion.



Wildlife Surplus.

The South Dakota Game Fish & Parks Department has not looked with favor on an open season on deer in the Waubay Refuge or vicinity for the past two years, in spite of the over population on the refuge. The State Commission felt that since there was no over population on areas outside the refuge itself and that only a small number of deer were involved, that herd reduction could best be handled by refuge personnel. A state permit was issued authorizing this reduction and these operations were begun early in January. A total of 35 head of bucks, does, and fawns were slaughtered and the carcasses turned over to State supported institutions including a number of local schools that serve noon lunches. This work was carried on in an efficient and business like manner without fan fair or local criticism and to the complete satisfaction of the State Game Department local commissioner and State Game Warden.

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Frederic T. Staunton  
Refuge Manager  
April 30, 1949