

WALNUT CREEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE - PRAIRIE LEARNING CENTER

Prairie City, Iowa

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Calendar Year 1991

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

REVIEW AND APPROVALS

WALNUT CREEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE - PRAIRIE LEARNING CENTER

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 Acting Refuge Manager	<u>3-27-92</u> Date	 Refuge Supervisor Review	<u>3.31.92</u> Date
 Regional Office Approval		<u>4-2-92</u> Date	

INTRODUCTION

Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge is located approximately 20 miles east of Des Moines, Iowa in southwest Jasper County. The Refuge was established on September 1, 1990, 30 days after release of an Environmental Assessment and signing of the "Finding of No Significant Impact" by Regional Director Jim Gritman. Authority for establishment was the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956.

Authorized size is 8,654 acres. The core of the project is 3,622 acres formerly owned by Redlands Corporation, a subsidiary of Iowa Power and Light Company. The primary purposes for establishment are: (1) to restore native tall grass prairie, wetland, and woodland habitats for breeding and migratory waterfowl and resident wildlife; (2) to serve as a major environmental education center providing opportunities for study; (3) to provide outdoor recreation benefits to the public; and (4) to provide assistance to local landowners to improve their lands for wildlife habitat.

The rolling topography of the Refuge contains lands which are highly erodible with steep slopes draining into Walnut Creek. Current land use is approximately 70% corn and soybeans, 14% pasture and small grain, 9% forest, and 7% "other". Wooded areas are mostly oak savannahs and riparian corridors along Walnut Creek.

Lands totalling 4,012 acres purchased from "willing sellers" will eventually be added to the core area formally owned by Iowa Power. The Iowa Power land was originally purchased in the late 1970's/early 1980's as the site for a future nuclear power plant. The plant was never built and the land had been intensively farmed by tenants.

A preliminary feasibility study completed by the Service indicated a traditional waterfowl refuge was not possible. However, in the interest of promoting the purposes for the establishment identified above, this opportunity was looked at in a new light.

On May 29, 1990, a \$6 million Land and Water Conservation Fund, (LAWCON) appropriation was included in a supplemental FY '90 appropriation bill. A Preliminary Project Proposal was prepared and approved on June 26, 1990.

A Region III Planning Team was formed and the necessary preliminary planning work completed. Following difficult negotiations with Iowa Power, an agreement was executed on September 26, 1990 for the sale of the 3,622 acres for \$4 million. The original cost to Iowa Power to acquire the land was \$7.8 million.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

i

A. HIGHLIGHTS

1

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1

C. LAND ACQUISITION

1. Fee Title	1
2. Easements	2
3. Other	2
4. Farmers Home Administration Conservation Easements	2

D. PLANNING

1. Master Plan	2
2. Management Plan	4
3. Public Participation	4
4. Compliance with Environmental and Cultural Resource Mandates	6
5. Research and Investigations	6
6. Other	7

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel	7
2. Youth Programs	8
3. Other Manpower Programs	8
4. Volunteer Program	8
5. Funding	8
6. Safety	8
7. Technical Assistance	9
8. Other	9

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

1. General	9
2. Wetlands	9
3. Forests	9
4. Croplands	9

HABITAT MANAGEMENT (Cont.)

	Page
5. Grasslands	10
6. Other Habitats	10
7. Grazing	10
8. Haying	10
9. Fire Management	10
10. Pest Control	10
11. Water Rights	11
12. Wilderness and Special Areas	11
13. WPA Easement Monitoring	11
14. Farmers Home Administration Conservation Easements	11
15. Private Lands	11
16. Other Easements	11

G. WILDLIFE

1. Wildlife Diversity	11
2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species	11
3. Waterfowl	12
4. Marsh and Water Birds	12
5. Shorebirds, Bulls, Terns, and Allied Species	12
6. Raptors	12
7. Other Migratory Birds	12
8. Game Mammals	12
9. Marine Mammals	12
10. Other Resident Wildlife	12
11. Fisheries Resources	12
12. Wildlife Propagation and Stocking	12
13. Surplus Animal Disposal	12
14. Scientific Collections	12
15. Animal Control	12
16. Marking and Banding	12
17. Disease Prevention and Control	12

H. PUBLIC USE

1. General	12
2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students	12
3. Outdoor Classrooms - Teachers	13
4. Interpretive Foot Trails	13
5. Interpretive Tour Routes	13
6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations	13
7. Other Interpretive Programs	13

H. PUBLIC USE (Cont.)

Page

8. Hunting	13
9. Fishing	13
10. Trapping	13
11. Wildlife Observation	13
12. Other Wildlife Oriented Recreation	13
13. Camping	13
14. Picnicking	13
15. Off-Road Vehicle	13
16. Other Non-Wildlife Oriented Recreation	13
17. Law Enforcement	13
18. Cooperating Associations	13
19. Concessions	13

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

1. New Construction	14
2. Rehabilitation	14
3. Major Maintenance	14
4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement	14
5. Communications Systems	15
6. Computer Systems	15
7. Energy Conservation	15
8. Other	15

J. OTHER ITEMS

1. Cooperative Programs	15
2. Other Economic Uses	15
3. Items of Interest	16
4. Credits	16

K. FEEDBACK

16

L. INFORMATION PACKET -- (none available)

A. HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights for the year include:

- acquisition of the Redlands/Iowa Power Co. lands and other tracts
- addition of staff -- Office Assistant, Outdoor Recreation Planner
- development of the Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement
- beginning of selection process for exhibit design/A&E firm
- \$13.5 million in funding for development of the Refuge secured through congressional action
- construction of Interim Headquarters on site

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

No data to report.

C. LAND ACQUISITION

1. Fee Title

Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge became "official" on 4/16/91 with the acceptance of title to the Swan Tract. It was only 9.50 acres, but thousand mile journeys start with one step. This was the first actual acquisition and gave Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge legitimacy in the form of the all important Organization Code, 30147, and three letter code, WNC.

On 9/30/91, a condemnation action was filed with the U.S. Court in Des Moines. This "friendly condemnation" was the result of efforts by the Service and Iowa Power to resolve the issue of placing value on a large block of land with no comparable sales for comparison. Both sides were in agreement as to value, \$4 million, but needed the Courts to endorse the agreement. When finalized, 3,622 acres were added to the Refuge land base. At year end, the U.S. F&WS owns in

fee or have signed Purchase Agreements on 4,028.9 acres "more or less". This represents about 47% of the Refuge.

Efforts continue, with several owners undergoing appraisals and in negotiation. Mr. Don Kleven, WAM3-Fergus Falls, MN, is the Realty Officer working on Walnut Creek NWR. Appraisals are considered low but little land is being sold, therefore, no real good market has been established.

In summary, at the end of the year:

<u>Tract#</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Status</u>
57	Swan	9.5	complete
43	Beener	4.4	complete
42	Beyer	112.4	complete
10,A-D 11	Redlands Iowa Power	3,622.0	complete
61	DeRaad	280.6	signed agreement

2. Easements -- Nothing to report.
3. Other -- Nothing to report.
4. Farmers Home Administration Conservation Easements -- Nothing to report.

D. PLANNING

1. Master Plan

A great deal of time and energy of the Refuge staff is involved in the Master Planning and Environmental Impact Statement development effort. The results of this effort will be reflected in the two documents when they are finalized in September, 1992. A few of the highlights that took place in 1991 follow.

Service staff and consultants spent the first part of the year gathering data.

A Programming Workshop was held 4/29-5/3/91 at Ding Darling NWR. It was a productive meeting resulting in valuable input being received from a variety of

disciplines. It was helpful to have Dr. Daryl Smith of the University of Northern Iowa and Arnie Sohn of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources attend. As a result of the workshop, a preliminary program or concept was agreed upon regarding the programmatic and physical facilities WNC would need to meet the goals which were also developed.

The Service Planning Team met the consultants at DeSoto NWR on 5/15/91 to review site selection criteria and Program Development Drafts. Not everything went as well as hoped. There was a great deal of difficulty in getting the contracted economist, Harrison Price, to understand the farm economy of south central Iowa as well as the constraints the Service must operate under in terms of Federal Acquisition Requirements and other rules and regulations. Much work needed to be completed prior to release to the public. A completion date was scheduled for August, 1991. By year end, this information had not been released.

During this same period, a large portion of the Draft Environmental Education Component was reviewed. Much of the work submitted by Jim Peterson of Bios, Inc. was substandard. Peterson was unable to grasp the concept of environmental education in the Service. He was also unable to prepare a refuge logo, even though the staff and the Regional Facilities Design Team spent an inordinate amount of time working with him. In the end, the logo was designed by Doug Johnson, RO-SS, on his own time. He did an outstanding job.

Eventually, Peterson's involvement with the WNC project was eliminated. Near year end, a Service Team was assembled to salvage what could be utilized from Peterson's efforts.

On 10/15-16/91, a workshop for the Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge Consultants and the Facility Design Team was held at the Ft. Snelling Air Force Base. It was an opportunity to consolidate decisions and highlight issues and tasks to be accomplished. The workshop served to emphasize the amount of effort it takes to do innovative master planning, even with outside consultants. Near year end, the need to reconfigure the Regional Facilities Design Team into a single focused Walnut Creek Development Team was evident.

Another major component of the master planning undertaking involved the effort to select an exhibit designer and architect/engineer to develop the physical facilities which were being planned in the tasks referred to above.

A pre-A&E Selection Workshop was held at Minnesota Valley NWR on 11/7-8/91. Ms. Claudia Jurmain was retained to facilitate the thoughts of the various participants: Regional Office staff, Refuge staff, and consultants. It was recognized that the success of the project will rest with the ability of the "client" to accurately portray the "vision" of Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Prairie

Learning Center. It was a very good session which allowed the Service to begin putting its act together prior to taking it on the road.

The Invitation for Bids for Design of the Visitor Center Complex resulted in 29 firms submitting proposals. A selection team composed of Shaffer, Birger, and Holbrook and Rampi of the Service Engineering Center met in June to examine the proposals.

Near the end of July, the selection team reviewed the firms' proposals and eliminated 23. A short list of 6 was selected. During 10/7-10/91, members of the A&E selection team reviewed facilities offered by short list exhibit designers as examples of their best work. Of particular note was the USFS Visitor Center at Mt. St. Helens, WA and the Royal British Columbia Museum at Victoria, B.C., Canada. Cahokia Mounds near East St. Louis, IL, also made a strong impression on the team. Interview visits to the 6 firms in contention were made shortly after the first of the year.

During the period, Birger and Shaffer met with Project Leader Steve Smith and the staff at Wichita Mountains NWR and the staff at Kansas State University's Konza Prairie Research Area to see bison and elk handling facilities and talk about large animal management. Everyone was helpful and we appreciated their assistance. We have a long way to go before elk and buffalo roam at WNC.

2. Management Plan -- Nothing to report.

3. Public Participation

As part of the Master Plan/EIS process, a great deal of time has been spent in public participation, ranging from large formal public meetings to one-on-one sessions with community leaders and private citizens.

Early in the process, Birger met with the local political delegation -- State Senator Dieleman and Representatives Black and Jesse at the State Capital. This was an introductory session to keep them informed of the WNC project and correct any misinformation they had received. It was a good session.

The first formal Public Meeting regarding the Master Plan/EIS was held on the evening of 3/14/91 at the Southeast Polk High School, west of Prairie City. Approximately 130 people attended and were composed of local Prairie City residents, area farmers and "outsiders" - this last group consisted of Audubon, Sierra Club, hunters, and interested citizens from the greater Des Moines area. The nominal group method was used to try to get some constructive comments on the project and the process. The meeting went fine but in retrospect, the citizens were not prepared well enough. Insufficient background information was available prior to the meeting in order for them to participate as effectively as anticipated.

The public's comments didn't bring any real surprises, economic effects were raised as an issue in addition to others. It was heartening to hear emphasis by a large number of participants placed on the need for a high quality project .

In addition to the formal public meeting, the Master Plan/EIS consultant team led by Allen Eskew of Eskew Filson Architects held several "focus group" meetings with distinct interest groups who had been identified in the preliminary work. They included educators, researchers, Chambers of Commerce/Tourism, and the Prairie City Co-op. As follow-up to the first meeting, a newsletter was produced and distributed by the consultants.

The Project Leader attended many meetings with local groups during the year, e.g., Greenbelt Advisory Committee, Monroe Businessmen, Pleasant Hill Economic Development Council, and the Prairie City Economic Development Committee. The Economic Development Committee has Birger acting in an ex officio capacity as a regular member. They meet every two weeks and concentrate on the development of the Prairie City community. This has proven to be a good communication link to the community.

The second Public Meeting was held in the Prairie City/Monroe Middle School auditorium on 6/27/91. Approximately 80 people were in attendance, again, many from outside the Prairie City area. The meeting was structured to be an information transfer session. Alternatives to facilities and sites were also presented. Some of the same issues--tax loss, price of Redlands property, loss of farm market--which have been presented in the past, were again discussed. A new item, horse trail riding and fox hunting to hounds, was raised and re-examined. The consultants planned to address special topics, e.g. taxes, fire, roads, and acquisition through newsletters and mailings. These had not been published prior to year end.

At the bi-annual Iowa Prairie Conference held at the University of Northern Iowa, 7/27-28/91, Shaffer and Birger conducted a presentation on the development of the Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge and the Master Planning process. The group, Iowa Prairie Network, composed of people from all over the state interested in prairies, adopted a resolution in support of the Walnut Creek NWR project. Several dozen individuals volunteered to assist with seed collection and other projects.

The Project Leader has become associated with the Des Moines Recreational River Green Belt Advisory Committee on a regular basis. The group is composed of representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and several counties and local municipalities along the Des Moines River. They meet quarterly to coordinate recreational development along the river.

4. Compliance With Environmental/Cultural Resource Mandates

Included in the Master Planning, Malcolm Pirnie and Associates was contracted to perform a cultural resources evaluation of the Refuge area. Their associates spent several weeks on the site in the spring to develop a geo-morphology study as part of a predictive model for establishing probable locations of sites. The unusually heavy spring rains hampered much of the initial effort.

Birger met on 5/6/91 with Malcolm Pirnie Associates Joe and Curt Hudak, Teresa Halloran and Kathy Gurley of the Iowa Historic Preservation Office to discuss the cultural resources investigation. It was agreed upon that the methodology outlined in the Pirnie Associates proposal would meet the state's needs.

On 7/9/91, the cultural resource team reviewed findings to date in: geo-morphology, archeology, and history. Time spent in the field reviewing sites offered opportunity for a beneficial exchange between investigators and reviewers. An effective predictive model will enable the Refuge to plan developments without having to do cultural resource reconnaissance for each site. In attendance were the Malcolm Pirnie team, SHPO, RHPO, (and me Harpo, but seriously folks...).

At the end of the period, a final draft had not been approved. Results are expected soon and will include details as to content.

A Categorical Exclusion for the Interim Office was prepared and sent to the RO.

5. Research & Investigations

As part of the Master Plan/EIS effort, several investigators were busy on the site during the year. All results and information are covered in the Master Plan/EIS and will not be documented in this report.

During the period, notice was received from Dr. Bruce Menzel, ISU Dept. of Animal Ecology Chairman, regarding a large multi-year, multi-state watershed study being proposed by ISU and the EPA. A portion of this study would take place on the Walnut Creek Watershed. This will be very useful in the Private Lands Program adjacent to the Refuge.

Birger met on 12/13/91 at the ISU Wildlife Co-op Unit in Ames to establish a "Research Advisory Group". The group would be composed of Unit members and other academics from ISU, UNI and other local institutions. They will address research opportunities and needs for the Refuge and begin to form a plan to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the prairie reconstruction.

Research proposals will need to go through the O&M funding process as well as any "outside sources" that can be brought to bear.

6. Other

Many opportunities to brief officials within and outside the Service occurred during the period. A brief sampling follows.

On 3/11/91, a briefing at the Regional Office for Regional Director Gritman, Deputy Regional Director Moriarty, and others took place on Draft Goals & Objectives for Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Prairie Learning Center. Allen Eskew practiced for his first public meeting held later in the week.

Assistant Regional Director (Wildlife Resources) Eadie was briefed at the Regional Office on 6/14/91. Discussions on key decisions to date were held.

Birger met with Larry Wilson, Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources on 6/20/91. He was briefed on the status of the Master Plan/EIS and other subjects.

On 12/2, ARD Eadie visited Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge. He visited with the staff and toured the site of the Interim Office, in addition to the "probable preferred" site for the visitor center. He was brought up to date on other topics also.

Matt Kerschbaum, Wildlife Associate Manager (Division 2), visited the Refuge on 12/12/91. He talked to the staff and visited the Interim Office site as well as the other features of the former Iowa Power Co. Lands. Matt has been very involved with the development of the project and has attended many of the Master Planning meetings and workshops.

Fourth Congressional District Representative Neal Smith stopped by the Refuge approximately on a monthly basis for briefings.

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

During the period, we finally received an Office Assistant Certificate from OPM. Birger interviewed candidates and selected Mrs. Carla Dykstra for the position. She accepted and began her government career 5/28/91. She took a correspondence training course in Small Purchases, passed the test with a high score and was issued a Warrant.

Office Assistant Dykstra attended the Administrative Workshop and Total Quality Management Training in Mpls. 11/4-9/91. It was a good opportunity for her to meet many of the RO and field station staff. She also participated in Intermediate and Advanced Word Perfect training which was held locally.

On 11/5/91, Mr. David Aplin accepted the position of Outdoor Recreation Planner. Attempts to fill this position had begun in early spring. Aplin reported for duty after the beginning of the new year. Dave and his wife, Susan, spent 3 weeks of December in Malawi, Africa on behalf of the Peace Corps, presenting an environmental education workshop and revisiting and evaluating the project they had worked on previously.

2. Youth Programs -- Nothing to report.

3. Other Manpower Programs

In an ongoing effort to attract qualified women to the Service, Birger attended the annual meeting of Iowa Women In Natural Resources at Springbrook State Park. Other Service personnel were also in attendance. It was a good opportunity to experience what it means to be in a minority group - a handful of males among a large group of females.

4. Volunteer Program

Although there has not been a formal Volunteer Program this year, several individuals and groups have expressed interest. A nucleus for a volunteer program will be organized in 1992.

5. Funding

The funding for Operations and Maintenance for Fiscal Year 1991 was \$294,000.00. In addition, \$13,550,000.00 was authorized by congressional add-on in October of 1991. This funding is for the continued design and construction of the Visitor Center and other physical facilities being developed in the Master Plan process.

6. Safety

No formal meetings were held. Only the Project Leader was on board, during a major portion of the year.

In response to inquiry from the Regional Office, Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge is being recognized for its accident free record. No accidents have occurred since the Refuge was established.

7. Technical Assistance -- Nothing to report.

8. Other

During 3/18-20/91, Judy McClendon, Mingo NWR, arrived at the Refuge and organized our office. She was extremely helpful in installing computer software and getting the paper flow caught up.

Judy was back again 6/17-19/91 to work with Carla on bringing the office up to date. It was again very helpful, not only for Carla, but the Project Leader as well.

During the period, Terry Root, DeSoto NWR - Biologist, played a key role in initiating a good relationship with our co-op farmers.

The Project Leader is very appreciative of the effort other offices and stations are making to assist Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Prairie Learning Center get through its birth pangs.

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

1. General -- Nothing to report.
2. Wetlands -- Nothing to report.
3. Forests -- Nothing to report.
4. Croplands

It was anticipated that transfer of the Iowa Power land title would take place prior to the crop year, but that didn't occur. It was agreed that Iowa Power as landlord would use the same language as used in their '90 farming agreement except for the one third/two third split and the Service's approved chemical list would be "recommended".

There was no cropland under Service ownership in 1991. On Jan, 3, 1992, 3,626 acres of the former Redlands/Iowa Power Co. land was transferred to the Federal Government.

Co-op farmer Mark Wiggins reported harvesting the following bushels per acre on his portion of the Iowa Power Co. land for 1991: 40 bu/ac average on beans versus 45 - 48 most years and 100 bu/ac average on corn versus 125 - 130 normally.

5. Grasslands

Birger spent much of the period in consultation with Dr. Daryl Smith, University of Northern Iowa, reviewing prairie restoration planning. Dr. Smith has put together a group of knowledgeable people prominent in the Iowa prairie community as a resource to assist in the reconstruction of Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge. This will be one of the largest, most ambitious landscape reconstruction undertakings the Service has ever been involved in.

Tom Cady, Refuge volunteer, collected the first seed for establishment of the prairie reconstruction. Pale Purple Coneflower and New Jersey Tea were collected within the area defined by Dr. Daryl Smith as providing local genotype sources.

From small seeds mighty ecosystems grow.

6. Other Habitats -- Nothing to report.

7. Grazing -- Nothing to report.

8. Haying -- Nothing to report.

9. Fire Management

Fire will be a major management tool at WNC. The early planning for reconstruction of the tall grass prairie will involve a great deal of coordination with fire interest groups especially since the concept of prescribed burning is foreign in a landscape dominated by corn and soybeans.

On 9/9/91, a meeting in Prairie City between the Service (represented by RO-Fire Management Officer Weltmer and Birger) and several local Volunteer Fire Departments was held to explain the role of fire in the work of the Service. About 40 people attended from 4 volunteer fire departments. The meeting proved to be very beneficial and a considerable amount of misinformation was corrected.

The next day, Birger and Weltmer toured the Refuge. Among topics covered were potential fire issues and needs, e.g. fuel reduction, habitat management, a Geographic Information System component, mutual-aid with Red Rock COE, local VFDs, IDNR, and others.

Birger met several times with members and the Trustees of the Walnut Creek Benefitted Fire Department to negotiate a Cooperative Agreement for fire protection. Negotiation continued through the end of the period.

10. Pest Control -- Nothing to report.

11. Water Rights -- Nothing to report.
12. Wilderness & Special Areas -- Nothing to report.
13. WPA Easement Monitoring -- Nothing to report.
14. Farmers Home Administration Conservation Easements

As WNC was created, county responsibility was transferred from other refuges in Iowa. Private Lands Program files from DeSoto NWR were transferred to WNC during the period along with files from the Wapello Dist. of the Mark Twain NWR. Birger and Tom Bell, Wapello Dist. Mgr., Mark Twain NWR, visited Conservation Easements in Wayne and Lucas counties on 5/29/91. Management responsibilities were transferred from Wapello to WNC. The owners we met with were cordial. One problem did surface. The owner of an adjacent tract was found to have a part of the easement on his land following the survey. Bell had tried to contact this individual by phone and certified letter. He is a convicted felon who has served time in the Iowa State Prison and is classified as "strange" by his neighbor. Further efforts to contact this individual have not been successful.

Birger met with Doug Goben, Wayne County Conservation Easement owner, on 11/11/91 to inspect and discuss his CE. A great deal of fencing will need to be put in this coming spring.

15. Private Lands

Along with the Conservation Easements, other Private Lands Program files and projects were transferred to WNC.

Birger met with Paul Miller, Jasper County SCS, and Steve Kennedy, Jasper County ASCS, regarding Private Lands potential in the upper reaches of the Walnut Creek watershed. This area has been cited for special attention by the SCS county advisory board and there is some REAP involvement, it holds some potential for 1992.

16. Other Easements -- Nothing to report.

G. WILDLIFE

1. Wildlife Diversity -- Nothing to report.
2. Endangered And/Or Threatened Species -- Nothing to report.

3. Waterfowl -- Nothing to report.
4. Marsh & Water Birds -- Nothing to report.
5. Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns, And Allied Species -- Nothing to report.
6. Raptors -- Nothing to report.
7. Other Migratory Birds -- Nothing to report.
8. Game Mammals -- Nothing to report.
9. Marine Mammals -- Nothing to report.
10. Other Resident Wildlife -- Nothing to report.
11. Fisheries Resources -- Nothing to report.
12. Wildlife Propagation & Stocking -- Nothing to report.
13. Surplus Animal Disposal -- Nothing to report.
14. Scientific Collections -- Nothing to report.
15. Animal Control -- Nothing to report.
16. Marking & Banding -- Nothing to report.
17. Disease Prevention & Control -- Nothing to report.

H. PUBLIC USE

1. General

On 8/13/91, the staff of WNC took part in the Prairie City Old Settlers Day Parade. We didn't have an official float, only a decorated Refuge van. Next year we'll be better prepared.

During the period, many presentations were made to various groups regarding the new Refuge and Prairie Learning Center. Some of this effort was mentioned in "Public Involvement" above.

2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students -- Nothing to report.

3. Outdoor Classrooms - Teachers -- Nothing to report.
4. Interpretive Foot Trails -- Nothing to report.
5. Interpretive Tour Routes -- Nothing to report.
6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations -- Nothing to report.
7. Other Interpretive Programs -- Nothing to report.
8. Hunting -- Nothing to report.
9. Fishing -- Nothing to report.
10. Trapping -- Nothing to report.
11. Wildlife Observation -- Nothing to report.
12. Other Wildlife Oriented Recreation -- Nothing to report.
13. Camping -- Nothing to report.
14. Picnicking -- Nothing to report.
15. Off-Road Vehicle -- Nothing to report.
16. Other Non-Wildlife Oriented Recreation -- Nothing to report.
17. Law Enforcement

On 7/15/91, Birger performed the quarterly Firearms Familiarization with SA Kocal at a range near Des Moines.

On 10/28/91, Birger qualified with his service revolver and shotgun under supervision of Iowa Department of Natural Resources Range Officer Lon Lindenberg and Special Agent Kocal.

18. Cooperating Associations -- Nothing to report.
19. Concessions -- Nothing to report.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

1. New Construction

The decision was reached to build an Interim Headquarters Facility on the Refuge. The leased office space in the Iowa Concrete Products Co. building in Prairie City was inadequate after more than 2 staff members were on board and it was important to have a presence on the land. The firm of Eskew Filson, doing the Master Plan/EIS, was given the task of designing a facility that would function well for a period of 2-4 years. Working with the SEC and the Facilities Design Team in the RO, a plan was formulated and a bid was let through the 8(a), Minority Contractors Program of the Small Business Administration. Tony's Cement Works, Inc. of Lincoln, NE was selected and began work late in the period.

A system of "modular buildings", (AKA trailers), was designed. At the conclusion of the need at WNC, these facilities could be transferred to another location for development of a field station.

Birger met with ASCS County Executive Kennedy regarding modification of the existing CRP Contract with Iowa Power Co. prior to Dec. 31, 1991, which was the date possession changed hands. The Refuge requested early access to the land to begin construction of the Interim Office.

The pre-construction conference for the Interim Office Project was held on 12/4/91. Dave Shaffer, RO-Facilities Design, acted as CORE. Joe Delgado, Superintendent with Tony's Cement Works, met with all of the sub-contractors. Ground was broken at 2:30 P.M. on a very cold and windy afternoon. By the end of the month, much progress had been made and a projected date for occupancy was 1/20/92. We came close, 2/28/92.

Work will continue in the spring to finish the site work and rehabilitate the existing buildings. The site is a former farmstead with a barn and small pole building that will be used for equipment storage.

2. Rehabilitation -- Nothing to report.
3. Major Maintenance -- Nothing to report.
4. Equipment Utilization & Replacement

A new Jeep Cherokee utility vehicle was delivered on 6/4/91.

A fiberglass topper was installed on one of the 4x2 pickups.

The WNC tracked excavator was transported from DeSoto NWR to Mingo NWR for summer work. During the period, other WNC equipment was loaned to the following stations: Sherburne NWR - 10yd dump truck for wetland restorations in Minnesota; Litchfield WMD - 4x2 pickup; and a wheeled ag tractor to Swan Lake NWR for habitat restoration work.

The Hydro-ax listed on WNC property was transferred to Agassiz NWR on 6/20/91.

A Ford semi-tractor for WNC was delivered to DeSoto NWR.

On 7/17/91, the station picked up a new 7 passenger Dodge van providing passenger transport.

On 8/9/91, WNT Management District purchased a \$385.00 "root plow" for use on FmHA Conservation Easements in Iowa. Thanks to the Wapello District Staff for assisting with the purchase.

A Polaris 350l 4x4 ATV was purchased for Private Lands and refuge work.

A slip-on pumper unit, 150 gls, was purchased for prescribed burning.

5. Communications Systems -- Nothing to report.

6. Computer Systems

Two IBM compatible, Northgate 386 ADP Processors with color monitors and Service standard software were added during the year.

In addition, two CompuAdd 325 Processors with color monitors and software were also added. A Compaq LTE/286 Portable computer with software was acquired for use in the field and Private Lands work.

7. Energy Conservation -- Nothing to report.

8. Other -- Nothing to report.

J. OTHER ITEMS

1. Cooperative Programs -- Nothing to report.

2. Other Economic Uses -- Nothing to report.

3. Items Of Interest

By the end of the period, reporters had interviewed for (or published) articles on the Refuge in the following publications: Journal of The American Planning Association, National Geographic Society Magazine, American Society of Landscape Architects, and International Wildlife.

4. Credits

This report was prepared by Project Leader Richard M. Birger and produced by Office Assistant Carla Dykstra.

K. FEEDBACK

Nothing to Report



OFFICE STAFF

1. Richard M. Birger, Project Leader, GM-485-13
2. Carla J. Dykstra, Office Assistant, GS-303-5