

14. CONCLUSIONS

Full realization of the potential habitat value in the Pool 11 Islands project area has been hindered by the dramatic decrease in island landmass, which has led to the loss of terrestrial and aquatic habitats, protected littoral zones, and deep-water habitats. Establishing off-channel areas containing reliable aquatic/wetland habitat would allow the project area to realize the highest benefit to migratory birds and wintering fish.

The recommended project enhancement features for Sunfish Lake and Mud Lake (sediment deflection embankments, mechanically and hydraulically dredged channels) are designed to meet the project's goals of restoring and protecting aquatic and backwater habitat. These goals will be met by reducing sediment resuspension, increasing the abundance of aquatic plants, reducing sedimentation in backwaters, and increasing wintering fish habitat.

Assessment of the future with-project scenario shows definite increases in total habitat units over the 50-year project life for the target species, as well as a majority of other wetland dwelling species considered. These increases represent quantification of the projected outputs: improved habitat quality and increased preferred habitat quantity.

This project is consistent with and fully supports the overall goals and objectives of the UMRS-EMP, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and the Partners in Flight Program.