

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER SYSTEM ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
FACT SHEETHARPERS SLOUGH  
POOL 9, UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER, IOWA

LOCATION: Harpers Slough is a backwater slough located on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River navigation channel in pool 9, about 3 miles upstream of Lock and Dam 9. The primary project area is adjacent to the navigation channel and lies in the Harpers Slough Closed Area of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

RESOURCE PROBLEM: The Harpers Slough Closed Area is a valuable habitat used heavily by tundra swans, Canada geese, puddle and diving ducks, black terns, nesting eagles, bitterns, and cormorants. The area is significant as a fish nursery area. Many of the channel border islands have been eroded or lost because of wind- and boat-generated waves and ice movement. The reduction and loss of these islands allows more turbulence in the backwater area, resulting in degradation of valuable fish and wildlife habitat. Continued loss of the islands will result in less productive habitat for both fish and wildlife.

PROPOSED PROJECT: The proposed project would include restoring about 8,000 feet of islands at the upper end of the Harpers Slough area, stabilizing about 5,000 feet of islands in the lower portion of the area, and repairing an existing partial closure structure at the upper end of Harpers Slough. Material from other backwater areas in pool 9 or the main channel may be used to restore the islands.

PROJECT OUTPUTS: The project would restore, enhance, and maintain about 3,000 acres of very valuable fish and wildlife habitat that will become substantially degraded if no action is taken. Loss of existing islands would be significantly reduced and the flow of sediment-laden water into the quieter backwaters would be less. The project would provide increased diversity of terrestrial and littoral zone habitats. The benefits of this project are of high significance when considering the general decline in habitat quality in the entire lower pool 9 area. Harpers Slough is one of the few remaining areas in lower pool 9 where high quality habitat could be maintained.

FINANCIAL DATA: The general design phase of the project is estimated to be \$250,000 and construction costs are estimated at \$3,400,000. Annual costs for OM&R are estimated at \$4,000. Because the project would be located on lands of the National Fish and Wildlife Refuge System and "managed as a national wildlife refuge" within the meaning of Section 906(e) of the 1986 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), general design and construction costs would be 100-percent Federal. The project lands are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Therefore, in accordance with Section 107(b) of the WRDA 1992, all costs for OM&R would be the responsibility of the USFWS.