

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER SYSTEM ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
FACT SHEETRICE LAKE
LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER, MINNESOTA

LOCATION: Rice Lake is a 275-acre, spring-fed wetland area located adjacent to the Minnesota River near Savage, Minnesota. The site lies within the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

RESOURCE PROBLEM: Natural levees have been formed by the Minnesota River that have trapped spring and stream flows to create marsh areas, but there are no controlled outlets to the river. The existing outlet allows higher water levels on the Minnesota River to back into the wetland, depositing river sediments. The natural levees are also topped by Minnesota River flood flows, allowing more sediments into the wetlands. This process is reducing water quality and increasing the aging rates in the marshes. These factors have substantially reduced the areas used by migrating birds for nesting, breeding, and feeding.

PROPOSED PROJECT: The proposed project would include excavating a 1,000-foot-long channel and installing a gated water control structure in the channel to provide an outlet from Rice Lake for water level management purposes. A partial closure may be constructed in the existing outlet from Rice Lake to prevent water from the Minnesota River from backing into the lake. A dike would also be constructed on the Rice Lake side of Eagle Creek to prevent Eagle Creek flows from entering Rice Lake.

PROJECT OUTPUTS: The proposed project would provide water management capabilities on about 275 acres of low production marshes to enhance waterfowl habitat and provide other migratory bird benefits, prevent Minnesota River sediment from being deposited in the lake, improve the ratio of open water to aquatic vegetation, allow water levels to be raised to increase the growth of aquatic plants, improve wild rice production in Rice Lake, and allow for partial dewatering of the lake to consolidate loose bottom sediments.

FINANCIAL DATA: The general design phase of the project is estimated to be \$70,000 and the construction costs are estimated at \$400,000. Annual costs for OM&R are estimated at \$2,000. 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, general design and construction costs would be 100-percent Federal. Costs for OM&R would be 75-percent Federal/25-percent non-Federal. Annual O&M requirements would be satisfied through an agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the non-Federal sponsor. The non-Federal sponsor would be the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.