

15 May 1987

FACT SHEET

TREMPEALEAU NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER, WISCONSIN

LOCATION: The 5,620-acre Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge is located adjacent to the Mississippi River on the Wisconsin side at pool 6, approximately three miles above Lock and Dam 6 near Trempealeau, Wisconsin. The refuge is separated from the main channel of the river by a Burlington Northern Railroad dike.

RESOURCE PROBLEM: A dike on the Trempealeau River that excludes adjacent river floodwaters from a 4,500-acre refuge pool was breached during the 1965 flood, causing the removal of existing vegetation mats within the refuge. Wetlands in the eastern half of the refuge pool are largely unproductive for wildlife because of turbid water conditions that limit submerged plant growth. Wind and wave action on existing islands and the feeding activity of rough fish contribute to the water quality problem. The role of the refuge in providing a major feeding and resting area for migratory waterfowl during the fall has been reduced. If the dike is breached again, loss of up to 500,000 waterfowl use-days could occur in addition to major damage to habitat for marsh and water birds and furbearers.

PROPOSED PROJECT: The proposed project would consist of rehabilitating the 7,200-foot-long Trempealeau River dike and constructing a cross-dike in the refuge pool with a water control structure to create a 1,000 acre impoundment that could be managed by an existing water control structure in the Trempealeau River dike. Islands would be constructed to reduce wind fetch and riprap would be placed on existing islands to stop erosion. Construction of an additional dike and water control structure in the main pool would be used to create a moist-soil unit and improve the effectiveness of water management in the remaining impoundments.

PROJECT OUTPUTS: The project would prevent loss of up to 500,000 waterfowl use-days in the event of a Trempealeau River dike failure. The cross-dike would improve aquatic plant growth to provide benefits to feeding waterfowl and game fish habitat. Waterfowl-use days are expected to increase from about 1 million to 2 1/2 million with the project. Major increases in refuge use by canvasback ducks during the fall migration would be expected. Marsh and water bird use for species such as herons, egrets, rails, and shorebirds is expected to increase by 50 percent or an additional 75,000 use-days. Expanded habitat could support an additional 3,000 muskrats, and other aquatic furbearers would increase significantly in numbers. Island construction and protection would significantly reduce turbidity in the pool.

FINANCIAL DATA: The General Design phase of the project is estimated to be \$230,000 and construction costs are estimated at \$4,100,000. Average annual operation and maintenance costs are estimated at \$5,000. Funding would be 100-percent Federal because the project is located on the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge.