



US Army Corps of
Engineers
St. Paul District

Reconnaissance Study: Minnesota River Basin in MN, SD, IA and ND

Location/Description

The Minnesota River originates in southwestern Minnesota at the Minnesota-South Dakota border. The river drains 16,770 square miles in Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota and Iowa. It flows 335 miles to join the Mississippi River at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Since European settlement, native prairie has been replaced by agriculture and urban development with constructed drainage systems; more than 90 percent of the wetlands that existed pre-settlement have been drained. Several dams prevent natural fish migrations. A navigation channel in the lower 15 miles of the river passes through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The Minnesota River carries substantial sediment and nutrient loads that degrade the aquatic ecosystems in the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers.

A reconnaissance study approved in January 2005 recommended three initial feasibility studies:

1. An integrated watershed, ecosystem restoration, and water quality management analysis that would produce a watershed management plan to better manage the watershed/identify specific opportunities for the Corps of Engineers and other stakeholders to implement.
2. Blue Earth River aquatic ecosystem restoration study (scheduled to begin September 2007).
3. Marsh Lake aquatic ecosystem restoration study (began May 2, 2007).

Feasibility study costs are shared 50-50 between the Corps and non-Federal sponsors. The following feasibility sponsors have submitted letters of intent: Blue Earth County (Minnesota), the (seven-county Twin Cities area) Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, University of Minnesota, and The Nature Conservancy.

Status

Scoping is underway for the proposed integrated watershed study. The reconnaissance report was approved January 13, 2005.

Authority

A resolution of the Committee on Public Works of the U.S. House of Representatives, May 10, 1962, to determine the advisability of further improvements in the Minnesota River basin for navigation, flood control, recreation, low-flow augmentation, and other related water and land resources.

Fiscal

Estimated federal cost \$369,000



Estimated non-federal cost 0
Total estimated cost \$369,000

Federal Appropriation through fiscal year 2006 \$309,000
Fiscal year 2007 Federal appropriation \$40,000
Total \$349,000

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