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UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER SYSTEM ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
FACT SHEET

EAST CHANNEL
POOL 8, UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER, WISCONSIN/MINNESOTA

LOCATION: East Channel is a side channel on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi River navigation channel in pool 8, about one-half mile downstream of Lock and Dam 7 at LaCrescent, Minnesota. The project area also includes a small bay adjacent to the Lock 7 guide wall and another small bay about one-half mile downstream near the Interstate 90 bridge, both on the Minnesota side of the navigation channel. The sites lie within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

RESOURCE PROBLEM: The head of East Channel leading into the bay has filled with sand from the main channel and the bay no longer receives flowing water during normal pool levels. Sand has also accumulated at the upper end of the bay and will gradually fill the bay. The bay is an over-wintering area for walleye and receives heavy walleye use prior to spawning. The area near the Lock 7 guide wall is a spawning area for northern pike but the bay has decreased in depth and the wing dams have filled in, causing a decline in its value for fish habitat. The peninsula and bay near I-90 is an important walleye staging area but the peninsula has been breached in several locations and deep water holes in the bay are being filled with sediment.

PROPOSED PROJECT: The proposed project would include dredging about 50,000 cubic yards of sand from the East Channel and bay, building a closure structure with flow control at the mouth of East Channel, notching an existing wing dam, stabilizing the peninsula at I-90 and the channel banks upstream of East Channel, closing some breaches in the peninsula, and dredging the guide wall and I-90 bays. Material for closing the breaches would be obtained from the dredged areas. Experimental and/or conventional fish habitat structures would be included in the project design.

PROJECT OUTPUTS: The project would restore and enhance about 40 acres of fish habitat for walleye and northern pike by providing deep water and fresh flows to the areas used heavily by these fish. Stabilizing the channel banks would remove the major source of sediment that enters the East Channel and Smith and French Sloughs. Dredged material not used for breach closures would be stockpiled for beneficial use.

FINANCIAL DATA: The general design phase of the project is estimated to be $90,000 and construction costs are estimated at $700,000. Annual costs for OM&R are estimated at $2,500. 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 sponsors would be the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, depending on the project component and location.