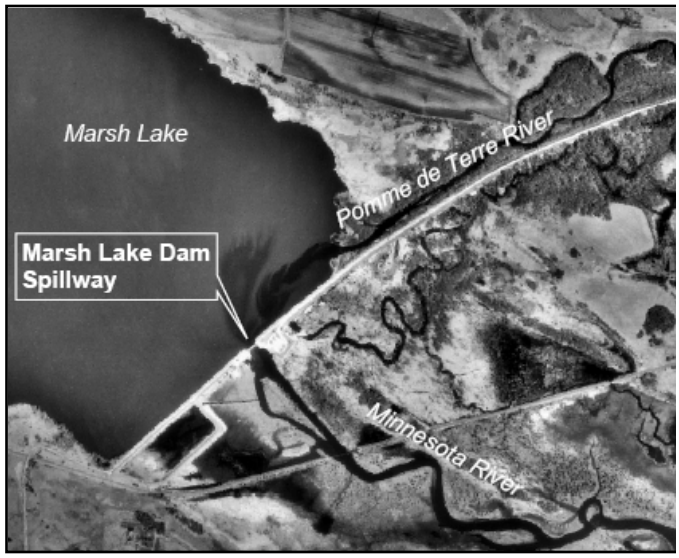
US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Feasibility Study: Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration, Minnesota



Aerial photo of Marsh Lake Dam

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Location/Description

Marsh Lake is on the Minnesota River between Swift and Lac qui Parle Counties near Appleton, Minnesota. The Marsh Lake Dam is owned and maintained by the Corps of Engineers as part of the Lac qui Parle flood risk management project. The fixed-crest dam holds a conservation pool in the upper portion of the Lac qui Parle reservoir. The Works Progress Administration constructed the dam and rerouted the Pomme de Terre River into the reservoir between 1936 and 1939. The Corps of Engineers modified the dam between 1941 and 1951 as part of the Lac qui Parle flood risk management project. During floods, the Marsh Lake Dam is inundated by the Lac qui Parle pool and serves no significant flood risk management purpose.

Marsh Lake lies within the Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management Area, which is managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. In the fall, as many as 150,000 Canada geese use the management area at one time. Marsh Lake is also home to Minnesota's largest breeding colony of American white pelicans and several species of fish.

The recommended plan features include:

- Restoring the Pomme de Terre River to its natural channel.
- Modifying the dam with a fishway for fish passage.
- Constructing a drawdown water control structure.
- Restoring connectivity to an abandoned fish rearing pond adjacent to the dam.
- Installing gated culverts at Louisburg Grade Road to maintain pool elevations in upper Marsh Lake.
- Implementing recreation features onsite.

In combination, each of these features would contribute toward restoring river habitat, eliminating winter oxygen refuge for carp, and providing for ecosystem connectivity. The natural flooding and drying cycles could be restored, promoting growth of emergent vegetation, increased waterfowl habitat, and reduced sediment resuspension. Restoration would benefit thousands of migratory waterfowl and many other species of birds and fish.

Status

The Chief of Engineer's Report recommending authorization of the project for construction was signed on December 30, 2011. Design efforts may begin when Federal funding is available and a design agreement is signed.

Authority

The study was authorized by a resolution of the Committee on Public Works of the U.S. House of Representatives, May 10, 1962. Additional congressional authorization will be required to proceed to construction.

Fiscal

Estimated Federal feasibility cost	$495,000
Estimated non-Federal feasibility cost	$495,000
Total estimated cost	$ 990,000
Federal funds allocated to date	$ 495,000
Estimated engineering/construction cost	$10,000,000