



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Habitat Restoration: Mississippi River, Harpers Slough, Pool 9, Iowa



Harpers Slough area in Pool 9 of the Mississippi River, looking south

Contact

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Location/Description

Part of the Corps' Environmental Management Program, the Harpers Slough area is a 2,200-acre backwater area located primarily on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River in Pool 9, about 3 miles upstream of Lock and Dam 9. The site is in the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The area is used heavily by tundra swans, Canada geese, puddle and diving ducks, black terns, nesting eagles, bitterns, and cormorants and is also significant as a fish nursery area. Many of the islands in the area have been eroded or lost because of wave action and ice movement. The loss of islands allows more turbulence in the backwater area, resulting in less productive habitat for fish and wildlife. Harpers Slough is one of the few remaining areas in lower Pool 9 where high quality habitat could be maintained.

The proposed project would restore or protect about 53,000 feet of islands using material from the backwater and the main channel. The project would slow the loss of existing islands, reduce the flow of sediment-laden water into the backwaters, reduce turbidity, and increase the diversity of land and shoreline habitats.

Status

The project is in the planning stage. A preliminary draft definite project report for public review will be completed in winter 2012. The Higgins eye, an endangered mussel species, is known to exist at the project site. Formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be required under the Endangered Species Act. Construction of the project would be in stages because of the estimated cost of the total project in relation to the anticipated program funding levels. It would be possible to initiate the first stage of construction in 2014, depending on the recommended plan and program funding levels.

Authority

The Harpers Slough Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project is being planned under the authority of the Upper Mississippi River System - Environmental Management Program. This program was authorized by Section 1103 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 and reauthorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

The project is being planned and designed as part of a cooperative effort of the Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Iowa and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources; and local interests.

Fiscal

Project design and construction costs would be 100-percent Federal because the project would be located on lands managed as a national wildlife refuge. Operation and maintenance costs would be 100-percent Federal (a responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Federal cost	\$11,000,000
Non-Federal cost	\$0
Total estimated cost	\$11,000,000
Funds allocated through fiscal year 2011	\$934,000