



## **Why does the Corps manage natural resources on Goose Island?**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, manages approximately 220,900 acres of land and water within the Upper Mississippi River 9-Foot Navigation Channel Project from Minneapolis to Guttenberg, Iowa, including lands encompassing Goose Island. It is Corps policy to apply principles of good environmental stewardship to the natural and cultural resources occurring on Corps-administered and/or managed lands and waters. Forested areas of Goose Island not leased to Wisconsin's La Crosse County for recreation purposes are co-managed by the Corps and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the benefit of wildlife habitat. These areas are within the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

## **Why are trees being cut down on Goose Island?**

The Corps is actively working to rid the island of invasive species, primarily black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). Black locust is a highly invasive tree that is native to Southern Appalachia and the Ozarks. It was introduced throughout Wisconsin in the early 1900s because its aggressive growth pattern and extensive root system discourage soil erosion. Once introduced to an area, the species expands readily into areas and their shade reduces competition from other sun-loving plants. Dense clones of locust create shaded islands with little ground vegetation, which greatly reduces suitable wildlife habitat.

## **What is being done after the locust is removed?**

The Corps began efforts in 2004 to cut areas and treat these areas with herbicides to kill suckers that sprout from the extensive root systems, as well as other invasive species such as garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). Following this, a diverse mix of native hardwood trees and shrubs species is planted in order to create wildlife habitat. Until 2010, seedlings have solely been hand planted. During the fall of 2010, 12 acres were planted by spreading acorns, nuts and other seeds over sites that were prepared as if they were farm fields. This is referred to as *direct seeding* and will hopefully allow the young forest to better compete with invasive species and deer browsing.

## **Why are there fences, poles, and tubes in areas cleared of locust?**

Due to the high deer population on Goose Island, trees are either protected with tree tubes or sprayed with deer repellent. From 2006 through 2008, a special deer hunt was also initiated to help reduce the deer herd to sustainable levels. In 2009, a deer fence was constructed to exclude deer from approximately three acres. Tall posts were placed within large open areas to serve as perches for hawks and owls so they can better hunt for small mammals that kill the young trees by chewing on their bark and girdling it.

## **Who can cut locust from Goose Island?**

The cutting of timber on Corps-managed lands is by permit only. Limited numbers of firewood permits are available for a modest fee on a first-come, first-served basis. Permits are issued through the Mississippi River Environmental Section Office, located in La Crescent, Minn.

**For more information, please contact Kurt Brownell, (507) 895-6341, ext. 6.**