



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Tribal Partnership Program: Section 203, Big Sand Lake Shoreline Stabilization



Shoreline erosion location.

Contact

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Purpose

The purpose of the project is to arrest erosion along tribal lands on the southeast side of the lake while enhancing access to the water for cultural practices.

Location

Fed by groundwater, Big Sand Lake is a clear, soft water lake that has varying levels of algae growth within the year, affecting lake health. The lake, located in Burnett County, Wisconsin, is typically 1,434 surface acres with a maximum depth of 55 feet.

The Sand Lake St. Croix Tribal Community is situated on Big Sand Lake along its southeast shoreline. The St. Croix Tribe hosts a swimming beach and winter boat landing. Tribal members grow and collect wild rice and fish for a variety of species in Big Sand Lake, including bluegill, black crappie, walleye, largemouth bass, yellow perch and northern pike.

Description

Tribal elders have indicated that these areas were good ricing spots historically but have decreased in size over time. No harvests have occurred for many years.

Additionally, approximately 2,000 lineal feet of shoreline is actively eroding into tribal land along the south eastern bank of Big Sand Lake. The eroded area is progressing towards Angeline Avenue, approximately 50 feet away at the nearest point. There is also a local beach that is being affected by the shoreline erosion. Tribal members indicate that runoff, wave action and springtime ice heaving occurring along the tribal lakeshore are causing the erosion and environmental degradation. The lake is over one mile wide at this location, which results in a large fetch for waves to develop.

Status

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and tribal partners will conduct a feasibility study to evaluate various alternatives for the permanent stabilization of the lake shoreline and the protection of the structural integrity of Angeline Avenue. The feasibility study must determine and compare alternative methods for achieving restoration; develop planning level cost estimates; and identify data gaps and collect the data needed to complete the assessment of alternatives.

Funding was received in fiscal year 2018. The Corps executed a feasibility cost share agreement with tribal partners on September 6, 2018. The completion of the feasibility study is expected in the fall of 2020.

Authority

The Tribal Partnership Program (Section 203 of Water Resources Development Act 2000) authorizes activities related to the study, design and construction of water resources development projects substantially benefiting Native American tribes. The non-federal sponsor for this project will be the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin.

Funding

Federal Funds Allocated to Date	\$250,000
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Pursuant to Section 1156 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, Public Law 99-662, as amended (33 U.S.C 2310), the non-federal cost share is waived up to \$484,000.