

LOSTWOOD WETLAND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
Kenmare, North Dakota

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
Calendar Year 1979

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM
Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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Review and Approvals

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Submitted by Date

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Des Lacs NWR Complex
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I. GENERAL

A. Introduction

The Lostwood Wetland Management District encompasses all of Mountrail County and the nine northernmost townships in the "gooseneck" of Ward County. The district has 45 Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) totaling 7797 acres, 7157 in Mountrail County and 640 acres in Ward County. Most of the WPAs are within the glacial moraine called the Coteau du Missouri (hills of the Missouri) that is composed of thin, rocky soils with numerous wetlands. WPAs in the district include approximately 403 wetland basins totaling approximately 2666 acres. The remainder consists of approximately 3225 acres of native grassland, 23 acres of woodland and 1893 acres of previously tilled land.

Easements for Waterfowl Management Rights are bought from land-owners and prohibit wetlands from being burned, filled or drained. Wetland easement contracts total about 31,541 wetland acres, 26,917 acres in Mountrail County and 4,624 acres in Ward County.

B. Climatic and Habitat Conditions

The weather throughout the district was similar to that reported for Lostwood NWR. Wetlands throughout the district had attractive water conditions once the thaw began, however conditions changed rapidly with lack of rain.

The following table shows the 1979 weather records.

Month	Precipitation (inches)			Temperatures (F)	
	Rain	Snow	Melt	Max.	Min.
January	--	3.30	0.14	25	-27
February	--	11.80	0.77	42	-35
March	--	9.70	0.87	45	-14
April	--	5.60	1.59	67	-9
May	0.85*	4.00	0.90*	88	11
June	0.61*	--	--	101	33
July	1.32*	--	--	96	42
August	0.04*	--	--	90	27
September	0.84*	--	--	96	31
October	0.50*	--	--	75	15
November	--	unk	0.07*	64	3
December	--	3.20	0.22	50	-18
Total	4.16	37.60	4.56		

*Records taken at Lostwood NWR. All others were taken at Des Lacs NWR.

C. Land Acquisition

1. Fee Title

All statewide acquisition was halted because the Governor vetoed any wetland acquisition proposal until the Garrison Diversion Unit, with associated wildlife mitigation, is resolved.

An example of how his decision has affected the wetland acquisition program on the local level is as follows. Jerry Lumley owned a half section of land in Mountrail County that he wanted to sell to FWS. The Minot Wetland Acquisition Office prepared an Environmental Assessment. A public meeting was held by the Mountrail County Commissioners, where a few local ranchers and farmers gathered in opposition on June 26, 1979. Mr. Lumley strongly expressed his right and desire to sell to FWS, but to no avail. The key county commissioner used the Governor's decision to veto the sale. Later, that same individual expressed to the author his concern about possible ill feelings between us.

2. Easements

Nothing to report.

3. Other

Nothing to report.

D. System Status

The Des Lacs Complex includes Des Lacs, Lostwood, Shell Lake, Lake Zahl, Lake Ilo, White Lake, Stewart Lake and Pretty Rock National Wildlife Refuges and two wetland management districts - Crosby and Lostwood.

Objectives are consolidated and a single annual work plan and program schedule are used for the entire complex. Therefore, individual units cannot be identified independent of the entire complex.

1. Objectives

The primary objective for all units of the complex is waterfowl production and maintenance through habitat management. BLHP and Revolving Rehab are being used to restore facilities and equipment to service standards.

2. Funding

FY80 funding for the Des Lacs Complex is as follows:

<u>1210</u>		<u>1240</u>		<u>Total</u>	
O&M	Cyclic Maint.	O&M	Cyclic Maint.	O&M	Cyclic Maint.
265,800	25,000	15,000	5,000	286,800	30,000
<u>6810</u>					
O&M					
6,000					

BLHP funds for the following projects are available in FY 80.	
Water Control Structure Rehab (Des Lacs NWR)	\$134,000
Grazing Facilities & Habitat (Complex)	308,000
Waterfowl Production (WMD's)	91,000
Habitat Development (Lake Ilo)	<u>43,000</u>
Total	\$576,000

3. Manpower

Staffing for the individual units in the Complex is shown in the personnel section.

II. CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

A. Construction

Two miles of boundary fence was constructed on Reinarts WPA. No additional fencing was completed in 1979.

B. Maintenance

Fence repair was completed on Erickstein WPA by refuge personnel. The adjacent landowner was told by the appraisers in 1965 that we would maintain the fence, but we left some fencing supplies with the landowner so that he could assist in maintenance.

There were three ditches plugged and several previously burned buildings and junk buried on the Hovland WPA.

C. Wildfires

Nothing to report.

III. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

A. Cropland

North Dakota #2 WPA, tract 383, had one acre seeded to a native grass mixture (from Lincoln Oaks Nursery) on May 25, 1979. The late spring postponed the normal earlier seeding. The mixture of western wheatgrass, green needlegrass, big bluestem, Indian-grass and switchgrass was seeded into a firm, bare soil base. Sudangrass had been seeded the previous year but it did not germinate. Maintenance fire will be essential once it becomes established.

Tract #412, Hovland WPA, had a cool season mixture planted in the fall of 1978. The seedlings were visible by June of 1979, but the dry year and poor soils may slow the growth significantly.

Portions of tract #64, Hovland WPA, had an old farm field in annuals, grass and alfalfa tilled in the fall of 1979, in preparation for a spring DNC planting. J. Clark Salyer Refuge provided a heavy brush disc and John Deere 4 wheel drive tractor to break the field. Lostwood's crew thanks Salyer Refuge for their assistance in transporting equipment!

Eighteen acres of brome and crested wheat in tract #202, Halvorson WPA, was cross-disc'd in preparation for 1979 spring seeding of DNC. The Robel reading before discing, following a wet year, averaged 0.95 for 40 readings and 7.2 average height (all brome). It is hoped a good stand of alfalfa will enhance the field.

Eleven acres of predominantly quack grass in tract #382, Halvorson WPA, was broken in the fall of 1978. The cold 1978-79 winter and the dry 1979 summer when the field was fallowed should result in a good quack grass kill. It will be seeded to DNC with a cover crop of barley, oats or flax in the spring of 1980.

Solberg WPA, acquired in 1978, was fallowed in 1979. It will be seeded to DNC with a cover crop of barley, oats or flax in the spring of 1980.

B. Grassland

1. Haying

A steep draw of brome in tracts #382 and #202, Halvorson WPA, totaling about 25 acres was hayed after July 15, 1979. It was fall seeded to DNC.

2. Grazing

No grazing permits were issued in 1979.

3. Burning

In tract #382, Halvorson WPA, approximately 20 acres of '74 DNC was Robelled on May 4, 1979. The average readings following a wet year, were 0.82 for density and 7.1 for height. The density was composed of: 81.5% slender wheatgrass, 7.5% alfalfa, 3% crested wheatgrass and 8% unknown grass. The height was composed of 80% slender wheatgrass, 10% alfalfa and 10% unknown grass. In an effort to get alfalfa and taller wheat grass species established, the area was burned on May 11, 1979, and cross seeded over existing rows with DNC on May 24, 1979, following about an inch of rain. One 6X6 fire truck, one Panama pump and four personnel were involved in setting the "ring fire" that began at 11:30 a.m. and ended at 1:15 p.m. The backfire was started with 8-20 mph north to northwest winds, 64% relative humidity and 44°F temperatures. The backfire was difficult to ignite, but the headfire moved rapidly even across very sparse vegetation. Photos 1 and 2 show before and after burn conditions. Unfortunately, only about 0.96 inches of rain fell by the end of June.



Halvorson WPA; DNC, prior to the burn K. Smith



Halvorson WPA; DNC, after the burn on May 24, 1979.
The slender wheatgrass bunches are sparse. The
rows are also quite evident. K. Smith

4. Herbicides

Grinolds, Lundt, N. Johnson, J. Cvancara and Godejohn (a unit of the Crosby WMD) were sprayed for leafy spurge in late June and again in September with Tordon 22K. Records are being kept on each area with regards to weather, plant development, chemical applied, etc.

An old leafy spurge site on Halvorson WPA was checked but found inactive June 27, 1979. During a late fall conversation with an adjacent landowner on Chafer WPA, it was mentioned that spurge was on the area.

5. Other

Someone has found it very convenient to tear down WPA signs and scour (clean) their plows and discs on the native grassland on US#1 WPA. A telephone call was made to the Township Supervisor, George Olson, who lives close to the WPA. He knew the township's equipment had not done the scouring (the scouring has occurred for four or five years), but he would not tell who was doing the damage. As previously stated, this tract would be enhanced tremendously by fencing it.

Again native sod was removed on U.S. #1f and g WPA, for fill on a township road. (The previous problems were detailed in the 1978 narrative.) A letter was sent to Mr. Leo Ringoen, Kickapoo Township Supervisor, asking about the removal. No reply was received and a visit is now necessary.

Another township road project has just about destroyed U.S. #1d WPA. A survey of the area will determine how much of the native grassland is left to protect. This area has never been posted probably because of the unknown corners.

C. Wetlands

Sikes Dam WPA has a dam and spillway built by the CCC's. The spillway is in dire need of rebuilding and a small portion of the dam needs to be repaired. SCS was contacted and asked to assist with the engineering. However, new SCS dam building guidelines basically prohibit their assistance. FWS Area Office engineering technicians have been contacted to assist.

SCS assisted in engineering a plug for a ditch which will resolve a serious erosion problem on Spooner WPA. A contract

will be released to complete the work.

No additional work was done on the non-easement drainage project adjacent to the Svenningson WPA. The run-off from an 80 acre watershed drains into one small wetland on the WPA.

D. Forest Lands

Nothing to report.

E. Other Habitat

Nothing to report.

F. Wilderness and Special Areas

Nothing to report.

G. Easements for Waterfowl Management

The Miller case, explained in detail in the 1978 narrative, is still pending. Miller's attorney attempted to get compliance before the area was restored but the judge, after seeing our progress report, has evidently declined the attorney's request. No word has been received from the judge since fall.

Violations in Ward County, easement numbers 270X-1, 270X and 289X done by Mr. Egeberg in the fall of '78, are pending a court hearing, because he refused to comply.

The first easement flights for 1979 were flown on November 5th and 6th. Second flights were made in December but photographic attempts were fruitless due to the camera and author malfunctioning.

There were eight violations found.

1. Easement #291X, Ward County has a township road ditch cleanout project that dumped fill into an easement basin.
2. Easement #371X, Ward County has a significant amount of fill placed in seven easement basins.
3. Easement #415X, Ward County has the typical ditch from a basin.
4. Easement #255X, Mountrail County has a half mile long ditch

that drains three large easement basins. The ditch, originally constructed after 1974, was not detected until it was cleaned out in 1979. The easement contract is dated 1967.

5. Easement #27X, Mountrail County has fill in an easement basin.
6. Easement #335X, Mountrail County has the typical ditch and fill violations on two easement basins.

The remaining two violations involve oil. There are exploratory wells being drilled in Mountrail County, and more to come. The following violations are a harbinger of things to come. It will be difficult to get compliance unless authorities get to the oil companies and permit-issuing agencies before construction begins.

7. Easement #226X, Mountrail County has oil sludge (oil and soil combined) pushed into an easement basin, after the drill rig was moved. Even in sub-zero weather, the moist fill did not freeze.
8. Easement #142X, Mountrail County has a pumping well on fill in an easement basin. Refer to photo #3. This is one case where compliance is not likely. So now what?



Oil pump placed on fill in an easement wetland. K. Smith

At what point does rock, placed in an easement basin, become a violation which is prosecutable? Photos 4 thru 7 show examples of the fill. If the rock was soil, all of the photos would show a prosecutable violation, but since it is rock some were not recorded as violations.



A few rocks in a wetland basin. No violation was recorded.
K. Smith



A few more rocks in another wetland basin. No violation was recorded. K. Smith



On both sides of the rock pile (note Robel pole) are cattails plowed in the fall of '79. A few more rocks have been placed in this basin. This violation was recorded and is being processed.



This is what is left of a wetland basin that has predominantly been filled with rock, plus the soil that is inadvertently pushed with the rock. This violation was recorded and is being processed. To what extent do we assume a violation? Should they all be processed as violations?

K. Smith

IV. WILDLIFE

A. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

Nothing to report.

B. Migratory Birds

1. Waterfowl

a. Ducks

Duck production was estimated at 15,880 ducks for 1979. Lost-wood NWR production is used to determine the WMD production.

b. Geese

Nothing to report.

c. American Coot

Nothing to report.

2. Marsh and Water Birds

Nothing to report.

3. Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns, and Allied Species

Nothing to report.

4. Raptors

A ferruginous hawk nest was found on Grinolds WPA in a patch of willows. Three young were observed.



Ferruginous hawk at the nest site
on Grinolds WPA. K. Smith



Ferruginous hawk nest in a willow patch on Grinolds WPA.
Three young and a blackbird are shown. K. Smith

5. Other Migratory Birds

Nothing to report.

C. Mammals and Non-Migratory Birds and Others

1. Game Mammals

Two antelope were observed on Svenningson WPA during the 1978-79 winter.

2. Other Mammals

Nothing to report.

3. Resident Birds

Three WPAs were checked for sharp-tailed dancing grounds. Bryant and King had no grounds. Vaage had at least one ground just north of the WPA on private native pasture.

4. Other Animal Life

Nothing to report.

V. INTERPRETATION AND RECREATION

A. Information and Interpretation

Nothing to report.

B. Recreation

1. Wildlife Oriented

Nothing to report.

2. Non-Wildlife Oriented

Nothing to report.

C. Enforcement

The district received very little hunting pressure during the opening of resident game hunting. Hunting pressure was heavy on certain areas during the opening waterfowl weekend. Special Agent Cooper made a significant overbag case on Erickstien WPA.

The entire deer season was spent on the refuge, so the hunting pressure on the district is unknown.

Prior to deer season, "Foot Traffic Only - No Vehicle" signs were erected along section lines on Kjallberg and Grant WPA.

While hunting in the district this fall, the author saw a state violation involving muskrats taken with a gun out of season. The muskrats were confiscated and given to state warden, Jerry Mier. The case was heard in the juvenile court and the sentence was one year suspension of all small game and trapping privileges.

Problems continue on Chafer WPA where adjacent farmers turn their big machinery around on the WPA, farm into the WPA boundary and establish roads here and there for their convenience. The last tract to be surveyed was completed in 1978. The entire area will be fenced in 1980.

On tract #383, North Dakota #2 WPA, an adjacent farmer is "sway" farming into a 1978 DNC planting. Posts were erected along the boundary about every 40 yards. Adjacent landowners are also using the small amount of upland on this area for farm roads instead of using their own fields. A fence would help to resolve these problems.

In 1978, the boundary of Martinson WPA was completely fenced. During the 1978 spring run-off, about 20 yards of the fence was ripped flat. Since the adjoining neighbor had wanted to graze this area, he found it convenient not to repair the fence. When it was finally discovered, the damage to the DNC was done. He received a FWS letter that disturbed him enough to call. Future problems are not expected.

Vaage WPA was checked periodically throughout the fall. Some time after the last check, the adjoining neighbor allowed his cattle into the area. The cattle were on the area only a short time before the owner moved them for the winter. This is a periodic problem on this WPA so the area will be fenced in 1980.

Trespass grazing continues on US#1 WPA because no funds were available to fence it to date.

Trespass haying again occurred on Howell WPA. After talking with the adjacent landowner, the author found out they had been haying the native grassland every other year since it was purchased from them in 1965. A certified letter was sent to the violator warning him of the consequences if haying continued. He refused the letter. The letter will be hand carried to him. If caught haying in the future, a citation will be issued and we hope stiff penalties will follow.

A state violation was found while working easements. Photo #10 shows a trap attached to a deer carcass, a violation on two counts. The comical thing about the violation is how coyotes were "reading" the set. They traveled their normal course until they were about 20 yards from the carcass, veered to the one side and once to the opposite side of the carcass, then assumed their normal travel.



A trap attached to the neck of a deer that had been shot for bait was found while on easement work. K. Smith

VI. OTHER ITEMS

A. Field Investigations

Nothing to report.

B. Cooperative Programs

Nothing to report.

C. Items of Interest

This report was written by Karen Smith with the exception of section I.D., which was written by John Venegoni. Typing and final assembly were completed by Molly Hansen and Debbie Semerad.

D. Safety

Monthly safety meetings were held in conjunction with other Des Lacs Refuge Complex personnel.