

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS



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W.P.A. TO DIVERT S. DAK. RIVER  
FOR U. S. WATERFOWL REFUGE

Reservoir on Diversion Project  
Also Will Provide Recreation

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W.P.A. workers in Bennett County, S. Dak., are carrying on a river-diversion project that will furnish water for a Federal waterfowl refuge and at the same time provide recreation for South Dakotans. The work is being done under a \$20,000 allotment recently authorized by the President from Emergency Relief appropriations.

Faced with the difficulty of administering the Lacreek Migratory Waterfowl Refuge with a scarcity of water during summer months, U. S. Biological Survey engineers found that a diversion project on the nearby Little White River would solve the problem. Local and State authorities saw the recreational possibilities of the proposed reservoir and agreed to cooperate. The South Dakota Game and Fish Department set aside \$3,850 for purchasing easements to lands to be flooded, and local citizens raised another \$1,500 to speed up purchases.

The W.P.A. project calls for a riverdam, outside the Lacreek Refuge, by means of which water can be diverted to the refuge. The resulting reservoir will be mostly deep water and in itself of minor importance to waterfowl, but will have great recreational value in a region where camping, swimming, and fishing opportunities are scarce. Biological Survey plans for this area outside the refuge thus call for a beach for swimmers, picnic grounds, cooperation in stocking the reservoir with fish, an area for hunting, and upland improvements for wildlife.

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### Lacreek Refuge Proves Worth

Established as an inviolate sanctuary by Executive order in August 1935, the Lacreek Refuge, says the Biological Survey, is an important breeding and resting area for waterfowl, and the new nearby diversion project should assure year-round usefulness. Local residents last year reported the most ducks and geese on the area in a decade. During migration, about 2,000 Canada geese, some snow geese, and thousands of ducks used the refuge. Shore birds, herons, and others remained to nest. Principal nesting ducks were blue-winged teals, mallards, pintails, gadwalls, shovelers, widgeons, redheads, green-winged teals, ring-necked and ruddy ducks, and American mergansers. Avocets, formerly little known in this territory, were fairly common, as were double-crested cormorants, black-crowned night herons, western willets, Wilson's phalaropes, and sharp-tailed grouse.

For improvement of wildfowl habitat, the Biological Survey has enlarged water and marsh areas and stabilized water-levels by constructing 4 dams, with spillways and control gates, and 6 dikes. Ten reservoirs thus created will conserve the runoff of Lake Creek, which flows through the refuge, and will flood a marsh area of about 3,700 acres.

### W.P.A. Workers Make Further Improvements

Since August of last year, W.P.A. workers have spent about 110,000 man-hours in further developments. Straw-covered game shelters with feed hoppers, other bird shelters surrounded by woven-wire fences and planting areas, an observation tower, a boathouse and equipment shed, and an aquatic cellar for storing wild rice and other seeds gathered on the area, have been completed.

Several old buildings on original homesites have been rehabilitated, or razed and materials salvaged for service buildings and secondary refuge quarters. Many trees have been replanted on more advantageous sites, and pines and willow slips have been set out, Brule clay surrounding the refuge manager's residence having been excavated and the area refilled with earth that supports plant and tree growth. A gravel road from headquarters site to the main highway has been completed and steel-fenced, and a 10-mile telephone line constructed.

Under a recently supplemented allotment, the W.P.A. workers will riprap and fill in around dikes, erect a coffer dam on one dike, and rehabilitate buildings on 3 former homesites. Work on tree-planting projects and a truck trail will be continued.

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