

Resettlement Administration Presses Development Work In 160,000-Acre Central State Game Project

Most Of Optioned Region Accepted And Checks Issued To Farmers

By ALFRED W. RICE (Tribune Conservation Writer)
Black River Falls, Wis.—Restoration of a vast 160,000-acre submarginal land region in Juneau, Clark, Wood, Monroe, and Jackson counties—once a lumberman's paradise, but in recent years, after the area had been denuded of its profitable timber resources, honeycombed with drainage ditches—in Nature's original intention, a conservation wild life area, is rapidly progressing under the supervision of the Resettlement administration, a federal government agency.

Under the direct supervision of a project manager are various divisions for the different phases of work, such as forestry, engineering, fish and game, land acquisition, and resettlement.

In probably another three or four years, if present outlined programs for development are carried on with adequate funds supplied under congressional direction through various federal relief and sub-marginal land purchasing agencies, Wisconsin may be able to boast of one of the most varied game, bird, fur-bearing animal, and timber producing areas in the nation.

Dream Coming True
Now, it is a dream of far-sighted conservationists that is beginning to come true. They tramped the area for years in quest of upland game birds and animals, often envisioning the marsh and prairie stretches as they were originally.

Attempted agricultural pursuits, and it might be said that in some instances they were fairly profitable to those farmers fortunate enough to settle on the more fertile soil, did not help conservation. These farmers came largely from densely populated areas of the country, thrilled probably at the vivid pictures of "the promised land" painted by speculators.

Most of them came, attempted to farm and were conquered by the undefeatable forces of nature. The areas drained by the network of ditches reverted to shrubs, grasses and other wild growth, and the prosperous appearance of the buildings erected by most of the settlers became delapidated through want of repair.

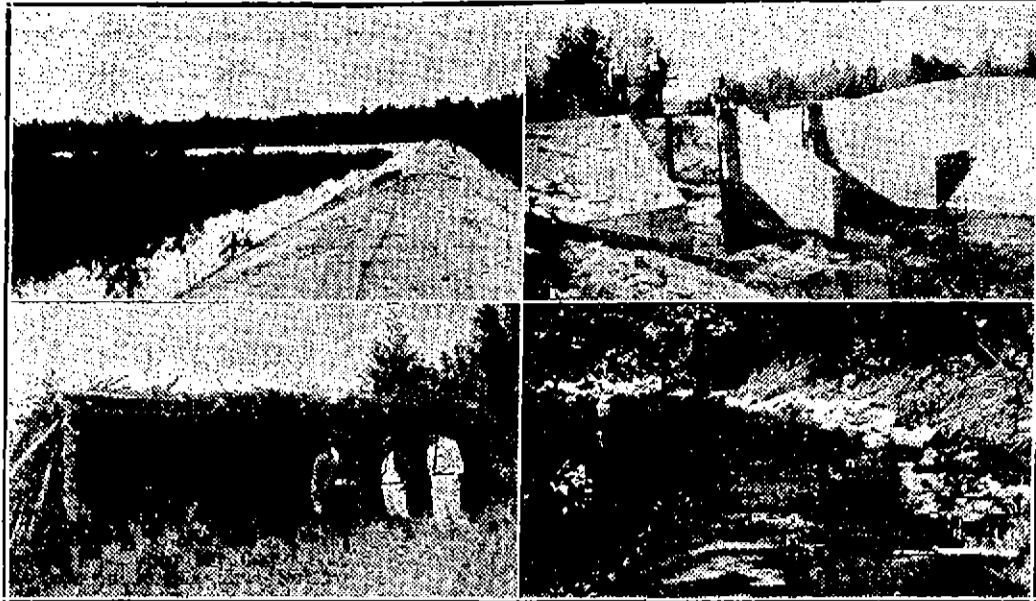
But, if the area did not prove successful agriculturally, it has in other phases aside from conservation. It boasts of one of the nation's largest moss regions—a product harvested by many and sold through various agencies to florists of the United States for the packing of flowers and plants for shipment.

Then, too, there is the cranberry industry. Large areas have been flooded for the raising of a crop sent to distant places to grace tables during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday period. The blueberry industry, too, has been developed in the territory, and is profitable.

To Protect Industries
These industries the Resettlement administration plans to protect and foster. They have been made a vital part of the program planned for the 160,000-acre region now commonly known as the "Central Wisconsin Game Project."

The government's program tends toward a balance of general conservation work. Eventually, probably

Pictures Show Project Progress



The above pictures show progress by the Resettlement administration in its program to restore the central Wisconsin area of Jackson, Clark, Monroe, Juneau, and Wood counties as a conservation wild life region. The upper left picture shows a long dike built in Horsehoe marsh near Millston for use as a migratory waterfowl nesting and fur-bearing animal area. The upper right picture shows a concrete dam built in a drainage district of Hoffman marsh in the eastern section of the area. The lower left picture shows one of 22 large timber and brush emergency feeding stations for deer and prairie chicken. The lower right picture shows a partially complete dirt road stream improvement project.

within a few years, the administrative phase will be supported entirely from the resources developed in the area.

It took months for the program to get under way, and little field work was undertaken until last December, when the government moved game, forestry and engineering forces into the area.

Optioned lands were accepted by the Resettlement administration, and many of the farmers since have received their checks "in full settlement."

Sentiment, at least in most parts of the vast project area, seems to have changed with the institution of the visual development program. There is more co-operative spirit, in fact, many of the former farmers are now working on the several projects in the area.

Perhaps the Resettlement administration got off on the wrong foot when it took over the area, which eventually will have full title vested in the name of the United States and the future administration by the Wisconsin conservation commission.

Slow Development
A year ago the sentiment largely was against the wild life development program, and residents of the area freely criticized the government. Perhaps the program might have been speeded if innumerable educational meetings had been held to fully acquaint those people with the purposes and aims of the government.

But, the government, despite these handicaps, proceeded with its original purposes, dividing the territory into two parts, the one covering Juneau, Wood and Monroe counties known as "site one" and the territory in Jackson and Clark counties titled "site two."

At the present time the government has optioned and accepted 94,000 acres of the 160,000 acres in site one, and 30,000 of the 66,000 acres in site two. The actual purchasing

work in site two has been concentrated in the townships of Millston and Komensky.

The towns of Manchester, Brockway and Knapp in Jackson county and Lewis, Washburn and Sherwood in Clark county have been kept in the project area, but are not in the active purchase zone. Development work only is done on land optioned and accepted by the government.

First payment checks to farmers selling their lands in site one to the government were issued last November, while the checks in the Jackson county area began to arrive last March. Checks still are being issued as gradually more and more of the optioned land titles are being cleared and put in line for payment.

Has Extensive Program
The government's development program includes:

Site one: General land treatment to cover 80 miles of boundary marking, obliterate many farm buildings, to attempt pest and disease control, and to seed collection; structural improvement, to provide for eight vehicular bridges, six contact stations, 50 water impounding dams of timber construction, 18 concrete water impounding dams, 50 miles of levees, dikes and jetties, build 25 miles of telephone lines, and to maintain one construction camp; transportation improvement, to build 50 miles of truck trails; forestry development, to build 50 miles of fire breaks, to reduce fire hazards generally; to improve 15,000 acres of standing timber and to forest 3,000 acres; landscape and recreation, to build and maintain six contact stations; wild life, to do biological reconnaissance, provide game food and cover on 2,150 acres, to clear and post 72 miles of developed wild life area; and other activities, to do research work covering experimental functions.

Site two: General land treatment, to mark 56 miles of boundaries, to obliterate many farm buildings, to do pest and disease control on 50,000 acres, and to collect seeds; structural improvement, to build seven vehicular bridges, to erect three contact stations, to build two fire look-out houses, to construct one ranger station, to establish 15 timber water impounding dams, to build five concrete water impounding dams, to build 15 miles of levees, dikes and jetties, to build and maintain 15 miles of telephone lines, and to establish and maintain three construction camps; transportation improvement, to include 48 miles of truck trails; forestry development, to create 60 miles of fire breaks, to reduce fire hazards, to improve 10,000 acres of standing timber, and to reforest 7,200 acres; landscape and recreation, to create one public camp and picnic area; wild life, to build one trout rearing pond, to provide game food and cover on 3,000 acres, to develop 7,000 acres of marshes, to develop 60 miles of trout streams, and to clear and post 32 miles of the developed wild life area; other activities, to do research work covering experimental functions.

Improve Trout Waters
At the present time in site two about 15 miles of the Zahrt, Wymert, Glen, Robinson, Pigeon and Starbuck creeks, trout waters, have been improved. Numerous small miss-matched rock riffle dams of low structure have been built, the creeks narrowed by rock runs, holes created in curve or stream bends to provide fish cover, and the banks replanted with willows and alders, and other shrubs and trees to provide shade.

In short, fishermen frequenting these creeks since the opening of the trout season have been amazed at the changes wrought since they made their visits a year ago. The creeks were for the most part wide and shallow and sanded or silted. Now they have been narrowed down considerably, and are deeper, some areas having six or more feet of water. A series of environmental requirements for fish life has been installed.

During the winter months in the Jackson county area the government agency maintained 200 feeding stations for upland game birds. There were 25 emergency feeding stations of log and brush construction about 32 feet long, 10 to 12 feet wide and four feet high for deer and prairie chicken. Some 8,000 pounds of mixed feed was distributed in the area.

In addition, there were 2,950 brush shelters scattered throughout the area for the protection of upland game birds and animals. These were erected where there was no undergrowth, and will take the place of that vegetation until it develops. Many areas were denuded of natural growth through fires and grazing.

It is estimated that in the stream improvement work about 23,000 willows, catbrier and other vegetation were planted. About 75 food and cover patches, ranging in size from one to 10 acres, have been planted this year to canopy grass, sorghum, corn, millet, buckwheat, soybeans, oats, rye, alsike clover, and alfalfa.

Eleven dikes are under construction in the marsh regions of the

Jackson county area, most of them now impounding water. These will eventually become nesting regions for migratory waterfowl, and will be inhabited by muskrat, beaver and other fur-bearing animals. These marshes will be planted with aquatic plants for migratory waterfowl.

In site one—Juneau, Wood and Monroe counties—the accomplishments to date include: Maintenance of 84 upland game bird feeding stations during the past winter and the building of 1,000 brush shelters; the sowing of 100 food and cover patches ranging in size from one to 10 acres; the building of three dikes, one of them already completed and impounding water; the erection of 20 concrete dams in drainage ditches to hold water in 150 miles of the network of canals in an effort to raise the water table.

In both areas extensive surveys were made of existing game and fur-bearing animals. Vegetation also was studied in an effort to determine the things lacking to bring about a balanced conservation program. The game division knows now the approximate species of upland game birds and animals as well as fur-bearers and predators in the 160,000 acres. The forestry branch has similar data pertaining to types of trees and other vegetation.

Outlines Program
Silas J. Knudson, Black River Falls, project manager for the entire area, points out that the immediate plans for the Juneau-Wood-Monroe site are for continuance of the marsh restoration activity. There are six possible dike sites for waterfowl nesting centers and fur-bearing animal production. In site two, Jackson county, there are six possible dike sites under consideration, while stream improvement and forestry work will continue.

"We plan to build extra reservoirs for the cranberry marshes, and will help the blueberry and moss interests," Knudson said. "The more water we can hold above private reservoirs assures ample water supplies, and accomplishes our purposes as well as helping in flood control."

The government is interested in

Comprehensive Program For Developing Area Already Perfected

making this area a sportsman's paradise, and to make it self-supporting. We expect after the first year to have returns from the sale of moss rights, wood pulp cuttings, fur-bearing animals, and marsh hay cuttings to pay administrative costs.

"The entire area will not be closed to sportsmen and their varied pursuits. We plan to close only a small percentage of the total acreage for refuge purposes in order to assure an ample seed stock of birds and animals."

"At the present time we are maintaining our general headquarters in Black River Falls, although we have a branch office at Necedah to administer the Juneau-Wood-Monroe region. We have 1,350 men on the payroll in both sections of the area, these being drawn from three classes—rural resettlement, relief and farmers having optioned their land to the government. On site one there are 450 relief and 200 non-relief men working, while on site two there are 250 relief and 350 non-relief men employed."

Have Three Camps
"We have three work camps. Those at Camp Douglas and Morrison creek are for unattached and married men who are willing to go into such camps. They are paid \$40 a month, and in turn pay 50 cents a day for board and room. The payments by the men are a minimum of \$11 a month. At Meador we have a transient camp. There are about 350 men in the three camps, but by July 1 we expect to increase the number to about 600."

"We are planning the building of a large ranger station. The site has not definitely been determined, but it probably will be near Pray. Contact stations for wardens and their families will be set up through the area."

"The wardens will be more than enforcement officers. They will be men capable of giving advice and supervising game work, food planting and other phases of the conservation program."

BRAIN SURGERY
Stockholm, Sweden—(AP)—Prof. Herbert Olivecrona, celebrated Swedish surgeon, recently performed his one thousandth operation for brain tumor. He has operated on more than 3,000 heads. A few months ago he sped by airplane to Moscow to operate on one of the soviet leaders.



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