

News Release

*National Wildlife
Refuge System*



Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

La Crosse District
555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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June 17, 2008

Pool 8 Island to be Temporarily Closed

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge will be temporarily closing the upper end of Crater Island in Navigation Pool 8 to all uses beginning Friday, June 20, 2008. This temporary closure is needed to protect the safety of visitors while a dredging operation is underway on the island.

Crater Island, or the Above Brownsville Dredged Material Placement site, is located across the main channel from Lawrence Lake near River Mile 690.2 (see map). Sand from the site is being moved downriver and used to construct islands as part of the Pool 8 Islands, Phase III, Stage 2 habitat rehabilitation and enhancement project.

La Crosse District Manager Jim Nissen said the closure will remain in effect until the dredging operation is completed, now tentatively scheduled for mid-August. The boundary of the area to be closed to entry will be posted with signs and flyers announcing the closure will be available at nearby landings.

Five islands are being constructed this year as part of the Phase III project. Four of the islands are located west of Raft Channel in Minnesota and are being constructed by L.W. Matteson, Inc. The fifth island is being built by the Corps of Engineers' Maintenance and Repair Crew and is located along Raft Channel in Wisconsin. In addition to Crater Island, material to build the islands is also being moved from Schnick's Bay.

Temporary closures are likely to occur again in 2009 and 2010 when material from Crater Island is scheduled to be moved downriver to construct additional islands.

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Overall, the Phase III EMP project involves the construction of more than 20 islands in lower Pool 8 to promote the growth of aquatic plants for migratory birds and to improve fish habitat.

This project is funded through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Environmental Management Program (EMP). Project planning and design have been a cooperative effort between the St. Paul District Corps of Engineers; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Geological Survey; the Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources; the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the public.

For more information, contact the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge office in Onalaska, Wisc. The office is located at 555 Lester Avenue and office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The telephone number is (608) 783-8405.

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The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is the most visited refuge in the United States. The refuge extends 261 miles along the Upper Mississippi River from Wabasha, Minn. to Rock Island, Ill., protecting and preserving habitat for migratory birds, fish, and a variety of other wildlife.