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TREMPEALEAU MARSHES, WIS., SCENE
OF W.P.A. WORK ON FEDERAL REFUGE

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The Biological Survey is continuing W.P.A. work in developing and improving the Trempealeau Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, in Trempealeau and Buffalo Counties, Wis., with a supplemental allotment of funds recently authorized by the President from the Emergency Relief appropriation.

This refuge, located near the confluence of the Trempealeau and Mississippi Rivers, was established by Executive order of August, 1931. Originally the entire tract of marsh and upland was developed as a drainage district; as a consequence it is crisscrossed with a rather elaborate system of dikes and ditches. The network of canals through the area, after improvements including construction of laterals, are valuable in providing arteries for travel by canoe and small boat for employees administering the area. They have also proved to be fair nesting sites for waterfowl and den sites for fur-bearers. The marsh area is interspersed with a number of artesian wells located at various points, and by a network of canals that were dredged by the drainage district. The area that the Federal Government is acquiring, which begins at a point opposite Winona, Minn., and extends to about 3 miles above the village of Trempealeau, will eventually contain over 6,000 acres.

The lakes and marshes of the refuge are frequented by mallards, blue- and green-winged teals, shovelers, pintails, ring-necked ducks, wood ducks, baldpates,

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mergansers, black ducks, scaups, and American goldeneyes. Geese and swans visit the area during their migrations. Fur-bearing animals, notably muskrat and mink, occur here in abundance; upland game birds abound in the meadows and woodlands; and some deer are found in the interior lands.

Administration buildings consisting of a family cabin, service building, lodge, laboratory, pumphouse, and barn, have been built as refuge headquarters; and a C.C.C. camp crew, maintained for several months on the refuge, did considerable improvement work, including the construction of roads, trails, bridges, and fences, and planted trees, shrubs, and grain crops.

With the advent of the W.P.A. workers in September of last year the work of improvement and development of the Trempealeau has continued. A general cleanup of some 700 acres of the refuge has been completed, 120 miles of exterior boundaries established and reposted, and about an acre of lawns prepared and seeded near the headquarters buildings. A total of 6 miles of rail fence, built of salvaged timber, has been constructed. Large fields were broken up into small tracts with the fences, and these form a foundation for the planting of game cover and food.

Thirty winter game-bird feeding stations have been constructed, and numerous brush piles provided for wildlife habitat. Sixty wood-duck nesting boxes, built by National Youth Administration enrollees, have been placed strategically around the refuge. During severe winter weather, crews were assigned to feeding wild birds on the area.

Over 5,000 pounds of Saggitaria tubers and 400 pounds of lotus seeds were harvested and prepared for planting; and nearly half a million trees, vines, and shrubs, now in the nursery at Trempealeau, are being planted or prepared for planting. Game food patches and cover seeding is under way, also, at the present time. About 50 acres of this type of planting will be completed under the extension of time permitted the project by this new supplemental allotment.

Approximately 1,000 cubic yards of sand was excavated from the service court and the area near the headquarters buildings. In addition, about 2,000 cubic yards of sand fill was accomplished; and some 3,000 cubic yards of clay and black dirt surfacing in the vicinity of the headquarters buildings completed. A total of 600 cubic yards of crushed rock has been hauled to the project where the service court, roads, and trails are being resurfaced at the rate of about 100 cubic yards per week. One hundred tons of agricultural lime and a large quantity of commercial fertilizer have been distributed on the project.

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