

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESTORATION – ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

***POOL 12 OVERWINTERING, STAGE 1, SUNFISH LAKE***  
***Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project***

**Location:** This Mississippi River habitat project is located in the 300-acre Sunfish Lake backwater area approximately six miles north of Bellevue, Iowa. The site lies within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Jo Daviess County, Illinois. (See map on back for project location.)

**Need:** The construction of Lock and Dam No. 12 in 1939 created a series of islands, backwater channels, and backwater lakes between Dubuque and Bellevue, Iowa. However, since the lock and dam construction, river sediments have been slowly filling in the backwater areas, reducing the value of historic fisheries overwintering sites. In addition, the lock and dam also caused changes to the floodplain forest communities. The floodplain forest is now dominated by similar-aged species of cottonwood and silver maple, and this lack of diversity results in reduced habitat value.

**Project Description:** This Sunfish Lake project will restore approximately 16 acres of deep backwater channels, providing overwintering and year-round habitat for fish in the surrounding area. The dredged channel material will be used to construct berms which will help keep sediment out of the lake. Trees will be planted on the berms to enhance the floodplain forest habitat. When complete, this project will provide homes, food, and resting places for river wildlife such as fish, migratory birds, and other resident animals.

**Partnership:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Iowa and Illinois Departments of Natural Resources, with public input, planned and designed this project as a cooperative effort.

**Current and Future Activities**

- The Pool 12 Overwintering project will improve habitat in four lakes – Sunfish, Tippy, Kehough, and Stone.
- Newt Marine Service (Dubuque, Iowa) began the Sunfish Lake construction in December 2013 and anticipates completion in Fall 2016. This work includes dredging over 2 miles of channels and constructing the adjacent berms.
- The Corps of Engineers will plant trees on the Sunfish Lake berms once construction is complete.
- Work in the remaining three lakes will begin in subsequent years.

**Points of Contact**

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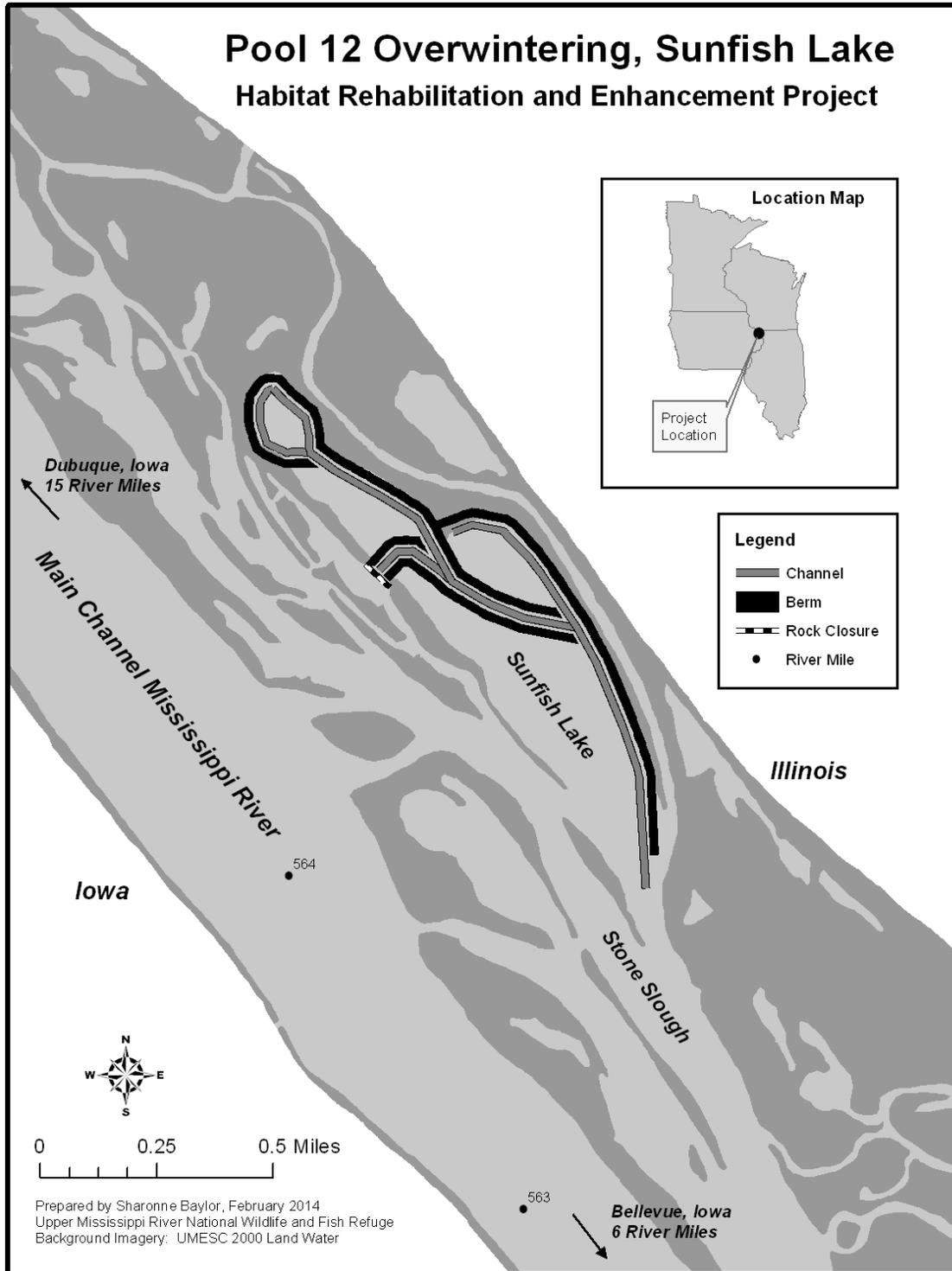
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# Pool 12 Overwintering, Sunfish Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project



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For more Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge information visit [www.fws.gov/refuge/upper\\_mississippi\\_river/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/upper_mississippi_river/)