

GRAND MARAIS CREEK OUTLET RESTORATION



Background

The Grand Marais Creek Outlet Restoration Project, funded in part with Outdoor Heritage Funds through the MN Clean Water Conservation Legacy Act, was completed in 2015 after nearly eight years of planning, design and construction efforts by the Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD). In its first year of operation, the channel is functioning as intended, and is showing signs of supporting the fishery goals and objectives established.

The Project Results

Area residents, such as outdoor enthusiasts Jaelyn Nelson and Ethan Borgan, have been taking advantage of newly constructed channel crossings as fishing platforms.



Channel catfish are already showing up as a fishing favorite. It is apparent that the fish passage elements of the project at the confluence with the Red River are providing for efficient movement of fish into the restored reach of the Grand Marais Channel. The MnDNR will coordinate with the RLWD to monitor the fishery throughout the next several years to determine fish population and species.



Upland and wetland vegetation along the channel corridor and riparian area are being maintained by the RLWD. Weed control will be a focus to provide best opportunity for native species growth. Access to the wetland areas and channel banks is proving to be difficult and will be a challenge to manage undesirable vegetation. Upland areas appear much more efficient to maintain.



The six private bridge crossings will be inspected by the RLWD after each flood event, where the structures are submerged or every two years, whichever is sooner. The inspection procedures are similar to public bridge inspection program. Files of bridge conditions will be maintained to assure safety and serviceability of the bridge crossings. It is expected that these structures will provide up to 35 years of service.



They make good fishing platforms also. Bank stability and bioengineering methods incorporated into the channel banks will be monitored by the RLWD for stability and channel shape.

Generally, the project will be monitored for the above referenced items for the next several years, and primarily after flood events. The first year of channel operations appears to be satisfying goals and objectives of the project. Maintenance of vegetation within wetland areas appears to be the notable challenge initially. ■