

National Environmental Policy Act



Common Reed

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Environmental analysis includes the preparation of an environmental report which assesses the environmental effects of the proposed alternatives and the recommended action. State and Federal agency coordination will be conducted to comply with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act regarding potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources. Some of the resources of concern identified as a result of previous studies that will be addressed during the feasibility phase include the following.

WETLANDS

It is estimated that there are about 65 acres of wetlands located within the vicinity of Wilson Lake. Common reed and salt cedar are two aggressive plants that are documented to occur at the lake. Common reed is the dominant plant species along the lake shoreline. Wetland plant species and wetland acreage will be refined with survey and field data.

FISHERIES

Wilson Lake contains many common fish including crappie, catfish, and bass. White perch and zebra mussels are aquatic nuisance species that also occur in the lake. Most fish species are impacted by drought as a result of reduced spawning and nursery habitat. Wet years expose fish habitat, which is beneficial to fish and aquatic organisms. The impact of varying lake levels on fish and aquatic organisms will be assessed during the feasibility phase.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Wilson Lake includes a variety of cultural resources including prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and prehistoric rock art. Low and fluctuating lake levels can impact known cultural resources located near the shoreline. Cultural resources located at higher elevations can be vulnerable to exposure and degradation as a result of high and fluctuating lake levels. Potential impacts to existing and unknown cultural resources will be assessed using hydraulic modeling data during the feasibility phase.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Threatened and endangered species that may occur in the general vicinity of the project area include the piping plover, snowy plover, Eskimo curlew, whooping crane, least tern, eastern spotted skunk, peregrine falcon, and bald eagle. Wilson Lake contains wetlands that may provide suitable habitat for some of these species, particularly shorebirds. The Federally endangered whooping crane is known to fly over Wilson Lake to nearby wildlife refuges. Any proposed changes to lake management will assess potential impacts to threatened and endangered species due to changes in habitat availability.

SOILS

The dominant soils adjacent to the lake are classified by the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service as loam. Soil erodibility and potential impacts to the shoreline, fisheries, water quality, and cultural resources will be assessed during the feasibility phase.

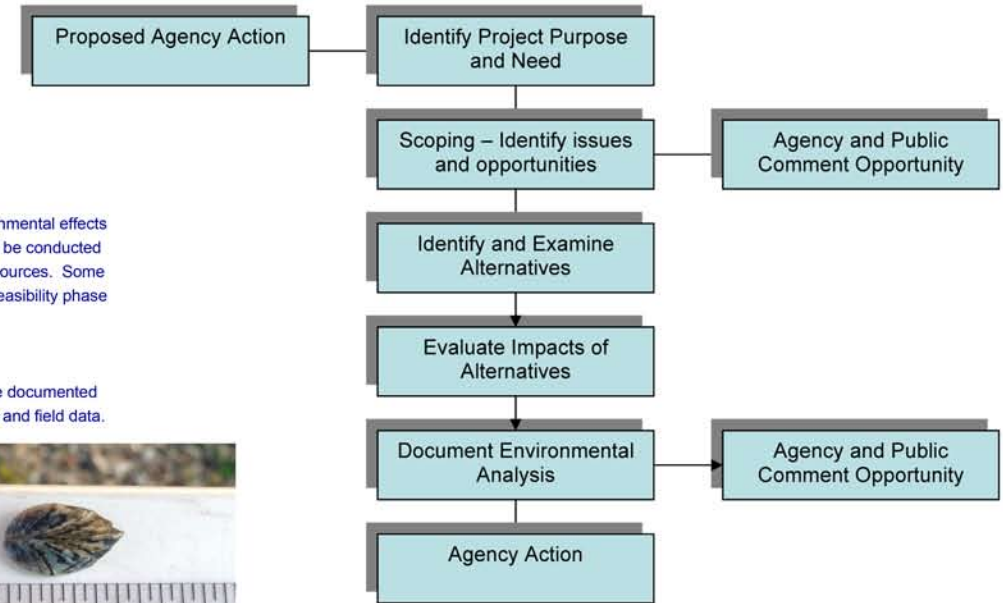


Whooping Crane



Zebra Mussel

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process requires Federal agencies to assess environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions. NEPA requires agency and public participation in the planning process. The NEPA process includes the following general activities:



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