

COMPLETED PROJECT SHEET

Project #4924289

Map #62M/1

#62M/2

COMPLETED 1986

YORKTON SOUTH

Location:

NE 23/NW 24-24-4-2. The complex of ten wetlands that represent the Yorkton South project lie within the watershed of the Assiniboine River and are located primarily south and west of the city of Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The area is depicted on the 62M (Yorkton) 1:250,000 plus the 62M/1 (Yorkton) and 62M/2 (Willowbrook) 1:50,000 mapsheets of the National Topographic Series. The site of the main water level control structure for the complex is on the road allowance between the northeast quarter of section 23 and the northwest quarter of 24, township 24, range 4, west of the second meridian. The Universal Transverse Mercator (U.T.M.) is 13-6785-56621 with the co-ordinates being 102° 27' N latitude and 51° 05' W longitude.

History:

There has been a long and often controversial history related to the system of lakes and marshes south and west of Yorkton. In 1899, following a drought period that saw Crescent and Leech Lakes go dry during 1896, the Willow Brook diversion dam was constructed by the Public Works Department of the North West Territorial Government in an effort to provide more water to the system. This also included a diversion ditch from the Rousay Lakes to York Lake. Historical records indicate that wet conditions returned in 1902 and public pressure was exerted during the next twenty-five years to lower levels in the lakes. An unanticipated benefit to this cause came in 1906 with the washing out of the Willow Brook diversion dam.

As the dry cycle of the 1930's began and water levels on the lakes began to drop conflicts arose as local interests attempted to divert water for their own uses. As a result of this demand for water Ducks Unlimited received a request in 1938 from local residents to investigate means of improving the water supply for Rousay Lake and Maddaford Marsh. In 1942 authorization to reconstruct the diversion works on Willow Brook was granted

to the City of Yorkton under the Water Rights Act. This construction was carried out jointly by the City of Yorkton and Ducks Unlimited.

During the next two decades Ducks Unlimited built extensive works throughout this wetland complex in an effort to maintain water levels during years of low runoff. However, problems again arose as the wet cycles of the 1950's and 60's brought surpluses of water into the system. This situation was aggravated because of a lack of adequate outlet facilities to provide for flood control.

In addition to problems with flooded agricultural lands a rivalry started between the cities of Yorkton and Melville over water supply. Numerous public meetings and investigations resulted with the culmination in 1972 when a petition from farmers brought the Government of Saskatchewan and all interested agencies together (Table 1). As a consequence, the Saskatchewan Wetlands Committee (Provincial Interdepartmental Drainage and Flood Control Review Committee) established a sub-committee, the Yorkton Creek Ad Hoc Committee, to investigate and present recommendations for resolving the problems attendant to this watershed. During the course of its work, the Yorkton Creek Ad Hoc Committee has reviewed, co-ordinated and attempted to compromise the interests and involvement of several government and private groups (Fig. 1).

To implement and fund the development of the Yorkton South project it was recommended that a Watershed Authority be established under the Watershed Associations Act, administered by the Land Improvement Branch, Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture. The Yorkton Creek Watershed Association No. 5 was established by order in council 2 June 1977. Ducks Unlimited negotiated with the Watershed Association and a proposal was agreed upon where Ducks Unlimited would undertake certain works within and adjacent to the Yorkton Creek Marshes. In consideration Ducks Unlimited received assurances that the wetlands will be managed to a mutually agreeable water level for the production of waterfowl and other wildlife benefits.