BARNETT POND SYSTEM

Community ...

McCook's **Barnett Pond System** was created in 1956 to supply gravel for local construction projects. The ponds were stocked with game fish which did well until recent years. As sedimentation increased, the natural springs provided very little fresh water to the ponds.

Challenges ...

Maximum pond depths of six feet were poor conditions for fish to survive cold winter and hot summer months. The fish that did survive were mainly rough fish such as carp and bullheads. Additionally, high populations of waterfowl were detrimental to water quality which was facilitated by the city starting a feeding program to entice migratory birds to the area.

Solutions ...

Based on recommendations from state officials, dredging resulted in some 10-12 foot depths in the pond, while some shallows were maintained for spawning. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service located natural springs, which were focus areas for sediment removal. Existing fish were eliminated prior to dredging. A bank stabilization program was also implemented to decrease sedimentation and improve access for people of all ages and physical abilities. After project completion, the pond was stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish.

Results ...

The lake renovation has provided recreational opportunities within walking distance of McCook. Area students researched methods to decrease geese populations, and as students work with the community and cooperating agencies, they will problem-solve using wise environmental restoration decisions. They will learn the effects every decision has on the biological diversity of the environment through hands-on experiences in this newly established outdoor classroom. Educational activities are centered around the changes in water quality, changes in geese populations and future recreation management. Information will be used to promote environmental awareness and conservation in the community. The project was completed at a cost of $243,274. Of this amount, $226,874 was provided through the CLEAR program while the City contributed $16,400.