



## Field studies support settlement negotiations

Employees of Wisconsin Electric Power Company (WE) and Mead & Hunt, along with the resource agencies and river and recreational stakeholders, collaborated on several studies during the negotiations:



### Paint River flow study

In 1995, WE provided a series of flow releases in the Paint River downstream of the Lower Paint hydro plant to determine minimum flow releases that could support an improved fishery, and enhanced whitewater boating opportunities. These were evaluated from aquatic resource and recreational enhancement perspectives. The resource agencies collected transect data at several points along the Paint River to evaluate the

potential for enhancing fisheries resources with higher minimum flows.

Recreational stakeholders were invited to participate in a concurrent recreational boating flow release. Since Mead & Hunt had recently arranged for a similar study on the Black River in Wisconsin, WE asked them to invite the potential participants, arrange for videotaping the various flow releases, and coordinate recreational feedback with recommendations. The study was successful in identifying flow releases that accommodate both the fishery and recreational needs.

### Michigamme Reservoir fishery survey

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has been conducting Walleye surveys in the reservoir for many years. While providing valuable information, these studies were restricted by MDNR budgets. WE and Mead & Hunt felt that more detailed information about the reservoir fishery resources, particularly walleye, was necessary for the license application; to support better informed decisions regarding the reservoir drawdown and impact on the walleye population; and to help identify economically feasible ways of mitigating for this impact. Mead & Hunt biologists, with assistance from WE environmental process employees, began a multi-year survey of the 7,000-acre Michigamme Reservoir. The focus of these studies has been to:

- Identify walleye spawning areas
- Identify young-of-year (YOY) forage
- Characterize the fisheries in the reservoir
- Introduce and evaluate the survivability of various plant species
- Characterize habitat used by walleye in various life stages



Additionally, Mead & Hunt has been testing a tagging technique developed in California by marking the YOY walleye in the fall, which may help identify walleye survivors in the reservoir and those that may move downstream to populate other impoundments.



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