



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# Upper Mississippi River

## *National Wildlife and Fish Refuge*

### **Summary of Major Changes to Final Preferred Alternative E Final Environmental Impact Statement and Comprehensive Conservation Plan**

*July 2006*



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# United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge  
51 E. Fourth Street - Room 101  
Winona, Minnesota 55987

Dear Reader:

We are pleased to provide you this Summary of Major Changes to Alternative E, the preferred alternative, for the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. This summary is being mailed to nearly 5,000 citizens and organizations who have expressed an interest in the plan.

This summary focuses on the changes made to Draft Alternative E in the Final EIS/CCP. Information on where to view or access the entire 700-page document is included in this summary. The Executive Summary of Draft Alternative E mailed to many of you in December, 2005, may prove a useful reference as you read this summary, especially since it contained full maps of each pool within the Refuge. Copies are still available by contacting Refuge offices or calling the numbers provided within.

This planning process has been a long and interesting journey. Starting with the first scoping meetings in August, 2002, there have been 46 public meetings and workshops attended by 4,500 people, and dozens of meetings with the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois; Corps of Engineers; and various organizations. A total of 3,230 written comments were received.

Despite an amazing diversity of viewpoints, one thing is clear: citizens love and enjoy the Upper Mississippi River, and many depend on it for livelihood and renewal. This passion bodes well for the future of both the river and the Refuge, and the fish and wildlife which call it home.

Thank you to all who have attended long meetings, voiced concerns, offered suggestions, and stayed engaged over the long haul.

Sincerely,

Don Hultman  
Refuge Manager

## Where to View the Full Text of the Final EIS/CCP

The Final Environmental Impact Statement/Comprehensive Conservation Plan (EIS/CCP) for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Refuge) is a large document of more than 700 pages and copies are limited due to printing costs. This summary provides an overview of the major changes most likely of interest to the general public. However, you may view the entire Final EIS/CCP at the locations below. Business hours for Refuge offices are generally 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

- # On the web at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/uppermiss>
- # At 58 libraries in communities from Wabasha, Minnesota to Rock Island, Illinois
- # At Refuge Headquarters, 51 East Fourth Street, Winona, Minnesota
- # At Refuge District Offices in Winona, Minnesota; La Crosse, Wisconsin; McGregor, Iowa; and Savanna, Illinois

The Final EIS/CCP is also available on compact disc (CD). To request a copy, or for help in locating a library or office above, please call the Refuge at (507) 452-4232, or leave a message with your name, address and phone number at the toll-free number (888) 291-5719. CDs are also available at any Refuge office.



*Les Zigurski*

## What's Next in the Planning Process?

There is a 30-day waiting period from the date of release of the Final EIS/CCP before a decision is made on which alternative will be implemented. The public or agencies may provide additional information or comment during this time, although no public meetings will be held. The decision is documented in a formal Record of Decision, signed by the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Twin Cities, Minnesota.

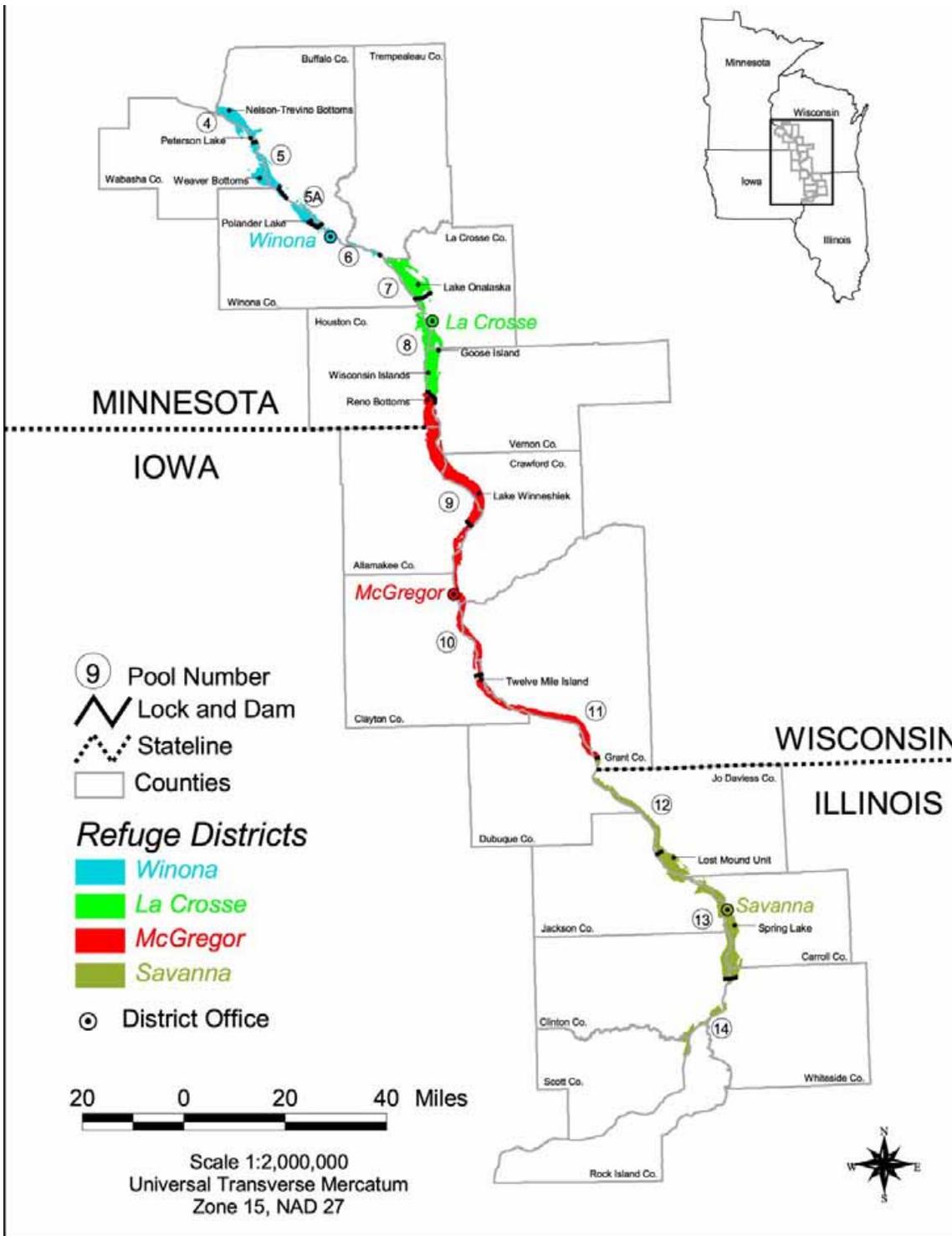
Comments may be submitted by mail to: Upper Mississippi River Refuge, Room 101, 51 East Fourth Street, Winona, Minnesota 55987; or you may comment by e-mail through a link on the Refuge planning website <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/uppermiss>.

## Introduction

A CCP is being prepared to guide the administration and management of the Refuge for the next 15 years. An EIS has been prepared as part of the process, and integrates the components of a CCP (goals, objectives, and strategies) with the requirements of an EIS (alternatives, description of the environment, consequences, and comments with response).

CCPs are required by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 to ensure that refuges are managed in accordance with their purposes and the mission of the Refuge System, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Refuge System is the largest collection of lands and waters in the world set aside for the conservation of wildlife, with over 540 units covering more than 95 million acres in the U.S. and its territories.

**Figure 1: Location of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge**



The Refuge encompasses just over 240,000 acres in a more-or-less continuous stretch of 261 miles of Mississippi River floodplain in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois. The Refuge was established by Congress in 1924 to provide a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds, fish, other wildlife, and plants. The Refuge is perhaps the most important corridor of habitat in the central U.S. due to its species diversity and abundance, and is the most visited refuge in the U.S. with 3.7 million annual visitors.

The Draft EIS/CCP was released for public review May 1, 2005, for a 120-day comment period ending August 31, 2005. Due to public input and concerns, a Supplement to the Draft (Alternative E) was released December 5, 2005 for a 90-day comment period ending March 6, 2006. In total, the Refuge hosted 46 public meetings and workshops during the planning process attended by 4,500 persons. An interagency planning team (state and federal) was active throughout the planning process. We also received 3,230 written comments including comments from the four states involved, the Corps of Engineers, elected officials, and 40 conservation-related organizations; and several petitions and form-letters. A summary of these comments, and our response, is included in the Final EIS/CCP as Chapter 7.

## Refuge Vision and Goals

The Refuge Vision provides a simple statement of the desired, overall future condition of the Refuge. Goals provide the themes or framework for measurable objectives and strategies which are the heart of the CCP and provided the basic structure for five alternatives considered in the Final EIS/CCP.

### Refuge Vision

*The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is beautiful, healthy, and supports abundant and diverse native fish, wildlife, and plants for the enjoyment and thoughtful use of current and future generations.*

### Refuge Goals

1. *Landscape.* We will strive to maintain and improve the scenic qualities and wild character of the Upper Mississippi Refuge.
2. *Environmental Health.* We will strive to improve the environmental health of the Refuge by working with others.
3. *Wildlife and Habitat.* Our habitat management will support diverse and abundant native fish, wildlife, and plants.
4. *Wildlife-Dependent Public Use.* We will manage public use programs and facilities to ensure high quality and sustainable hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, interpretation, and environmental education opportunities for a broad cross-section of the public.
5. *Other Recreational Use.* We will provide opportunities for the public to use and enjoy the Refuge for traditional and appropriate non-wildlife-dependent recreation that is compatible with the purpose for which the Refuge was established and the mission of the Refuge System.
6. *Administration and Operations.* We will seek adequate funding, staffing, and facilities, and improve public awareness and support, to carry out the purposes, vision, goals, and objectives of the Refuge.

# Summary of Major Changes to Alternative E, the Preferred Alternative, in the Final EIS/CCP

The Supplement to the Draft EIS/CCP, which presented new Draft Alternative E, was released for public review and comment in December 2005. Draft Alternative E was the new preferred alternative and made several major changes compared to the earlier preferred alternative, Alternative D.

Nine public meetings were held in January 2006 on Draft Alternative E and just over 700 written comments were received during the 90-day comment period. These comments, along with previous comments, were considered for Final Alternative E in the Final EIS/CCP.

Below is a summary of the major changes, by navigation pool, made to Alternative E in the Final EIS/CCP. The objective numbers cited match the numbering used for objectives in the plan for ease of tracking and comparison.

Tables at the end of this summary provide more details and help with comparing other alternatives, and especially the changes from Draft Alternative E to Final Alternative E. The series of maps included focus on illustrating the changes discussed. Full maps of Alternative E, and the other alternatives, are available on the planning website for the Refuge. Maps in the Executive Summary of Alternative E dated December 2005 and mailed to more than 3,000 persons may also prove useful.



*Cindy Samples, USFWS*

## **Pool 4: Waterfowl Hunting Closed Areas (Objective 4.2) and Nelson-Trevino Slow, No Wake Area (Objective 5.2)**

Alternative E delays the implementation of the new Big Lake Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area until fall, 2009 to allow for additional monitoring of waterfowl use in the existing Nelson-Trevino Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area and surrounding area. The Buffalo Slough area would also be opened to hunting in 2009, while a portion of Peterson Lake would retain its closed area designation. The Nelson-Trevino Slow, No Wake Area is also delayed until 2009. See maps on page 34 and page 35.

## **Pool 5: Weaver/Lost Island Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area (Objective 4.2)**

The 185-acre expansion of the Weaver/Lost Island Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area to include some constructed islands east of River Mile 743 has been deleted. See map on page 36.

## **Pool 5a: Fountain City Bay Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area (Objective 4.2) and Thorpe Hiking Trail (Objective 4.10)**

This 24-acre Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area near Merrick State Park was identified in Alternative D but was inadvertently left off in Draft Alternative E. The area has been restored in Final Alternative E. There is no date for implementation since the first choice is to seek a land exchange for this area with the State of Wisconsin. See map on page 37. Also in Pool 5a, the Thorpe Hiking Trail west of River Mile 736 has been deleted (not on map above).

### **Pool 6: No change in Final Alternative E.**

### **Pool 7: Black River Bottoms Slow, No Wake Area (Objective 5.2), Firing Line - Gibbs Lake Area (Objective 4.4), and Lake Onalaska Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area (Objective 4.2)**

The Black River Bottoms Slow, No Wake Area will be implemented in 2008 versus 2007 to allow further exploration of a proposal by citizens for an alternative Slow, No Wake Area in the Big Marsh/Mud Lake area to the northwest. The proposal had several conditions which made it unsuitable, but since the area has merit, the extra year will allow further exploration of the proposal with citizens. The implementation of the Black River Bottoms Slow, No Wake Area will proceed unless this consultation and a decision by the Refuge Manager dictate another course (see map on page 38). The date for completing a plan to address firing line issues in the Gibbs Lake Area, with public and Wisconsin DNR input, has been moved to October 1, 2006. Minor adjustments to the west boundary of the Lake Onalaska Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area have been clarified and more accurately mapped (see map on page 39).

### **Pool 8: Goose Island Special Hunt Area (Objective 4.1), Goose Island No Hunting Zone changes and Raft Channel Travel Corridor (Objective 4.2), and Slow, No Wake Areas (Objective 5.2)**

The creation of a Goose Island Special Hunt Area on 235 acres to the north of the Goose Island entrance road has been deleted. This area remains open to currently allowed uses, including hunting, in Final Alternative E (see map page 40). The observation deck in the same vicinity was also deleted. The expansion of the Goose Island No Hunting Zone to the south was adjusted, from 99 acres to 110 acres based on aerial photography review, ground-truthing, and more accurate mapping. The Raft Channel Travel Corridor provision for the Wisconsin Islands Waterfowl Hunting Area remains in Final Alternative E, but the effective date was clarified for the slow, no wake provision (see map on page 41).

Also in Pool 8, minor adjustments were made to the boundaries of the Blue/Target Lake and Root River Slow, No Wake Areas based on a review of aerial photography. The size of the Blue/Target Lake area was reduced 15 acres from Alternative D (see map on page 42).



*Cindy Samples, USFWS*

### **Pool 9: Reno Bottoms Slow, No Wake Area (Objective 5.2) and Kain Switch Hiking Trail (Objective 4.10)**

The designation of the Reno Bottoms Area as a Slow, No Wake Area means that from March 16 through October 31 watercraft must travel at slow, no wake speed and no airboats or hovercraft are allowed. In Draft Alternative E this area was 3,402 acres in size. In Final Alternative E, Pickerel Slough and areas west (866 acres) have been deleted from the designation, leaving a Slow, No Wake Area of 2,536 acres (see map on page 43). Also, the Kain Switch Hiking Trail was reduced in length, the routing changed, and it will remain open to hunting in Final Alternative E (see map on page 44).

### **Pool 10: McGregor Lake Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area and Wisconsin River Delta Special Hunt Area (Objective 4.2)**

This paired Waterfowl Hunting Closed Areas in Draft Alternative E was modified since the paired concept was deemed overly complicated and confusing. The new configuration in Final Alternative E has a standard, small closed area at Sturgeon Slough, the McGregor Lake area was dropped from any designation, and the Wisconsin River Delta Area was renamed a special hunt area to more accurately depict the special regulations in effect (see map on page 45).

## **Pool 11: Waterfowl Hunting Closed Areas (Objective 4.2), Guttenberg Pond Electric Motor Area (Objective 5.2), Goetz Island No Hunting Zone, and Open Water Hunting (Objective 4.1)**

In Final Alternative E, a travel corridor was established in Swift Slough in the 12-Mile Island Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area due to its importance for fishing and limited waterfowl use. The Guttenberg Pond Electric Motor Area (93 acres) was deleted since natural obstructions most of the year preclude access by larger watercraft regardless of designation. The Goetz Island No Hunting Zone encompassing a hiking trail adjacent to Guttenberg, Iowa was reduced in size from 242 acres to 32 acres. For all these changes, see map on page 46.

Minor changes were made to the John Deere Marsh Closed Area to clarify boundaries. The area still includes an area open to hunting (see map on page 47). The open water prohibition in Draft Alternative E was changed in Final Alternative E to target only the area of Pool 11 in Grant County that is a major staging area for Canvasback and Lesser Scaup (see map on page 47). Respective state regulations governing open water hunting remain in effect throughout the rest of the Refuge.

## **Pools 12, 13, and 14: Phase-out of Permanent Blinds and Decoy Regulation Change (Objective 4.5)**

The only changes affecting these portions of the Refuge are the phase out schedule for permanent blinds and the adoption of current regulations governing decoy use on the Refuge. The sequence for phasing-out permanent blinds in Final Alternative E is Pool 12 (after 2006-07 season), Pool 14 (2007-08), and Pool 13 (2008-09) versus Pool 12, 13, and 14 in Alternative D and Draft Alternative E. This change will give more hunters the opportunity to adjust to alternative methods or areas since the majority of blinds are in Pool 13. This will also help with enforcement and administrative planning associated with the phase-out. Related to permanent blinds is the issue of leaving duck hunting decoys on Refuge waters in Pools 12-14. This is an exception to Refuge-wide regulations which state that decoys may not be in place “½ hour after the close of legal shooting hours and 1 hour before the start of legal shooting hours.” In Final Alternative E, the Refuge regulation above for decoy use will apply Refuge-wide. The implementation schedule will follow the same sequence and dates as for permanent blinds.



*Stan Bousson*

## **General – Dog Use Policy (Objective 5.4)**

The language in the dog use policy in Alternatives D and Draft E was changed for clarity and ease of understanding, and a provision added for removing dog waste. The new regulation in Final Alternative E is summarized in Table 1 in this summary, and the full text is in Objective 5.4 of the Final EIS/CCP.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<b>Goal 1. Landscape. Improve scenic qualities and wild character of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge.</b>					
<i>1.1 Refuge Boundary</i>	Survey problem areas, post boundary as time permits	In coordination with the Corps of Engineers, survey and post entire boundary by 2021. Boundary issues would be addressed in coordination with the Corps of Engineers, as appropriate.	Same as B	Same as B	In coordination with the Corps of Engineers, identify, survey, and post all areas where threat of encroachment is greatest by 2021.
<i>1.2 Acquisition within approved boundary</i>	Acquire from willing sellers about 200 acres per year or 3,000 acres by 2020. Give highest priority to acquisition of lands and waters most important to fish and wildlife.	Acquire from willing sellers an average of 1,000 acres per year or 15,000 acres by 2021 (58% of goal). Give highest priority to acquisition of lands and waters most important to fish and wildlife.	Same as B except give highest priority to acquisition of lands and waters most important for public recreation values and opportunities.	Same as B except give highest priority to acquisition of lands and waters most important to fish and wildlife, but consider public recreation values.	Same as D
<i>1.3 Bluffland protection</i>	Low-key current approach: support others and support opportunistic acquisition of some bluff areas in boundary	Acquire from willing sellers 13 bluffland areas within approved boundary (Winona District – 6, La Crosse District – 3, McGregor District – 4). Work with partners to leverage resources, and favor easements over fee-title acquisition.	Same as B, but favor fee-title acquisition over easements.	Same as B, but consider a blend of easements and fee-title acquisition.	Same as D

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>1.4 Research Natural Areas and Special Designations</i>	No change, continue low-key monitoring, administration, and public information. No new Natural Areas proposed and no Ramsar designation.	More actively administer Natural Areas; complete management plan for each by 2010 with focus on plant and wildlife conservation. No new Natural Areas proposed and no Ramsar designation.	Same as A except increase effort to make public aware of values and management of Natural Areas by incorporating information in brochures, maps, and websites.	Same as B except increase effort to make public aware of values and management of Natural Areas by incorporating information in brochures, maps, and websites. Also, nominate Refuge as Wetland of International Significance under Ramsar.	Same as D
<b>Goal 2. Environmental Health. Improve environmental health of the refuge by working with others.</b>					
<i>2.1 Water Quality (chemistry and sediments)</i>	Current program of seeking improvement in water quality and sediment problems through programs of other agencies, including EMP.	Proactive program to address water quality: - priv. lands biologists - watershed agreements - assessments - research/education - support UMRBA efforts to standardize water quality criteria Address sedimentation in backwaters through EMP and other programs, with emphasis on improving fish and wildlife habitat.	Same as B except put emphasis on improving access for recreation when addressing sediment reduction projects in backwaters.	Same as B except ensure that fish and wildlife objectives are met while integrating public use needs such as access.	Same as D, but strategies expanded, especially for sedimentation, to include consultation with the U.S. Geological Survey and others.
<i>2.2 Water level management</i>	By 2021, complete drawdowns of Refuge pools.	Same as A except seek establishment of Access Trust Fund so drawdowns can be accomplished as needed based on habitat conditions.	Same as A	Same as B	By 2021, complete as many drawdowns of Refuge pools as practicable through the interagency workgroups based on ecological need and engineering feasibility. Retain Access Trust Fund provision from Alternative B.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>2.3 Invasive Plants</i>	Continue modest level of control as funding allows.	Complete invasive plant inventory by 2008; reduce acres affected by 10% by 2010.	Same as A	Same as B	Same as D, recognizing that some level of control should continue before and during inventory work.
<i>2.4 Invasive Animals</i>	Continue modest effort of information and education on invasives and their impact.	Increase efforts to control invasive animals through active partnerships with the states and other federal agencies, and increase public awareness and prevention.	Same as A	Same as B	Similar to D, but objective and strategies strengthened to highlight the seriousness and urgency of the invasive animal threat, especially in regard to asian carp species and the new threat from trematodes affecting waterbirds.
<b>Goal 3. Wildlife and Habitat. Support diverse and abundant native fish, wildlife, and plants.</b>					
<i>3.1 Environmental Pool Plans</i>	Aggressive implementation of Pool Plans using all tools available, with 30% of the portion of the priority projects/tools within the approved refuge boundary completed by 2021.	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A
<i>3.2 Guiding Principles for all habitat management programs</i>	Do not adopt and implement guiding principles.	Adopt and begin use of guiding principles when providing input to design and construction of projects. Principles will favor fish and wildlife over public use and aesthetic considerations	Adopt and begin use of guiding principles when providing input to design and construction of projects. Principles will favor public use of projects versus fish and wildlife needs or aesthetics.	Adopt and begin use of guiding principles when providing input to design and construction of projects. Principles will integrate public use and aesthetic considerations with fish and wildlife needs.	Same as D, but language clarified so that active management practices not discouraged (e.g. moist soil, water control structures) and consideration given to other agency guidelines.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>3.3 Monitoring fish and wildlife populations</i>	Continue current monitoring efforts on some key species and habitat indicators, moderate applied research.	Increase monitoring efforts. Amend Wildlife Inventory plan to include more species and more emphasis on habitat monitoring and research.	Decrease monitoring by focusing on waterfowl and a few other migratory bird species or groups.	Same as B	Same as B, but strategy added to consult states' new Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans.
<i>3.4 Threatened and Endangered species management</i>	Continue current monitoring of bald eagles, advisory involvement with other listed species.	By 2008, begin monitoring all federally listed threatened or endangered and candidate species and prepare management plans to help recovery.	Same as A	Same as B	Same as B, but recognize need to consider state-listed species and other "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" in state plans to help preclude federal listing.
<i>3.5 Furbearer trapping</i>	Continue basic trapping program until refuge trapping plan, with public involvement, is updated by 2007.	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A, but expand trapper and public input as outlined in strategies.
<i>3.6 Fishery and Mussel Management</i>	Continue current modest involvement in fishery and mussel management on the refuge, deferring to states and Service's Fishery Resource Office	Increase refuge involvement in fishery management by: 1. Completing by 2008 a Fishery and Mussel Management Plan which incorporates current monitoring and management by the states and other Service offices. 2. Hire a fishery biologist to facilitate state/Service/ refuge coordination	Same as A	Same as B	Same as B, but wording in rationale and strategies modified to emphasize state and Corps of Engineers role.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>3.7 Commercial fishing and clamming (see 3.8 for reference to turtle harvesting)</i>	Continue to defer to the states to monitor, regulate, and permit commercial fishing and clamming.	Increase refuge involvement in commercial fishing and clamming by: 1) Completing a Fishery and Mussel Management Plan (see Objective 3.6) 2) Issuing refuge special use permits in addition to state-required permits 3) Increase coordination with the states for commercial fishing activity to meet fishery objectives, especially in regards to invasive fish species (see Objectives 2.4 and 3.6)	Same as A	Same as B	Same as B, with edits to reflect “one-stop-shopping” aspect of dovetailing Refuge permit with state-issued permit, to emphasize state lead in fisheries, and to emphasize collaborative approach with states and Corps of Engineers.
<i>3.8 Turtle Management</i>	Continue current limited involvement with turtle management; continue to cooperate with Corps of Engineers and the states studies and turtle management issues.	Increase refuge involvement in turtle management by: 1) completing a 3-5 year turtle ecology study of representative habitats of the entire refuge, and 2) coordinating with other agencies on turtle management actions including monitoring, harvest, and limiting disturbance to nests.	Same as A	Same as B	Same as B.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>3.9 Forest Management</i>	Continue current limited involvement with forest management; continue to cooperate with Corps of Engineers' forest inventory work.	Increase refuge involvement in forest management by: 1) Completing, with Corps of Engineers, a forest inventory for the entire refuge. 2) Hire a refuge forester to complete a Forest Management Plan and lead an active forest management program.	Same as A	Same as B	Same as B, but strategy added on exploring ways to leverage funds to add needed forestry technicians at each District.
<i>3.10 Grassland Management</i>	Maintain 5,700 acres of grassland through various management tools including prescribed fire, haying, and control of invasives.	Same as A except also complete a step-down Habitat Management Plan to address grassland conservation and enhancement.	Same as A	Same as B	Same as B, except strategy added to explore feasibility of increasing grassland acres due to importance to birds and other wildlife, and added reference to, and strategy for, sand prairie areas.
<b>Goal 4. Wildlife-Dependent Recreation. Ensure abundant and sustainable opportunities for a broad cross-section of the public.</b>					
<i>4.1. General Hunting</i>	Maintain a minimum of 192,219 acres (80%) of land and water open to all hunting. Make no changes to current 8 No Hunting Zones for a total of 3,555 acres.	Maintain a minimum of 165,524 acres (69%) of land and water open to all hunting. Add 2 new No Hunting Zones for a total of 3,813 acres (10 zones total).	Maintain a minimum of 189,647 acres (79%) of land and water open to all hunting. Add 9 new No Hunting Zones for a total of 5,959 acres (17 zones total).	Maintain a minimum of 180,626 acres (75%) of land and water open to all hunting. Add 6 new No Hunting Zones for a total of 5,404 acres (14 zones total).	Maintain a minimum of 187,205 acres (78%) of land and water open to all hunting and clarify this benchmark. Add 3 new No Hunting Zones totaling 290 acres (11 zones total).

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

Alternatives Issue/ Objective	Alternative A. No Action	Alternative B. Wildlife Focus	Alternative C. Public Use Focus	Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus	Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)
<p>4.2 Waterfowl hunting closed areas and sanctuaries</p>	<p>Continue current system of 14 Closed Areas and one Sanctuary (no entry). No change in current entry or use regulations. Make only minor adjustments to some areas to clarify boundaries or address operation/ maintenance needs. Total acres = 44,544 Closed Areas = 14 Sanctuaries = 1</p>	<p>In fall 2006: 1) Add 14 new Closed Areas to the current 15, for a total of 29 areas. 2) All areas, except on Lake Onalaska, would become true Waterfowl Sanctuaries by prohibiting entry and use from Oct. 1 to the end of the respective state duck season. 3) Some boundary adjustments would be made to the Lake Onalaska Closed Area. The Voluntary Avoidance Area would continue. Total acres = 60,396 Closed Areas = 1 Sanctuaries = 28</p>	<p>Continue current system of 14 Closed Areas and one Sanctuary, but in 2007 reduce the Lake Onalaska Closed Area by 245 acres to address a firing line. No change in entry or use regulations from existing system. Make only minor adjustments to other areas to clarify boundaries or address operation/ maintenance needs. Total acres = 44,614 Closed Areas = 14 Sanctuaries = 1</p>	<p>In fall 2006: 1) Add 5 new Closed Areas and delete or modify the current 15 for a total of 21. 2) Add 2 new Waterfowl Sanctuaries (no entry) for a total of 3: a. Pool Slough Sanctuary (McGregor District, Pool 9, Iowa/Minnesota) b. Guttenberg Ponds portion of the 12 Mile Slough Sanctuary (McGregor District, Pool 11, Iowa) c. Spring Lake Sanctuary (Savanna District, Pool 13, Illinois-existing) 3) All Closed Areas, except on Lake Onalaska, would be closed to fishing, except bank fishing, and all motorized watercraft, from Oct. 1 to the end of the respective state regular duck season. (continued next page)</p>	<p>In fall 2007 (except fall 2009 for Pool 4): 1) Add 8 new closed areas/ sanctuaries and delete or modify the current 15 for a total of 23. 2) Add 2 new Waterfowl Sanctuaries (no entry) for a total of 3: a. Pool Slough Sanctuary (McGregor District, Pool 9, Iowa/Minnesota) b. Guttenburg Ponds portion of the 12 Mile Slough Closed Area (McGregor District, Pool 11, Iowa) c. Spring Lake Sanctuary (Savanna District, Pool 13, Illinois – existing) 3. Voluntary Avoidance on all large closed areas Oct. 15 to the end of the respective state duck season and no motors and Voluntary Avoidance on small closed areas (~1,000 acres or less) Oct. 15 to the end of the respective state duck season. Exceptions for sanctuaries and Bertram/McCartney Closed Area, Pool 11. Establish threshold for disturbance. (continued next page)</p>

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<p><i>4.2 Waterfowl hunting closed areas and sanctuaries (continued)</i></p>				<p>4) Some boundary adjustments would be made to the Lake Onalaska Closed Area. The Voluntary Avoidance Area would continue. Total acres = 43,704 Closed Areas = 18 Sanctuaries = 3</p>	<p>4) Wisconsin River Delta Special Hunt Area: Closed to hunting and trapping, and a voluntary avoidance area November 1 to end of duck hunting season. 5) Some boundary adjustments to the Lake Onalaska Closed Area. The Voluntary Avoidance Area would continue. 6) Policy and strategy added to address fish habitat projects in closed areas. Total acres= 43,764 Closed areas = 20 Sanctuaries=3</p>
<p><i>4.3 Waterfowl hunting regulation changes</i></p>	<p>No major changes to current waterfowl hunting regulations.</p>	<p>In 2006, implement new refugewide regulation limiting each hunter on the refuge to 25 shotshells in possession while hunting during the waterfowl season. Establish regulations to prohibit open-water hunting on areas of Pools 9 and 11.</p>	<p>In 2006, implement new refugewide regulation requiring a minimum of 100 yards spacing between waterfowl hunting parties. No shotshell restriction. No change in open-water hunting regulations in Pools 9 or 11.</p>	<p>In 2006, implement new refuge-wide regulations limiting each hunter on the refuge to 25 shotshells during waterfowl season and a minimum of 100 yards spacing between waterfowl hunting parties. Establish regulations to prohibit open-water hunting on areas of Pools 9 and 11.</p>	<p>In 2007, prohibit open-water waterfowl hunting in Pool 11, river miles 586-592, Grant County, Wisconsin. No daily shotshell limit or hunter spacing regulation.</p>

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>4.4 Firing Line -- Pool 7, Lake Onalaska, La Crosse District</i>	Status quo, do not address the firing line issue beyond existing laws and regulations.	Move the north boundary of Lake Onalaska Closed Area northward to include 530 more acres and thus reduce the firing line.	Move the north boundary of Lake Onalaska Closed Area southward to exclude 245 more acres and thus reduce the firing line.	Establish a managed waterfowl hunting area on the north end of the Lake Onalaska Closed Area. This hunt would establish posted hunting sites and limit the number of hunters to those sites via random drawing and for-fee permits.	By Oct. 1, 2006, develop plan in cooperation with local waterfowlers and state managers and conservation officers for the area north of the Lake Onalaska Closed Area (Gibbs Lake) to address firing line issue.
<i>4.5 Permanent hunting blinds on Savanna District</i>	Continue current program.	Eliminate the use of permanent hunting blinds after with the 2006-07 waterfowl hunting season.	Same as B	Phase-out the use of permanent hunting blinds beginning with Pool 12 after the 2006-07 season, Pool 13 after the 2007-08 season, and Pool 14 after the 2008-09 season.	Phase-out the use of permanent hunting blinds and the practice of leaving decoys sets overnight beginning with Pool 12 after the 2006-07 season, Pool 14 after the 2007-08 season, and Pool 13 after the 2008-09 season.
<i>4.6 Potter's Marsh Managed Hunt Savanna District</i>	Continue current program but make some administrative changes.	For 2006-07 hunting season, eliminate the managed hunt program, including use of permanent blinds, and open to all on first come, first secured basis.	Same as B	For 2006-07 hunting season, implement a variety of administrative changes. Permanent blinds would be eliminated after the 2007-08 season, but boat blind sites provided and managed.	Same as D
<i>4.7 Blanding Landing Managed Hunt Program (Lost Mound Unit, Savanna District)</i>	Continue current managed hunt as previously managed by the Illinois DNR: 15 permanent blind sites awarded by drawing.	After the 2006-07 season, eliminate the managed hunt program, including use of permanent blinds. Open to all on first come basis.	Same as B	Same as B	Same as B

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>4.8 Fishing</i>	Provide 140,545 acres of surface water open to year-round fishing. An additional 2,736 acres open except October 1 to the end of the state duck hunting season. Maintain 15 fishing piers/docks.	Provide 104,716 acres of surface water open to year-round fishing. An additional 38,645 acres open except October 1 to the end of the state duck hunting season. Maintain 15 fishing piers/docks.	Same as A, except add 5 new fishing piers/docks for a total of 20.	Provide 110,611 acres of surface water open to year-round fishing. An additional 32,750 acres open except October 1 to the end of the state duck hunting season. Add 3 new fishing piers/docks for total of 18.	Provide approximately 140,000 acres of surface water open to year-round fishing. An additional 5,050 acres open except Oct. 1 to the end of the state duck hunting season. Add 3 new fishing piers/docks for total of 18.
<i>4.9 Fishing Tournaments</i>	Continue current “hands off” approach to regulating fishing tournaments.	Issue refuge special use permits for tournaments in addition to state-required permit, to minimize impact to sensitive fish, wildlife, and habitat.	Review and comment on all tournament permits issued by the states to try and minimize conflicts with general public fishing, wildlife observation, and other uses.	Same as B	Same as B, but wording changed to reflect “one-stop-shopping” aspect of dovetailing Refuge permit with state-issued permit. Rationale and strategies changed to emphasize state lead in fisheries and collaborative approach with states and Corps of Engineers.
<i>4.10 Wildlife Observation and Photography</i>	Maintain the following existing facilities: 15 observation areas 6 hiking trails 4 canoe trails 3 biking trails 1 auto tour route	Maintain the following existing or new facilities: 15 observation areas 8 hiking trails 4 canoe trails 3 biking trails 1 auto tour route	Maintain the following existing or new facilities: 31 observation areas 21 hiking trails 26 canoe trails 6 biking trails 3 auto tour routes 3 observation towers 3 photography blinds	Maintain the following existing or new facilities: 26 observation areas 16 hiking trails 21 canoe trails 5 biking trails 3 auto tour routes 3 observation towers 3 photography blinds	Slight change from D as follows: 25 observation areas 14 hiking trails 19 canoe trails 6 biking trails 3 auto tour routes 3 observation towers 4 photography blinds

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>4.11 Interpretation and Environmental Education</i>	Maintain 59 interpretive signs. Continue Refuge brochure and website. Sponsor 1 major annual interpretive event on each District. No change in current visitor services staffing.	Same as A, except long-term add visitor services staff to McGregor and Winona Districts (low priority compared to biological, technical and maintenance positions)	Maintain 102 existing and new interpretive signs. Build 3 new District Offices and new Lost Mound office, all with visitor contact facilities, and 1 major visitor center. Continue refuge brochure and website. Sponsor 2 major annual interpretive events and establish 1 environmental education program on each district. Add visitor services specialists to McGregor and Winona Districts, and one at the National Mississippi River Museum in Dubuque.	Same as C, except no major visitor center.	Same as D.
<i>4.12 Fish Floats</i>	Continue to allow 4 existing fish floats under current annual permits, stipulations, and \$100 annual fee.	Phase out 4 existing fish floats and do not replace, letting private sector provide alternative off-refuge lands opportunities, such as commercial fishing barges not moored to refuge lands.	Develop new standards for fish float facilities and operations, including new concession fees, and phase out floats that can not meet those standards. Seek replacement operations to replace those phased out. Solicit proposals for one new fish float, or other alternative, in the Savanna District.	Develop new standards for fish float facilities and operations, including new concession fees, and phase out floats that can not meet those standards. Do not replace floats that are phased out, letting private sector provide alternative off-refuge lands opportunities, such as commercial fishing barges not moored to refuge lands.	Same as D except solicit new proposals for any float phased out for not meeting standards, and base decision to replace on adequacy and feasibility of proposals.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>4.13 Guiding services</i>	Continue inconsistent, low-key approach to issuing permits for hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation guiding.	Do not allow guiding for hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation on the refuge.	Provide policy and consistent process for issuing permits for hunting, fishing and wildlife observation guide services. Coordinate with the states for consistency with their permitting requirements.	Same as C	Same as C, but language modified to amplify cooperation with states and Corps of Engineers and “one-stop-shopping” for permits when possible.
<b>Goal 5. Other Recreational Use. Provide opportunity for traditional and appropriate non-wildlife dependent use that is compatible with the Refuge.</b>					
<i>5.1. Beach use and maintenance policy and regulations</i>	Open policy. No limits on areas open to camping, boat mooring, swimming, social gatherings, picnicking and other non-wildlife-dependent uses, subject to current regulations. No new regulations and use current guidance for beach maintenance.	Closed-unless-open policy. Limit camping, boat mooring, swimming, social gatherings, picnicking, and other non-wildlife-dependent uses to islands and shoreline that border the main channel, including the backside of such islands or points, that are posted open for such uses. Implement new regulations dealing with camping, human waste, and alcohol use. No beach maintenance would be conducted.	Open policy. No limits on areas open to camping, boat mooring, swimming, social gatherings, picnicking and other non-wildlife-dependent uses, subject to current regulations. Implement new regulations on camping, human waste, and alcohol use. Require that all persons using boats for beaching, mooring, or anchoring on refuge lands purchase a Recreation Use Permit. Beach maintenance would be allowed on most areas. Work with interagency teams to complete beach plans by pool.	Open-unless-closed policy. All areas currently open to camping, boat mooring, swimming, social gatherings, picnicking and other non-wildlife-dependent uses, would remain open, except: 1) areas closed or restricted by signing to protect wildlife, habitat or the public, and 2) camping and overnight mooring limited to islands and shoreline that border the main channel, including the backside of such islands or points. Implement new regulations dealing with camping, human waste, and alcohol use. Articulate clear beach maintenance policy, and work with interagency teams to complete beach plans by pool.	Similar to D, with modifications: 1) Current camping area regulations remain in effect (all open, except in sight of main channel and not in Closed Areas during waterfowl season). 2) Managers may close areas for bona fide wildlife and human health and safety concerns, proper coordination with states and Corps of Engineers and notice to public. 3) New alcohol regulation dropped; enforce existing. 4) Regulation for portable toilets or disposal kits dropped in favor of increased “Leave No Trace” education and outreach. Human solid waste must either be removed or buried on-site in accordance with other back country public land regulations.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

Alternatives Issue/ Objective	Alternative A. No Action	Alternative B. Wildlife Focus	Alternative C. Public Use Focus	Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus	Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)
5.1. Beach use and maintenance policy and regulations (continued)					5) Regulations prohibiting the use of glass food and beverage containers on Refuge lands added. 6) New camping definition retained. 7) Retain “explore” user fee for camping and other beach-related uses, but wording added for interagency and citizen involvement before crafting any proposal. 8) “Adopt-A-Beach” program strategy added
5.2. Electric Motor Areas and Slow, No Wake Areas	Current program with only 1 electric motor area of 222 acres (Mertes Slough, Winona District).	Designate 10 electric motor areas encompassing 15,900 acres. All current uses allowed, except camping.	Designate 15 electric motor areas encompassing 13,239 acres. All current uses allowed, including camping.	Designate 16 new electric motor areas encompassing 14,498 acres. All current uses allowed, and areas open to primitive camping.	Designate 5 electric motor areas (4 are new, Mertes existing) encompassing 1,852 acres, and 8 slow, no wake areas* encompassing 9,720 acres. Black River Bottoms and Nelson-Trevino SNWAs effective 2008 and 2009 respectively. Delete 4 areas from any designation. All current uses allowed. <i>*From March 16 through October 31, Slow, No Wake for watercraft and no airboats or hovercraft allowed.</i>

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>5.3 Slow, No Wake Zones</i>	Maintain 2 existing slow, no wake zones administered by the Refuge, and assist in enforcement of 44 others.	Add 9 new slow, no wake zones, bringing total to 11 administered by the Refuge, and assist in enforcement of 44 others.	Add 8 new slow, no wake zones, bringing total to 10 administered by the Refuge, and assist in enforcement of 44 others.	Add 9 new slow, no wake zones, bringing total to 11 administered by the Refuge, and assist in enforcement of 44 others (slight location difference compared to B).	Add 11 new Slow, No Wake Zones, bringing total to 13 administered by the Refuge, and assist with enforcement of 44 others. Spring Lake and Crooked Slough (Lost Mound): adopt Iowa regulation of under 5 mph if within 100 feet of another vessel going under 5 mph versus slow, no wake.
<i>5.4. Dog use policy</i>	Maintain current regulations: dogs and other animals must be confined, except dogs during hunting seasons. No field trials or commercial training will be permitted (current policy).	Adopt clearer regulation which defines confined: Dogs and other animals must be on 6 ft or less leash, or in closed kennel, at all times, except dogs during hunting seasons while engaged in hunting. No field trials or commercial training will be permitted (current policy).	Adopt regulation similar to one proposed by area conservation group: no wildlife or people disturbance, under control of owners at all times, and physically restrained at posted public use areas or when in proximity to people except while engaged in hunting. No field trials or commercial training will be permitted (current policy).	Adopt enforceable regulation which safeguards wildlife and visitors: From March 1 to June 30, dogs must be restrained by leash or other means. At all other times, dogs can be free if 100 yards away from designated public use areas and/or other persons, and if within sight and voice control of owner/handler. No field trials or commercial training will be permitted (current policy).	Adopt regulation which safeguards wildlife and visitors yet allows dog exercising: No dogs are allowed to disturb or endanger wildlife or people, and must be under the control of their owners/handlers and leashed when on hiking trails or other areas so posted. Exercising retrievers allowed and dogs exempt during authorized hunting. Provision for cleaning up after dogs, and professional training and field trials remain prohibited.
<i>5.5. General Public Use Regulations</i>	Make no changes to public entry and use regulations for the Refuge.	Conduct annual review, and update as needed, general public use regulations governing public entry and use of the Refuge.	Same as B	Same as B	Same as B, but add strategy for doing a Law Enforcement step-down plan for the Refuge in cooperation with the states and Corps of Engineers.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

Alternatives Issue/ Objective	Alternative A. No Action	Alternative B. Wildlife Focus	Alternative C. Public Use Focus	Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus	Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)
Goal 6. Administration and Operation. Clarify boundary issues; seek adequate funding, staff, and facilities; improve public awareness of Refuge.					
6.1 Office and shop facilities	Maintain existing offices (6) and shops (5), but replace the maintenance facilities at Winona and Savanna Districts by 2006.	Maintain existing offices (6) and shops (5), but replace the maintenance facilities at Winona, McGregor, and Savanna Districts by 2010.	By 2010, construct new offices and maintenance shops at Winona, La Crosse, and McGregor Districts, and expand the office and construct a new maintenance shop at Savanna District. Each office would have expanded visitor facilities but not a biological work area or lab. By 2020, build a new office and large visitor center for the Headquarters of the Refuge, and locate it either in Winona or La Crosse. Also by 2020, remodel or replace office and shop at the Lost Mound Unit.	By 2010, construct new offices and maintenance shops at Winona, La Crosse, and McGregor Districts, and expand the office and construct a new maintenance shop at Savanna District. Each office would feature a biological work area or lab, and modest visitor facilities. Refuge Headquarters would be integrated with either the Winona or La Crosse offices. By 2020, remodel or replace office and shop at the Lost Mound Unit.	Same as D
6.2 Public access facilities	Maintain and modernize as needed, 25 existing public boat accesses.	Same as A, except implement launch fee for Refuge-operated boat ramps.	Add 1 new boat access, 3 new walk-in accesses, 3 new and 1 improved canoe landings, and improve 5 parking areas. Implement launch fee for Refuge-operated boat ramps.	Add 1 new boat access, 3 new walk-in accesses, 1 improved canoe landing, and improve 5 parking areas. Implement launch fee for Refuge-operated boat ramps.	Same as D except no launch fee for Refuge-operated boat ramps and 1 additional walk-in access.

**Table 1: Alternative Comparison by Issue/Objective, Upper Mississippi River Refuge (Continued)**

<b>Alternatives Issue/ Objective</b>	<b>Alternative A. No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B. Wildlife Focus</b>	<b>Alternative C. Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative D. Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus</b>	<b>Alternative E: Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>6.3. Operations and maintenance needs</i>	Complete annual review of Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS), Maintenance Management System (MMS), and Service Assessment and Maintenance Management System (SAMMS) databases to ensure these reflect needs of current direction.	Same as A, but reflect needs of wildlife focus alternative.	Same as A, but reflect needs of public use focus alternative.	Same as A, but reflect balanced needs of wildlife and integrated public use focus alternative.	Same as D, but wording added to account for maintenance needs of large habitat projects (e.g. Environmental Management Program projects).
<i>6.4. Public information and awareness</i>	Continue current annual average of 80 media interviews, 125 news releases, and 25 special events (special programs, presentations, and displays at others' events). Maintain existing 66 kiosks.	Decrease by 50 percent the current annual average of 80 media interviews, 125 news releases, and 25 special events (special programs, presentations, and displays at others' events). Maintain existing 66 kiosks.	Increase by 50 percent the current annual average of 80 media interviews, 125 news releases, and 25 special events (special programs, presentations, and displays at others' events). Add 49 kiosks.	Same as C, but also take advantage of technical and specialist positions added in this alternative to increase outreach.	Same as D
<i>6.5 Staffing needs</i>	No change in staffing level of 37 people (37 FTEs)	By 2015, increase staffing from current 37 to 57 people (54.5 FTEs) to bring all Districts to minimum staffing level, add specialists to Headquarters, and increase staff at Lost Mound Unit. Priority would be positions which support biological and habitat programs.	By 2015, increase staffing from current 37 to 57 people (54.5 FTEs) to bring all Districts to minimum staffing level, add specialists to Headquarters, and increase staff at Lost Mound Unit. Priority would be public use positions.	By 2015, increase staffing from current 37 to 59 people (56.5 FTEs) to bring all Districts to minimum staffing level, add specialists to Headquarters, and increase staff at Lost Mound Unit. Priority would be a blend of wildlife and public use related positions.	Similar to D, but add 4 additional FTEs: 4 Full-time Refuge Officers based on public and agency comment. Total FTEs: 60.5. Implement by 2021.

**Table 2: Summary of Project Features for Alternatives A, D, E (Draft) and E (Final)**

Feature	Existing Features		Proposed Features					
	Alternative A: No Action		Alt. D: Wildlife & Integrated Public Use Focus		Alt. E: Draft Modified Wildlife & Integrated Public Use Focus		Alt. E: Final Modified Wildlife & Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)	
	Units	Acres or Miles	Units	Acres or Miles	Units	Acres or miles	Units	Acres or miles
Waterfowl Closed Areas and/or Sanctuaries	15	44,544	21	43,704	22	45,755	23	43,764
No open water hunting areas	0	0	2  One area in Pool 9, one in Pool 11	10,487	Drop 2 areas; apply no open water hunting regs throughout MN and WI portions of Refuge	NA	1  Reinstate Pool 11 area, WI side only	4,000
Managed/Special Hunts	2	2,434	2	2,403	4	2,265	3	~3,530
Administrative no hunting zones	8	3,555	14	5,404	10	3,973	11	3,845
Fish catch and release area	1	700	1	700	1	700	1	700
Heron sanctuary	0	0	1	64	0	0	0	0
No-wake zones	46	NA	55	NA	58	NA	57	NA
Electric motor areas	1	222	16	14,498	6	1,947	5	1,852
Slow, no wake areas	0	0	0	0	8	10,569	8	9,720
Research Natural Areas	4	6,946	4	6,946	4	6,946	4	6,946
Canoe trails	4	32.1	21	126.9	19	120.6	19	120.6
Hiking trails	6	20.5	16	40.9	15	39.9	14	36.5
Auto tour routes	1	2.5	3	11.0	3	11.0	3	11.0
Biking trails	3	10.0	5	14.1	6	21.1	6	21.1
Fishing piers	15	NA	18	NA	18 drop 2,add 2	N/A	20 add 2	NA
Commercial fishing floats / piers	4	NA	4	NA	4	N/A	4	NA

**Table 2: Summary of Project Features for Alternatives A, D, E (Draft) and E (Final) (Continued)**

Feature	Existing Features		Proposed Features					
	Alternative A: No Action		Alt. D: Wildlife & Integrated Public Use Focus		Alt. E: Draft Modified Wildlife & Integrated Public Use Focus		Alt. E: Final Modified Wildlife & Integrated Public Use Focus (Preferred Alternative)	
	Units	Acres or Miles	Units	Acres or Miles	Units	Acres or miles	Units	Acres or miles
Boat access	25	NA	26	NA	27	N/A	26	NA
Walk-in access	0	NA	3	NA	4	N/A	4	NA
Canoe landing / launch	1	NA	2	NA	2	N/A	2	NA
Parking lot improvements	0	NA	5	NA	5	N/A	5	NA
Observation decks/areas	15	NA	26	NA	27	N/A	25	NA
Observation towers	0	NA	3	NA	3 drop 1, add 1	N/A	3	NA
Photo blinds	0	NA	3	NA	4	N/A	4	NA
Kiosks	66	NA	115	NA	118	N/A	115	NA
Interpretive signs	59	NA	102	NA	102	N/A	102	NA
Entrance signs	25	NA	30	NA	30	N/A	30	NA
Official Notice Boards	30	NA	49	NA	49	N/A	49	NA
Build new maintenance facilities	2	NA	5	NA	5	N/A	5	NA
Build new office facilities	0	NA	3	NA	3	N/A	3	NA
Build major visitor center	0	NA	0	NA	0	N/A	0	NA
Refuge Staffing	37.0	NA	56.5	NA	60.5	N/A	60.5	NA

**Table 3: Closed Areas and Sanctuaries <sup>1</sup> / Alternative E (Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus)**

Pool	Name	State	Alt. A Existing (acres)	Alt. E Draft (acres)	Alt. E Final (acres)	Comments for Alt. E Final
4	Nelson / Trevino	WI	3,773	0	0	Remains in effect until the 2009 waterfowl hunting season, then dropped.
4	Big Lake	WI	0	3,249	2,461	Drop Buffalo Slough portion proposed in Alt. E Draft. Has travel corridor. Will not take effect until the 2009 waterfowl hunting season. Voluntary Avoidance (VA)
4	Rieck's Lake / Buffalo River	WI	0	496	608	This boundary configuration will not take effect until the 2009 waterfowl hunting season. No motors; VA
4	Peterson Lake	MN-WI	3,111	0	677	This boundary configuration will not take effect until the 2009 waterfowl hunting season. Has travel corridor; voluntary avoidance (VA). Rieck's Lake and Buffalo Slough were part of this area under Alt. A.
5	Weaver Bottoms/ Lost Is.	MN-WI	3,139	3,693	3,508	Drop boundary correction proposed in Alt. E Draft that added 185 acres on WI side. Has travel corridor; VA
5	Spring Lake	WI	0	243	243	No motors; VA
5A	Fountain City Bay	WI	0	0	24	Site will be a closed area if land exchange with Wisconsin DNR does not occur; inadvertently left out in Alt. E Draft. No motors; VA
5A	Polander Lake	MN-WI	1,589	1,907	1,907	Has travel corridor; VA
6	Trempealeau NWR	WI	n/a	n/a	n/a	Part of existing closed area system; special regulations; 5520 acres
7	Lake Onalaska	WI	7,348	7,357	7,369	Adjust boundaries at Proudfoot Slough and "old channel" areas. Has existing VA of 3,356 ac. No change from current regulations.

**Table 3: Closed Areas and Sanctuaries <sup>1</sup> / Alternative E (Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus) (Continued)**

Pool	Name	State	Alt. A Existing (acres)	Alt. E Draft (acres)	Alt. E Final (acres)	Comments for Alt. E Final
8	Goose Is. No Hunt Zone	WI	876	975	986	Part of existing closed area system; has 110 acre expansion; no motors and VA; drop special hunt area proposed in Alt. E Draft
8	Wisconsin Islands	MN-WI	6,510	6,510	6,510	VA; adds slow, no wake zone in travel corridor on Raft Channel
9	Pool Slough	MN-IA	1,112	1,112	1,112	Designated sanctuary in Alt. E Draft and Final; is located adjacent to state (IA) sanctuary
9	Harpers Slough	IA-WI	5,209	5,209	5,209	VA
10	Sturgeon Slough	WI	0	0	340	This is the upper portion of McGregor Lake area (see below); no motors, VA
10	McGregor Lake	WI	0	852	0	Dropped from Alt. E Final
10	Wisconsin River Delta	WI	0	1,376	0	Changed to special hunt area (see Appendix H, Table 17).
10	12-Mile Island	IA	540	540	540	Pool 10 portion; no motors; VA
11	Guttenberg Ponds	IA	0	252	252	Sanctuary; located within 12-mile Island closed area
11	12-Mile Island	IA	1,396	1,145	1,145	Pool 11 portion of 12 Mile Island closed area; adds Swift Slough travel corridor; VA
11	Bertom McCartney	WI	2,415	2,384	2,384	Does not include Bertom Island, a no entry area year round; No change from current regulations (no motor restriction or VA in this closed area)
11	John Deere Marsh	IA	0	405	439	Travel corridor; no motors; VA
12	Kehough Slough	IL	0	343	343	no motors; VA
13	Pleasant Creek	IA	2,603	2,067	2,067	VA
13	Spring Lake	IL	3,686	3,686	3,686	Only existing sanctuary on Refuge; remains sanctuary
13	Elk River	IA	1,237	1,237	1,237	VA

**Table 3: Closed Areas and Sanctuaries <sup>1</sup> / Alternative E (Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus) (Continued)**

Pool	Name	State	Alt. A Existing (acres)	Alt. E Draft (acres)	Alt. E Final (acres)	Comments for Alt. E Final
14	Beaver Island	IA	0	717	717	No motors; VA
Total Acres			44,544	45,755	43,764	
Total Units			15 units: 14 Closed Areas, 1 Sanctuary	22 units: 19 Closed Areas, 3 Sanctuaries	23 units: 20 Closed Areas, 3 Sanctuaries	

1. *Waterfowl hunting closed areas defined as follows: Closed to all migratory bird hunting. Other hunting and trapping is only allowed beginning the day after the close of the regular state duck hunting season, until season closure or March 15, whichever comes first, except turkey hunting is allowed during state seasons.*

*Under Alternative E, the public will be asked to practice Voluntary Avoidance (VA), i.e. limiting entry, on all closed areas ("Large" and "Small") October 15 to the end of the respective state duck hunting season and in addition there will be a "no motor" restriction on Small closed areas October 15 to the end of the regular state duck hunting season. Large closed areas are greater than 1,000 acres and small closed areas are ~1,000 acres or less. "No motors" means the use of motors on watercraft is not allowed.*

*Sanctuary is defined as follows: no entry October 1 to the end of the regular state duck hunting season.*

**Table 4: Electric Motor Areas (E)/ Slow, No Wake Areas (S)<sup>1</sup> Alternative E, Final  
(Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus)**

Pool	Feature	State	Existing	Proposed			Up-River Mile	Down-River Mile	Distance to Landing	Comments for Alternative E Final
			Alt. A Acres	Alt. D Acres	Alt. E Draft Acres	Alt. E Final Acres				
4	Nelson-Trevino	WI		2,626 E	2,626 S	2,626 S	762.5	760.0	0.1	Delay implementation until 2009 to coincide with closed area changes.
5	Finger Lakes	MN		497 E	0	0	752.7	751.5	0.2	Dropped from Alt. E
5	Island 42	MN		459 E	459 E	459 E	749.8	747.6	1.5	Remains electric motor area
5A	Snyder Lake	MN		182 E	182 E	182 E	735.0	734.0	2.5	Remains electric motor area
5A	Denzers Slough	MN		83 E	83 S	83 S	733.0	732.0	1.5	Remains Slow, No Wake Area
6	Mertes Slough	WI	222 E	222 E	222 E	222 E	727.0	726.0	0.1	Only existing Electric motor area on Refuge. Remains electric motor area
7	Browns Marsh	WI		966 E	829 E	827 E	711.0	708.0	0.1	Remains electric motor area; size reduced
7	Black River Bottoms	WI		1,146 E	1,146 S	1,165 S	711.0	708.8	0.1	Delay implementation until March 2008
8	Blue/Target Lake	MN		1,849 E	1,836 S	1,834 S	699.0	696.0	0.1	Remains Slow, no Wake area; slight size reduction in Alt. E Final
8	Root River	MN		695 E	695 S	695 S	696.0	694.0	0.5	Remains Slow, No Wake Area
9	Reno Bottoms	MN		3,402 E	3,402 S	2,536 S	681.0	679.2	0.1	Reduce size by 866 acres Alt. E Final
10	Hoosier Lake  Formerly Bagley Bottoms and Glass Lake	WI		789 E	162 E	162 E	624.8	624.0	0.1	Remains electric motor area; drop the Glass Lake section (627 acres)
11	Guttenberg Ponds	IA		93 E	93 E	0	614.8	614.0	0.8	Dropped in Alt. E Final

**Table 4: Electric Motor Areas (E)/ Slow, No Wake Areas (S)<sup>1</sup> Alternative E, Final  
(Modified Wildlife and Integrated Public Use Focus) (Continued)**

Pool	Feature	State	Existing	Proposed			Up-River Mile	Down-River Mile	Distance to Landing	Comments for Alternative E Final
			Alt. A Acres	Alt. D Acres	Alt. E Draft Acres	Alt. E Final Acres				
12	Nine Mile Island	IA		567 E	454 S	454 S	573.8	572.0	0.3	Becomes Slow, No Wake Area; size reduced in Alt E
13	Kellers Island	IA		595 E	0	0	540.0	537.2	0.3	Dropped
14	Princeton (formerly called Rock Creek)	IA		327 E	327 S	327 S	506.7	506.0	1.3	Becomes Slow, No Wake Area
	Total Acres		222	14,498	12,516	11,572				
	Total Units		1	16	14: 6 Electric motor areas; 8 Slow, No Wake areas	13: 5 Electric motor areas; 8 Slow, No wake areas				

1. *Alternative E (Draft): A total of 6 Electric motor areas cover 1,947 acres. A total of 8 Slow, No Wake areas cover 10,569 acres. Alternative E (Final): A total of 5 electric motor areas cover 1,852 acres. A total of 8 Slow, No Wake areas cover 9,720 acres.*

*Definitions:*

*Electric Motor Areas. Areas closed year-round to all motorized vehicles and watercraft except watercraft powered by electric motors or non-motorized means. The possession of other watercraft motors is not prohibited, only their use. For example, anglers could switch to an electric trolling motor when entering these areas.*

*Slow, No Wake Areas. From March 16 through October 31 in these areas, watercraft must travel at slow, no-wake speed and no airboats or hovercraft are allowed. Respective state definitions for what constitutes “slow, no wake” speed or operation will apply as appropriate. The airboat and hovercraft prohibition refers to operation. For example, they could be propelled by electric motors or other means at slow, no wake speed inside these areas during the dates specified.*

**Table 5: Managed Hunts / Special Hunt Areas. Alternative E Final**

Pool	Feature	State	Existing	Proposed			Up-River Mile	Down-River Mile	Comments for Alt E, Final
			Alt. A Acres	Alt. D Acres	Alt. E Draft Acres	Alt. E Final Acres			
7	Gibb's Lake Special Hunt Area	WI	0	480	< 200 acres Complete hunt plan by July 1, 2006	<200 acres Complete hunt plan by Oct. 1, 2006	708.6	707.2	Change completion date of plan.
8	Goose Island Youth Hunt	WI	0	0	235	0	692.1	691.4	Drop youth hunt Proposed in Alt E Draft
10	Wisconsin River Delta Special Hunt	WI	0	0	0	1406 acres Proposed Special Hunt Area	633.8	630.7	No hunting and Vol. Avoidance Nov 1 to end of duck season; has travel corridor
11	John Deere Marsh	IA	0	0	107	0	586.5	586.0	Drop; open area to general hunting
12	Blanding Landing Managed Hunt	IL	511	0	0	0	557.7	556.8	Alts. D and E the same: end managed hunt; open area to general hunting
13	Potter's Marsh Managed Hunt	IL	1,923	1,923	1,923	1,923	526.0	522.7	Alts. D and E the same: No permanent blinds; boat blinds only; same day drawing
	Total Acres		2,434	2,403	2,265	~3,530			
	Total Units		2	2	4	3			

# Maps Showing Changes Made to Alternative E

## Legend

### Base Features

- River Mile
- County-State Line
- Lock & Dam
- Railroads
- Roads
- Adjacent Public Land
- EMP Project
- Refuge Land
- Research Natural Area & State Natural Area
- Non-refuge Land
- Water

### Public Use Descriptions

- Existing USFWS (Blue)  
New USFWS (Red)  
Other Public or Private (Brown)
- Accessible Fishing Pier
  - Auto Tour Route
  - Bike Trail
  - Boat Ramp
  - Camping
  - Canoe Access/Walkdown
  - Canoe Trail
  - Fishing Site
  - Hiking Trail
  - Motorboat Route
  - Observation Deck
  - Observation Tower
  - Overlook
  - Parking Area
  - USFWS Office
  - Wildlife Photography Blind

### No Wake Zones

- Existing
- New



The U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center (UMESC) created the land cover/use data set for the Upper Mississippi River System from 1:15,000 scale color infrared aerial photos collected in 2000. All data is in the Universe Transverse Mercatum Projection, Zone 15, NAD 27.

### Management Strategy

Changes from current management are shown in red symbols and/or text.

- Bass/Catch Release Area
- Closed Area Change \*
- Electric Motor Area\*/ Slow, No Wake Area\*\*
- Blanding Landing Managed Hunt Area
- Existing Closed Area\*
- Existing Electric Motor Area
- Existing No Entry
- Existing No Hunting Zone
- No Hunting Zone Change
- Potter's Marsh Hunt Area
- Special Hunt Area
- Tailwater Fishing Closure
- Travel Corridor through Closed Area
- Voluntary Waterfowl Avoidance Area

\*Closed Areas - Closed to All Migratory Bird Hunting. Other hunting and trapping is allowed beginning the day after the close of the state duck hunting season, until season closure or March 15, whichever comes first, except turkey hunting is allowed during state seasons.

Voluntary avoidance on large closed areas (>1,000 acres) October 15 to the end of the state duck hunting season. No motors and voluntary avoidance on small closed areas (~1,000 acres or less) October 15 to the end of the state duck hunting season.

\*Electric Motor Area - Closed year-round to all motorized vehicles and watercraft except watercraft powered by electric motors or non-motorized means.

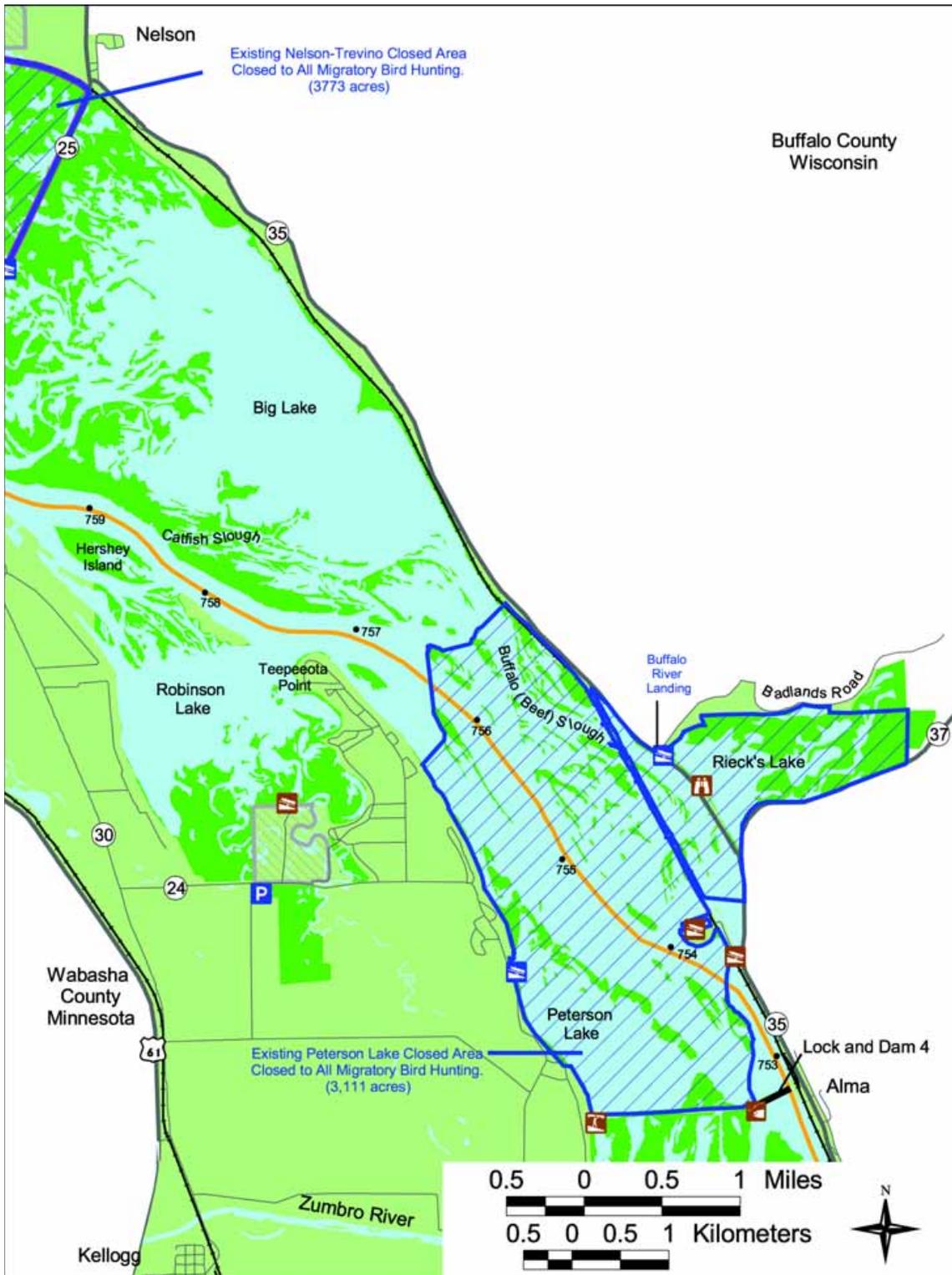
\*\*Slow, No Wake Area - From March 16 through October 31, slow, no wake for watercraft and no airboats or hovercraft allowed.

### Signs

- Existing (Blue)  
New (Red)
- Kiosk
  - Kiosk
  - Interpretive Sign
  - Interpretive Sign
  - Notice Board
  - Notice Board
  - Entrance Sign
  - Entrance Sign

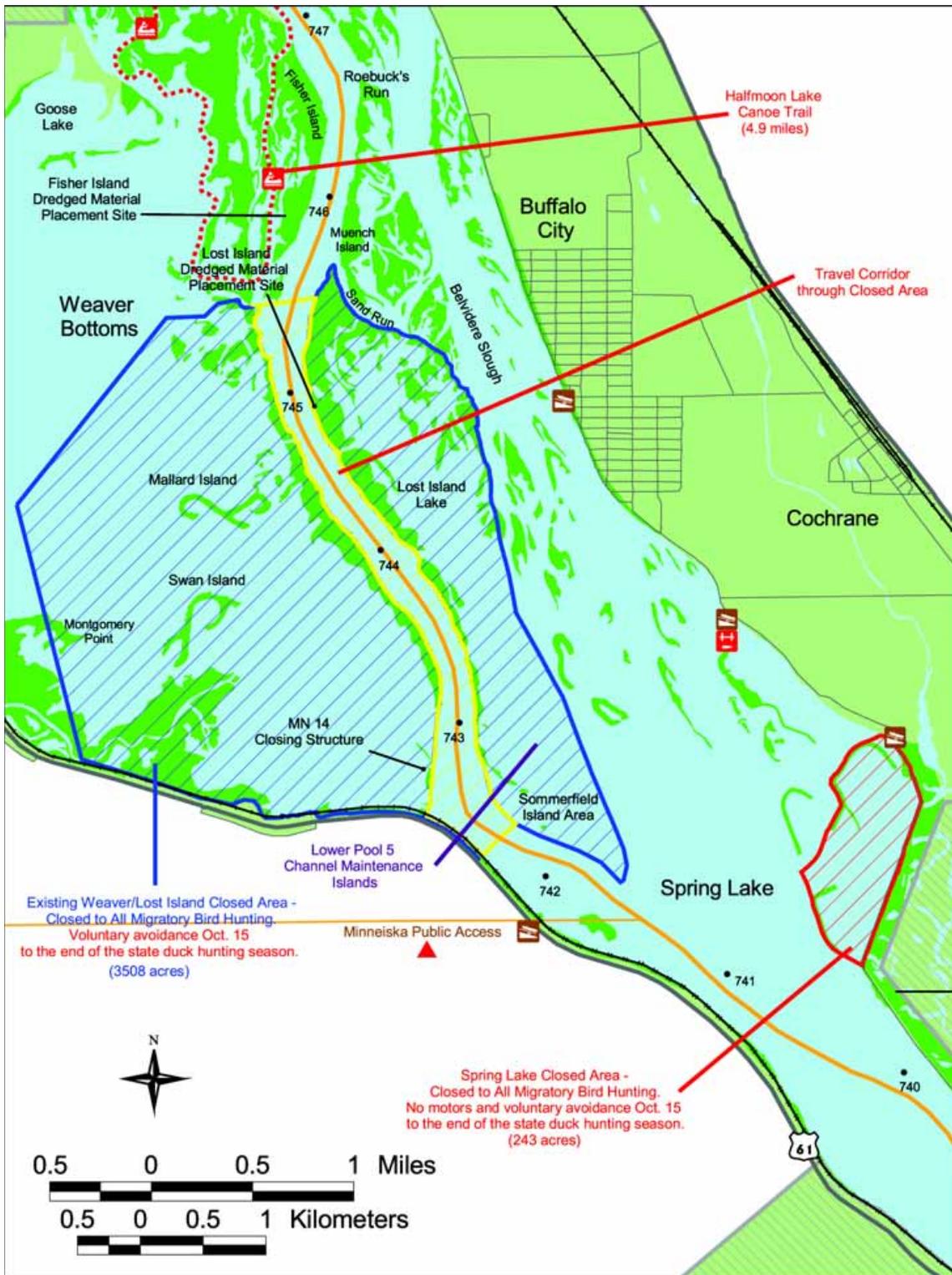


**Figure 2: Pool 4 Existing Closed Areas for Comparison**





**Figure 4: Pool 5, Alternative E (Final), Deletion of 185 Acres from Weaver/Lost Island Closed Area Around Created Islands**



**Figure 5: Pool 5a, Alternative E (Final), Fountain City Bay Closed Area**

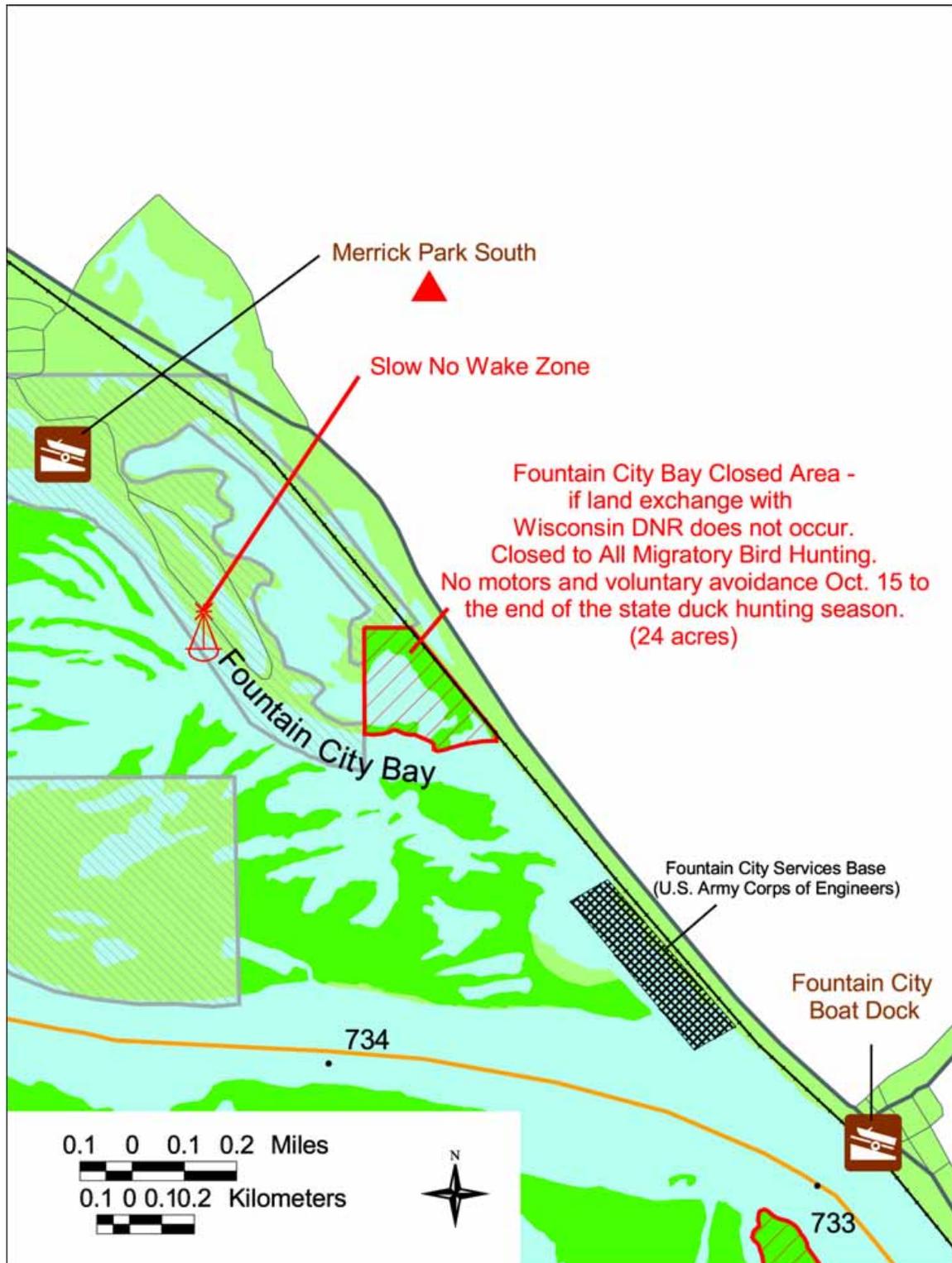
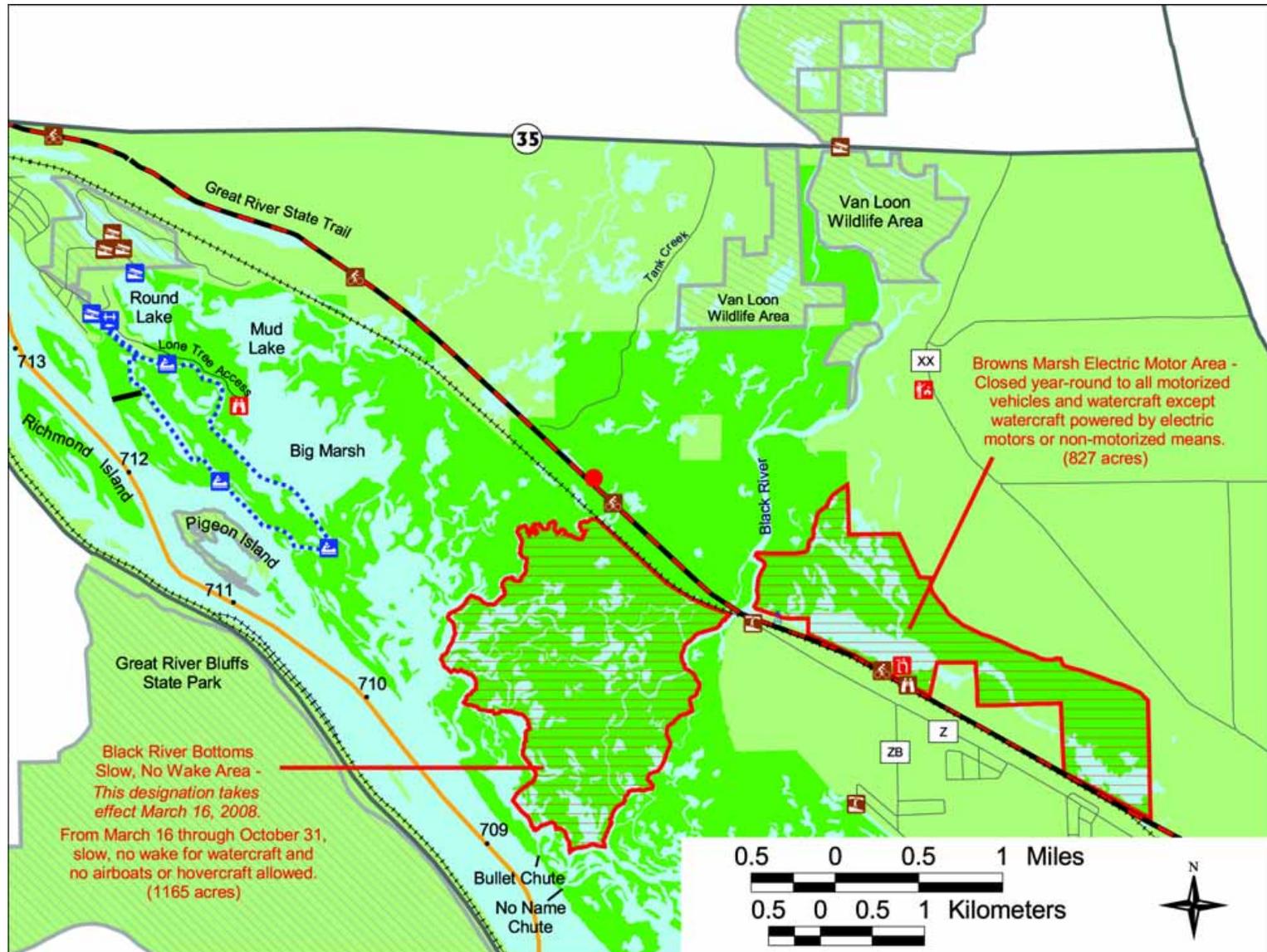
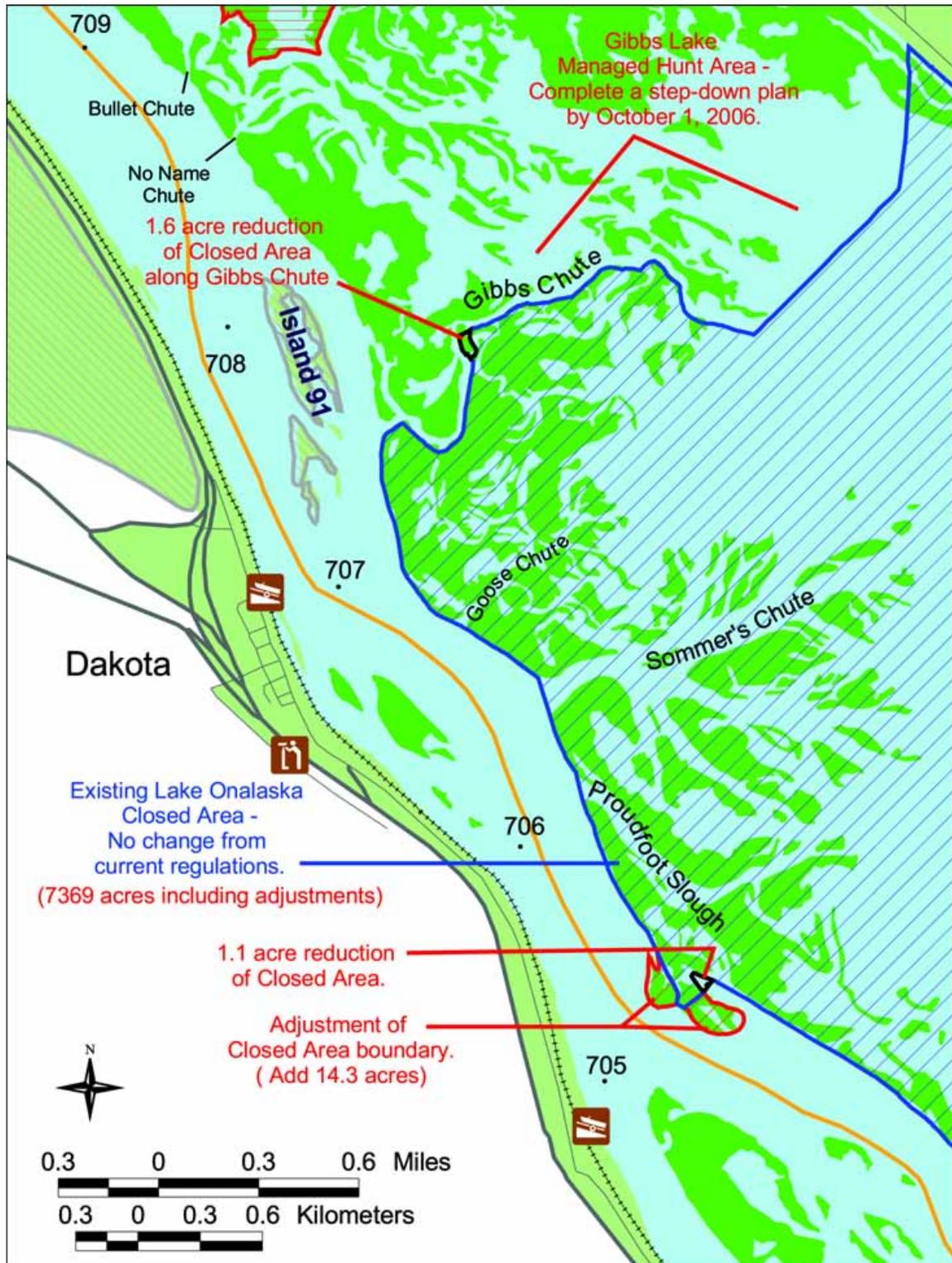


Figure 6: Pool 7 in Alternative E (Final), Black River Bottoms Slow, No Wake Area to Take Effect in 2008



**Figure 7: Pool 7, Alternative E (Final), Gibbs Lake Managed Hunt Area and Closed Area Adjustments**



**Figure 8: Pool 8, Alternative E (Final), Goose Island No Hunting Zone**

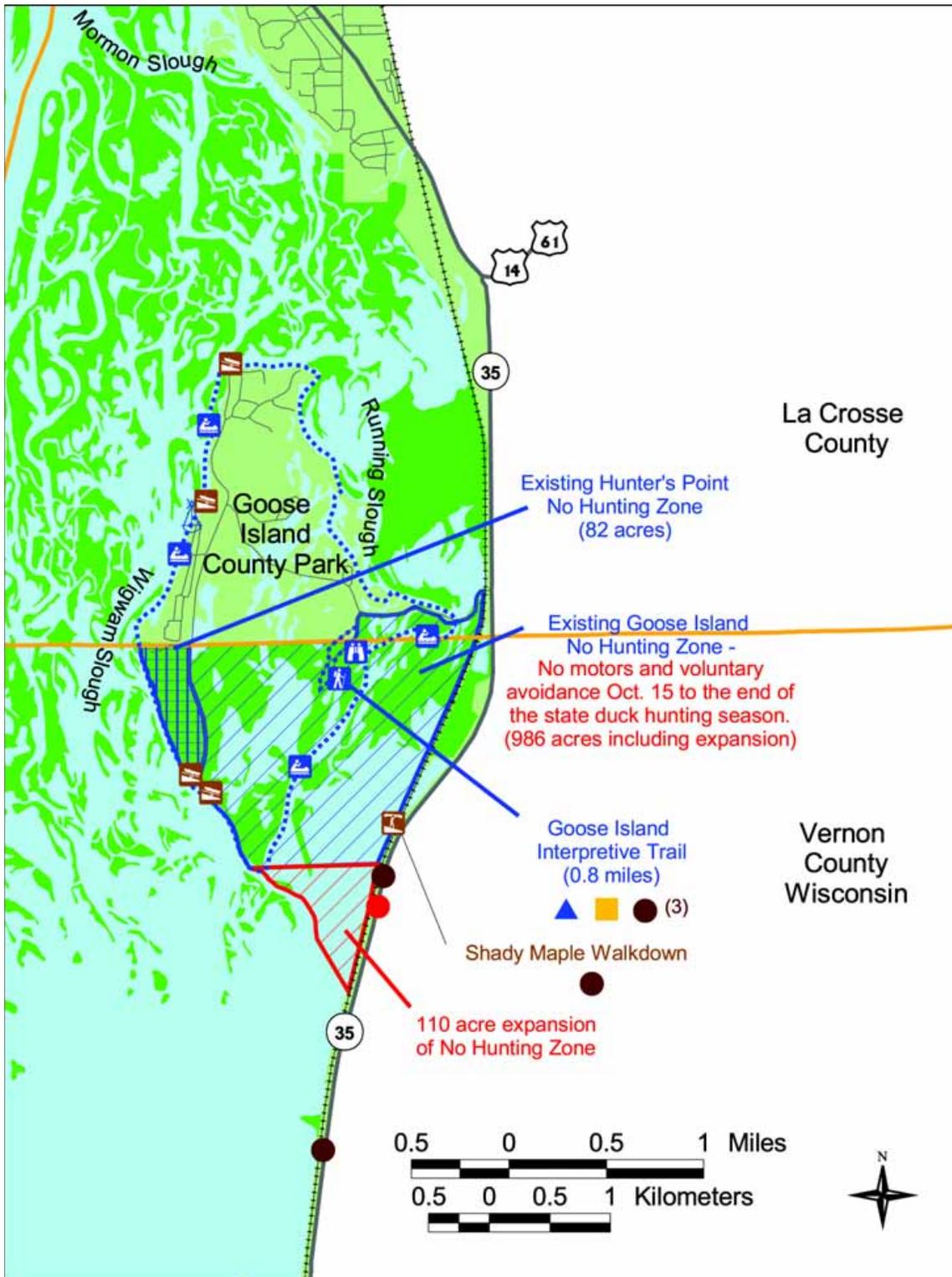
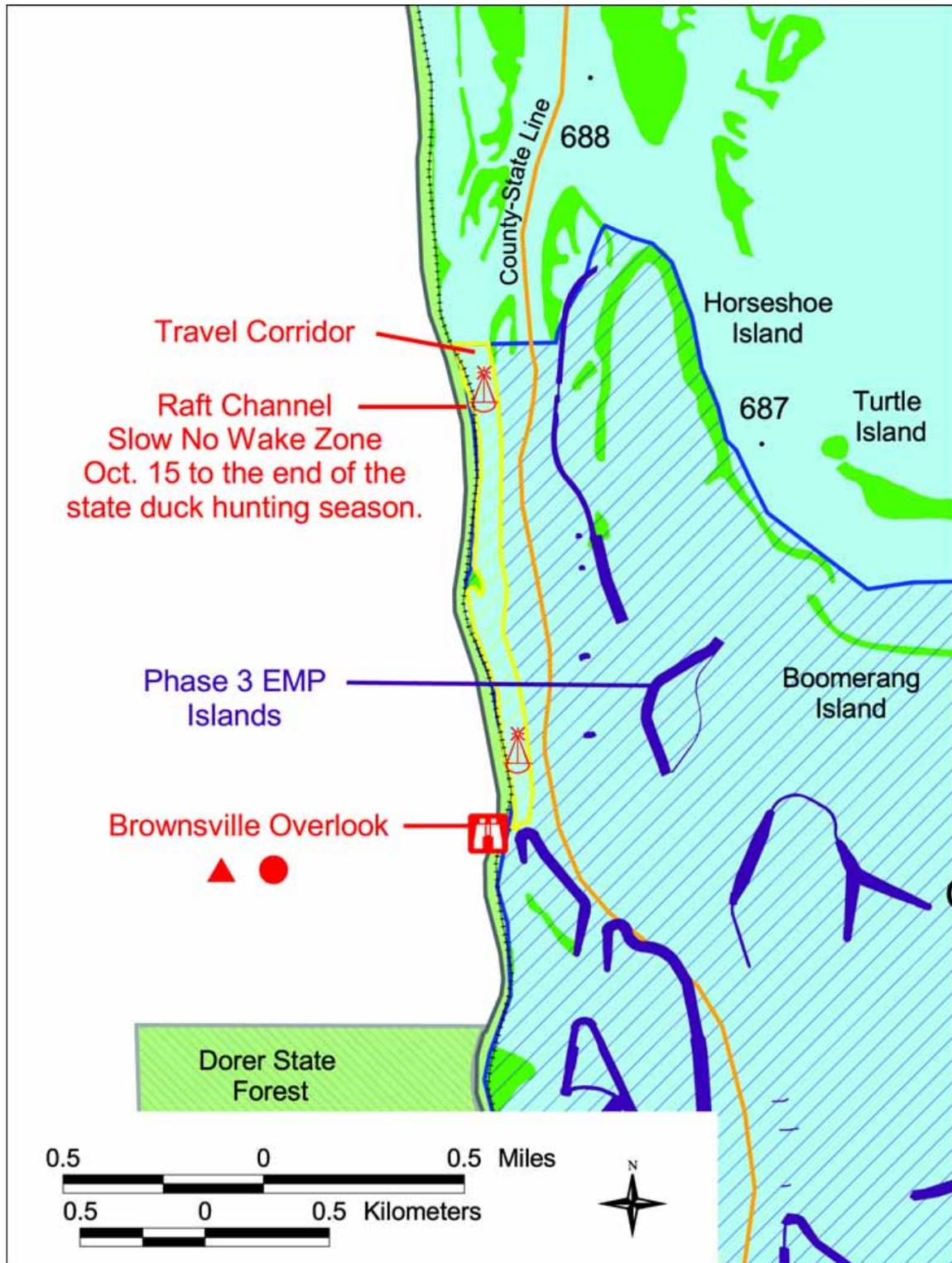


Figure 9: Pool 8, Alternative E (Final), Raft Channel Travel Corridor



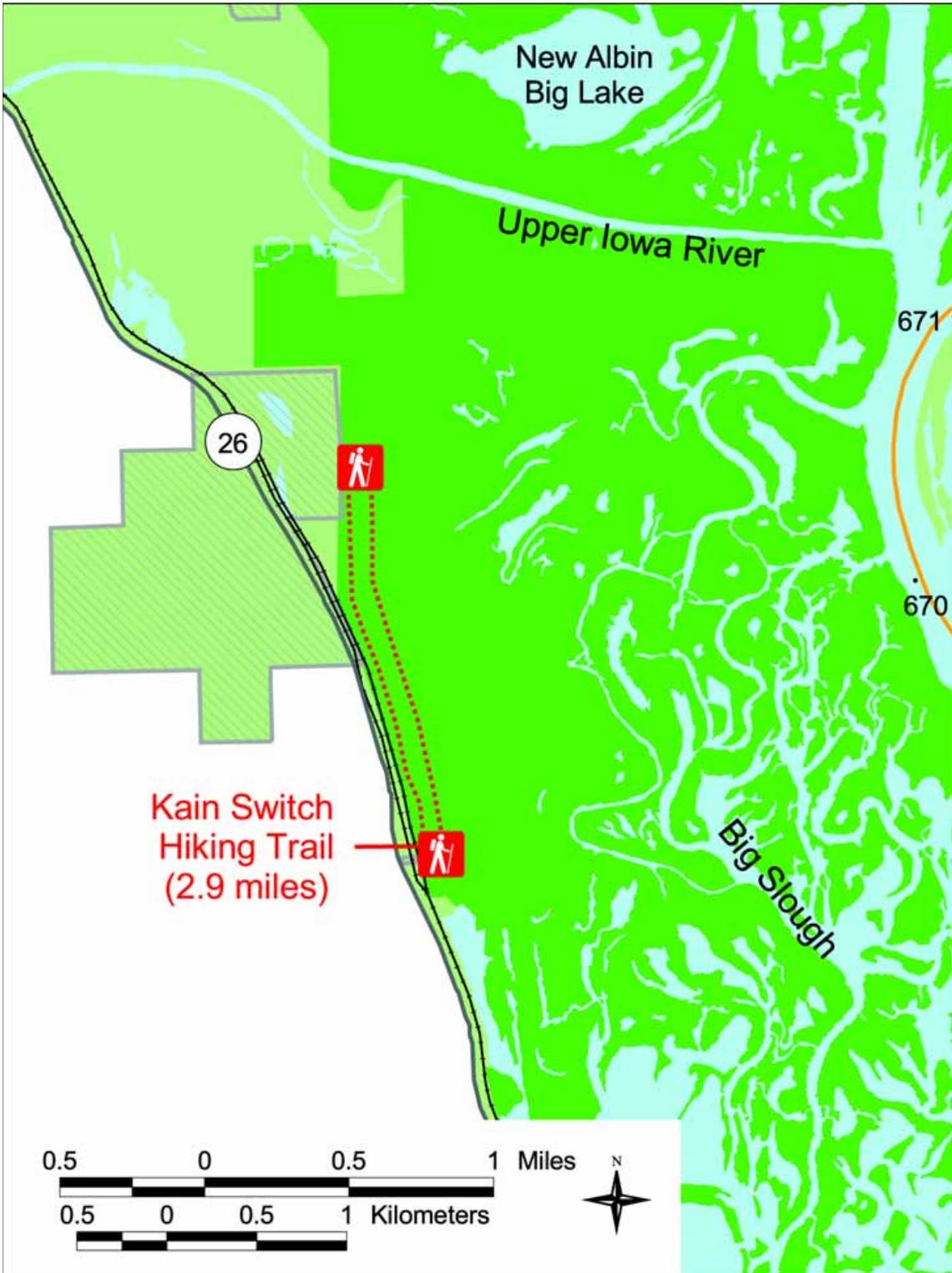
**Figure 10: Pool 8, Alternative E (Final), Blue Lake and Root River Slow, No Wake Areas**



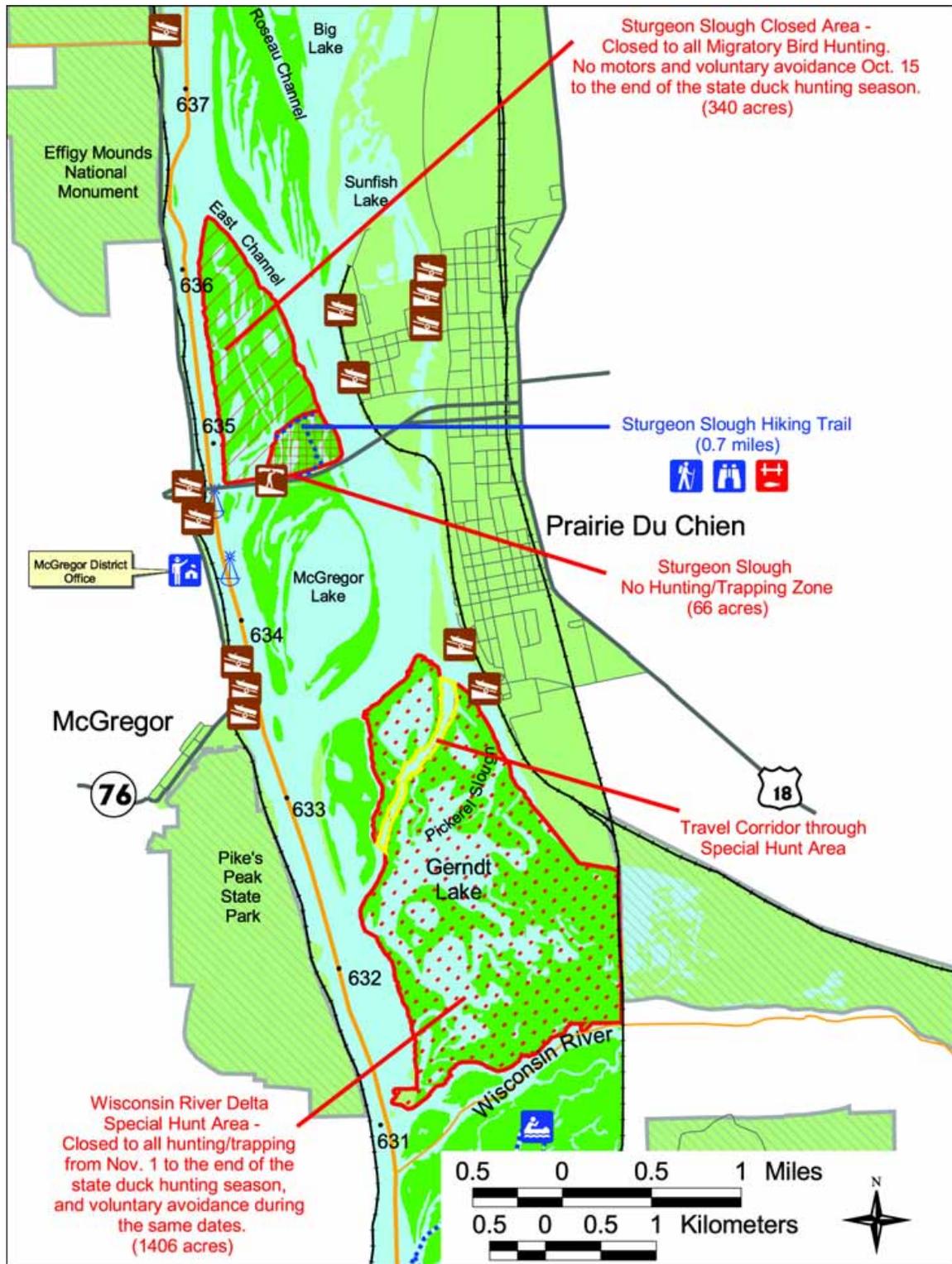
Figure 11: Pool 9, Alternative E (Final), Reno Bottoms Slow, No Wake Area



Figure 12: Pool 9, Alternative E (Final), Kain Switch Hiking Trail



**Figure 13: Pool 10, Alternative E (Final), Sturgeon Slough Closed Area and Wisconsin River Delta Special Hunt Area**



**Figure 14: Pool 11, Alternative E (Final), Guttenberg Ponds and 12-Mile Island Closed Areas and Goetz Island Hiking Trail**



**Figure 15: Pool 11, Alternative E (Final), John Deere Marsh Closed Area and No Open Water Hunting Area**

