

News Release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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For Immediate Release

Date: November 21, 2008

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RELEASES DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS FOR NISQUALLY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WATERFOWL HUNT PROGRAM FOR COMMENT

A Draft Supplemental Cumulative Impact Analysis (Draft Supplement) for the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) waterfowl hunt program is available for public review. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared the Draft Supplement to provide additional information and analysis regarding the cumulative impacts of opening Nisqually NWR to waterfowl hunting in 2009. The waterfowl hunt program was described and analyzed in detail in the Nisqually NWR Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement in 2004. A step-down Waterfowl Hunt Plan has been prepared and is also available for review.

The Draft Supplement was prepared as a result of the Fund for Animals lawsuit against the Service on March 14, 2003, alleging noncompliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in opening 37 refuges to hunting during the 1997-98 through 2002-03 seasons. On August 31, 2006, the U.S. District Court Judge granted the plaintiff's motion for summary judgment, agreeing that the Service did not adequately consider the cumulative impacts of opening these refuges to hunting. The Service's October 5, 2006 brief asked the court not to enjoin the hunt programs while the Service addressed the NEPA deficiencies in the original 37 hunting packages. The Service informed the court that by May 30, 2007, it would also correct possible NEPA deficiencies for refuges opened to hunting since the lawsuit was filed. In addition, cumulative impact analyses would be conducted for new Refuge hunt programs.

A public review and comment period for the Draft Supplement will begin on November 21, 2008. Comments on the Draft Supplement should be provided on or before December 15, 2008 to Jean Takekawa, Refuge Manager, Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, 100 Brown Farm Road, Olympia, WA, 98516. Comments may also be submitted via electronic mail to

Nisqually@fws.gov. Copies of the Draft Supplement and Waterfowl Hunt Plan can be obtained electronically at <http://nisqually.fws.gov>, or by requesting a hardcopy at the address listed above.

The mission of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.