

## Appendix K: Finding of No Significant Impact

### Environmental Assessment and Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Iowa Wetland Management District, Iowa

An Environmental Assessment (EA) and Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) have been prepared to identify management strategies to meet the conservation goals of the Iowa Wetland Management District (WMD). The EA examined the environmental consequences that each management alternative could have on the quality of the physical, biological, and human environment, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The EA evaluated four alternatives for the future management of the Iowa Wetland Management District.

The alternative selected for implementation in the district is *Alternative D*. Breeding waterfowl, primarily represented by Mallard and Blue-winged Teal, will be the focus for management activities. The dominant activity will be restoring cropland to perennial grassland and wetlands. Restoration efforts will be the same as current management with a focus on a variety of prairie pothole wetlands, in particular temporary and seasonal types, many of which will complement shallow lake restoration by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. More diverse habitat will allow for more diversity in wildlife, in particular other grassland/wetland birds. Acquisition of the potholes will initially be the same as current management, working with partners to pursue perpetual protection of wetland and grassland of up to 112,000 acres in the Prairie Pothole Region, but may be modified by new landscape-level planning tools and models developed. Food plot use will be at levels that do not materially detract from breeding waterfowl. Additional public use opportunities found to be appropriate and compatible will occur. Environmental education, interpretation, and outreach, however, will remain similar to current levels with more effort placed on distributing a consistent message for the entire district through coordination meetings, additional kiosks, trails, pull-offs, etc., and an informational and regulatory brochure.

Furthermore, the portions of three Waterfowl Production Areas—Jemmerson Slough (Dickinson County), Elk Creek Marsh (Worth County), and Rice Lake (Winnebago and Worth Counties)—currently closed by state regulation as waterfowl refuges will remain closed. Also, within two years of CCP approval, it will be proposed through the federal rulemaking process to implement the following regulation on the Service's fee title property within the Iowa WMD: "You may only use or possess approved nontoxic shot shells while in the field, including shot shells used for hunting wild turkey." This requirement would be in line with current regulations at 50 CFR 32.2(k).

For reasons presented above and below, and based on an evaluation of the information contained in the EA, we have determined that the action of adopting Alternative D as the management alternative for Iowa WMD is not a major federal action, which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of Section 102 (2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

#### **Additional Reasons:**

- Future management actions will have a neutral or positive impact on the local economy.
- This action will not have an adverse impact on threatened or endangered species.

**Supporting References:**

- EA and Draft CCP (separate document)
- Final CCP (attached)

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Date