

## COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

**Use:** Hunting

**Refuge Name:** Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge

**Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:**

The Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge was created under the legal authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (MBCA), Feb. 18, 1929, 16 U.S.C. 715d and the Emergency Wetland Resources Act of 1986, 16 U.S.C. 3901b. The MBCA of 1929 created the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and authorized the acquisition of lands from funds appropriated by Congress, and later, from funds generated by the sale of Federal Duck Stamps. The following is the only language in the Act, or subsequent amendments, pertaining to the types of lands authorized for acquisition:

Sec. 715d. Purchase or rental of approved areas or interests therein; gifts and devises; United States lands. The Secretary of the Interior may -

(2) acquire, by gift or devise, any area or interests therein; which he determines to be suitable for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.

The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 authorized the purchase of wetlands from Land and Water Conservation Fund monies, removing a prior prohibition on such acquisitions. The Act calls for:

“...the conservation of the wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions ...”

For other federal policies and regulations that apply to the management of the Glacial Ridge NWR see Appendix 1.

**Refuge Purpose:**

As outlined in the Draft Environmental Assessment and Interim Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Glacial Ridge NWR was established to:

- Strive to maintain diversity and increase abundance of waterfowl and other migratory bird species dependent on prairie wetland and grassland habitats.
- Conserve, manage and restore the diversity and viability of native fish, wildlife and plant populations associated with tallgrass prairie and prairie wetlands.
- Work in partnership with others to restore or enhance native tallgrass prairie, prairie wetlands and unique plant communities.

- Restore, enhance and protect water quality and quantity that approaches natural hydrologic functions.
- Provide for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses by the public, emphasizing increased public understanding of the northern tallgrass prairie ecosystem and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

**Description of Use:**

*What is the use?* As described in the Glacial Ridge NWR Hunting Plan, allow the hunting of white-tailed deer, waterfowl (ducks, geese and coots), other migratory birds (rails, snipe, woodcock, mourning doves) and upland game (prairie chicken, and sharp-tailed grouse) as compatible with the purpose for the establishment of the refuge and where appropriate in concurrence with the State of Minnesota.

*Where is the use conducted?* Hunting will occur on refuge lands specifically identified in the Hunting Management Plan

*How/when is the use conducted?* All hunting activities follow applicable state & federal laws and seasons except where the refuge administers further restrictions to ensure compliance with refuge specific laws and compatibility issues. All hunting activities can only occur in designated areas identified in the Hunting Management Plan.

**Availability of Resources:**

The Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge is currently being managed by the staff at the Rydell National Wildlife Refuge located approximately 10 miles to the east. Funding allotted to the Rydell NWR will be used to manage the hunt including: coordination with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, completion of surveys, and placement of signs. Law enforcement activities would be completed through U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Zone Law Enforcement officers, State of Minnesota Conservation Officers, and Rydell Refuge Personnel.

**Anticipated Impacts of the Use:**

Disturbance to wildlife during the hunting season as people participate in the hunt is an anticipated affect. Disturbance by vehicles will be limited as off-road travel will not be permitted. Special access accommodations for persons with disabilities will be minimal, utilizing existing trails.

As indicated in the Glacial Ridge NWR Hunting Plan, adjustments to the species hunted and harvestable limits will be annually evaluated by wildlife surveys conducted by both the State of Minnesota and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The establishment of a non-hunting sanctuary area, as outlined in the Hunting Plan, provides a resting and feeding area during the hunting season.

**Determination:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Use is Not Compatible

X  Use is Compatible with the Following Stipulations

- Ensure annual wildlife surveys are completed and that the hunting program is adjusted to populations.
- Annually review all hunting activities and operations to ensure compliance with all applicable State and Federal laws, regulations and policies.

**Justification:**

Hunting is a historical and current tradition of residence of northwestern Minnesota. The Glacial Ridge NWR Hunting Plan provides the management needed to ensure compatibility with the goals of the Refuge and to maintain compliance with the 1997 National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act. Annual wildlife surveys conducted by the State of Minnesota and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have provided the data to ensure that hunting of these species doesn't jeopardized their long range population goals. The continuation of these surveys on Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge will provide the necessary data for managing the hunting program into the future.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Acting Refuge Manager

Concurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Chief, National Wildlife System

Mandatory 10 or 15 year RE-evaluation Date:  2019