

# News Bulletin



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge  
223 N Shore Road  
Medicine Lake, MT 59247  
406-789-2305**

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## **Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge Proposes Expanding Hunting and Fishing Opportunities**

*Members of the Public Invited  
To Participate in 30-day Public Comment Period*

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**Medicine Lake, MT** – Today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes opening [Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge](#) to hunting for several additional bird species (tundra swans, sandhill cranes, coot); reopening recreational fishing opportunities on 2,499 acres; and extending fishing to year-round (fishing on the refuge currently occurs from November 15 through September 15 annually). The Service aims to make a decision regarding these proposed expansions in time for the 2019-2020 hunting and fishing season.

For minor changes to existing fishing opportunities on the refuge deemed by the Service not to be environmentally significant, we developed a categorical exclusion (CE). For new or significant expansion of existing hunting opportunities on the refuge, we prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA). Details on proposed alternatives in the draft EA may be found on the [refuge's website](#).

Members of the public are invited to submit comments on the draft EA during a 30-day public comment period through June 21. Public comments concerning the draft EA and its proposed alternatives can be submitted via email to [medicinelake@fws.gov](mailto:medicinelake@fws.gov) or in writing by postal mail: 223 N Shore Rd, Medicine Lake, MT 59247.

Following the public comment period, the Service will analyze comments received, publish a final EA, and make a final determination about the proposed hunting expansion. Hunting and fishing opportunities are and will continue to be authorized and provided in accordance with Federal, State, and Tribal regulations and seasons (where applicable).

The proposed expansion of hunting access and opportunities on the refuge supports objectives outlined in [Secretarial Order 3356](#), which focuses on “efforts to enhance conservation stewardship; increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, including opportunities

to hunt and fish; and improve the management of game species and their habitats for this generation and beyond.” Secretarial Order 3356 also emphasizes recruiting and retaining hunters, and engaging non-traditional audiences in [America’s hunting tradition](#).

Hunting and fishing are part of six priority wildlife-dependent public uses of the [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) in accordance with the [National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997](#). Other wildlife-dependent public uses include wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. Each of these activities are permitted when determined to be compatible with refuge management goals and are recognized as legitimate and appropriate public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Medicine Lake National Wildlife was established when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an Executive Order authorizing the refuge on August 19, 1935. The refuge was established as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife. It is one of over 560 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. To learn more about Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge visit: [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/medicine\\_lake/](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/medicine_lake/)

*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 in the West, visit [our website](#), connect with us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), watch our [YouTube channel](#), and download public domain photos from [Flickr](#).*