



News Release

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For Release: July 1, 2010

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Comments Solicited on Refuge Farm Program

Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) in eastern Oklahoma is currently reviewing farming activities that take place on the Refuge. As part of this process the public is being invited to provide early comments on potential issues or concerns that should be considered.

On many refuges throughout the nation, farming programs provide benefits for both resident and migrating animals. For example, farming programs provide supplemental forage for resident and migratory wildlife, manage undesirable and/or invasive vegetation, restore native habitats and aid in the recovery of threatened or endangered species, and in some cases provide a safe resting spot for migrating waterfowl and help to keep them off private farm fields. Farming programs also provide increased wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education opportunities.

Sequoyah manages approximately 2,800 acres of croplands. The majority is farmed through the cooperative farming program, but a small amount (25 acres) is farmed by Refuge staff. The purpose of the farming program at Sequoyah is to provide supplemental forage for migratory birds. Crops used for wildlife food include winter wheat, Japanese millet, and corn. In addition, the refuge permits the use of genetically modified crops (Roundup Ready Soybeans, Roundup Ready Corn, and BT Corn) on approximately 2,100 acres, primarily for the cooperator's share.

This comment period is known as 'Scoping' under the National Environmental Policy Act. During scoping the Refuge is looking for general comments on the farming program. These comments will assist in determining the next course of action. Comments will be accepted until August 1, 2010. Comments should be sent to jeff_hass@fws.gov or mailed to Refuge Manager, Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge, Route 1, Box 18-A, Vian, Oklahoma.

This review of the Refuge's farming program is part of a nationwide review of all Refuge farming programs. For the status of farming programs being reviewed throughout the southwest and commenting instructions please visit <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/Plan/planindex.html>

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