

Appendix G: National Wildlife Refuge System Policy Changes

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New U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policies for the National Wildlife Refuge System were issued on June 26, 2006, late in the planning process. These new policies set forth new goals for the system, and new policies for hunting and other recreational uses on refuges. They are similar to the guidance in place during preparation of the CCP, but wording and scope changed to some degree and they will be used and consulted as the CCP is implemented. These new policies are referenced in the CCP (Chapter 1, page 3 and Chapter 4, Objective 4.4, page 125) and are excerpted and summarized below.

Goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System (601 FW 1)

A. Conserve a diversity of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats, including species that are endangered or threatened with becoming endangered.

B. Develop and maintain a network of habitats for migratory birds, anadromous and interjurisdictional fish, and marine mammal populations that is strategically distributed and carefully managed to meet important life history needs of these species across their ranges.

C. Conserve those ecosystems, plant communities, wetlands of national or international significance, and landscapes and seascapes that are unique, rare, declining, or underrepresented in existing protection efforts.

D. Provide and enhance opportunities to participate in compatible wildlife-dependent recreation (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation).

E. Foster understanding and instill appreciation of the diversity and interconnectedness of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats.

Summary of New Recreation Policy, Especially Hunting, on National Wildlife Refuges (605 FW 1 and 605 FW 2)

General Guidelines for Quality Wildlife-Dependent Recreation

- # Promotes safety of participants, other visitors, and facilities
- # Promotes compliance with applicable laws and regulations and responsible behavior
- # Minimizes or eliminates conflict with fish and wildlife population or habitat goals or objectives in an approved plan
- # Minimizes or eliminates conflicts with other compatible wildlife-dependent recreation
- # Promotes accessibility and availability to a broad spectrum of the American people
- # Promotes resource stewardship and conservation
- # Promotes public understanding and increases appreciation of natural resources
- # Provides reliable/reasonable opportunities to experience wildlife
- # Uses facilities that are accessible to people and blend into the natural setting
- # Uses visitor satisfaction to help define and evaluate programs

Guiding Principles for the Refuge System's Hunting Programs

- # Manage wildlife populations consistent with management plans
- # Promote visitor understanding of and increase appreciation for America's natural resources
- # Provide opportunities for quality recreational and educational experiences consistent with the

quality guidelines for wildlife-dependent recreation above

- # Encourage participation in this tradition which is deeply rooted in America's natural heritage and conservation history
- # Minimize conflicts with visitors participating in other wildlife-dependent recreation

Guidance on How to Manage Refuge Hunting Programs

- # *General:* In ways that conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats, ensure hunter and visitor safety, comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and promote respect for the resource.
- # *Boundary hunting:* We discourage hunting adjacent to refuge areas or neighboring lands closed to hunting.
- # *Zoning uses:* We may use time and space zoning to achieve balanced hunting