

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
Established 1924
Compatibility Determination

Use: Archeological Investigations and Surveys

Refuge Name: Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Refuge)

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies):

The Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge was established by Public Law No. 268, 68th Congress on June 7, 1924. This act authorized acquisition of lands for Refuge purposes. Additional lands acquired in fee title by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are managed as part of the Refuge under a 1963 Cooperative Agreement between the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior.

Refuge Purpose(s):

“The Refuge shall be established and maintained (a) as a refuge and breeding place for migratory birds included in the terms of the convention between the United States and Great Britain for the protection of migratory birds, concluded August 16, 1916, and (b) to such extent as the Secretary of the Interior by regulations, prescribe, as a refuge and breeding place for other wild birds, game animals, fur-bearing animals, and for the conservation of wild flowers and aquatic plants, and (c) to such extent as the Secretary of the Interior may, by regulations, prescribe a refuge and breeding place for fish and other aquatic animal life.”

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission:

“The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”

Description of Use:

Permitted archeological investigations on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge are those requested by archeologists who are not performing the investigation for Refuge management purposes (e.g., not for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act). Rather, permitted archeologists are pursuing their own or institutional research or are working for other parties that will be conducting activities on Refuge land, or as requested by the Governor of Minnesota, and similar third party activities on lands of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Permitted investigations can occur at any time of the year, but generally not during the winter. Investigations may be as short as a few hours or go on for months, depending on the research objective. These permitted investigations occur on the Refuge most often in response to a planned project where resources could be disrupted, but could occur because of the general archaeological richness of the Refuge.

Archeologists request Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) permits or Antiquities Act permits to conduct "Surveys and limited testing and limited collections on lands identified" and "Excavation, collection and intensive study of specific sites described" on Refuge managed lands. Permits are issued by the Regional Director to qualified archeologists. Permits can be for anyplace on Refuge managed lands, but each permit is for specific lands; i.e., no general archeological permits are authorized.

The Refuge Manager also issues a special use permit to archeologists prior to investigations on lands managed by the Refuge. The permit defines allowable dates and times for the investigation, and other stipulations designed to protect Refuge resources and minimize conflicts with other occurring uses.

Availability of Resources:

The Refuge has the resources available to administer this use. This activity will require the District Manager to develop and issue a Special Use Permit and random inspections of the project area. ARPA/Antiquities permits are received by the Regional Historic Preservation Officer and issued by the Regional Director as part of normal duties.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use:

Impacts from routine pedestrian surveys, soil coring, shovel tests, and land form analysis are limited to short term disturbance to wildlife using the immediate area and disruption of vegetative cover for the growing season on an extremely small area affected by shovel tests.

Impacts from a large scale excavation are potentially longer term (several growing seasons) with associated disturbance impacts affecting animals in the immediate area. Vegetative cover disruption may be severe enough to require site re-grading and reseeded to desired native species.

Public Review and Comment:

A draft of this Compatibility Determination was included in the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) released May 1, 2005 for a 120-day comment period. It was also available during a subsequent 90-day review period on a supplement to the EIS released December 3, 2005. Public notification included notices in the Federal Register, media announcements, and 31 public meetings and workshops attended by more than 3,700 persons. General comments related to archaeological resources are found in Chapter 7 of the EIS. No comments specific to this use or determination were received.

Determination:

_____ Use is Not Compatible

xx Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

