

Appendix S

Compatibility Determination for Recreational Hunting

Use: Recreational Hunting

Refuge Names: Des Lacs National Wildlife
Refuge (NWR)
J. Clark Salyer NWR
Upper Souris NWR

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities

- Migratory Bird Conservation Act
- Executive Orders 7154-A, 7161, and 7170

Refuge Purposes

“As a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wild life.”
[Executive Orders 7154-A, 7161, and 7170]

“For use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”
[16 U.S.C. § 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)]

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission

The mission of the 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 Proposed Use:

Recreational Hunting

All three refuges are open to recreational public hunting in accordance with state of North Dakota seasons and regulations established for each area. Visitation during 2004 for this activity was estimated at Des Lacs NWR (big game 800, upland game 175); at J. Clark Salyer NWR (big game 2,000; upland game 600); and at Upper Souris NWR (big game 2,200; upland game 50). Currently hunted or additional animals that may be hunted are listed below.

Des Lacs NWR

deer	sharp-tailed grouse
fox	ring-necked pheasant
moose	Hungarian partridge
rabbit	turkey

J. Clark Salyer NWR

deer	sharp-tailed grouse
fox	ring-necked pheasant
waterfowl	Hungarian partridge
turkey	

Upper Souris NWR

deer	sharp-tailed grouse
fox	ring-necked pheasant
moose	Hungarian partridge
turkey	

Specific areas are open to hunting during early seasons. Other areas at the refuges, with the exception of administrative areas, may open later in the season. Additional hunting information, regulations, and maps are found in hunting brochures specific to J. Clark Salyer NWR and Upper Souris NWR (available at information kiosks and administrative areas).

Hunting is a designated priority public use established for the Refuge System. The harvest of these species would be compensatory mortality, with minimal impact to the overall health of their populations.

Availability of Resources

Currently, sufficient resources are available to continue the existing recreational hunting programs. Implementing improvements or expanding hunting opportunities will be described in step-down management plans and addressed through future funding requests. The refuges will provide special accommodations for people with disabilities.

Anticipated Impacts of Use

The CCP recommends an annual review of the hunting program. This evaluation will determine what effect diverting funding and staff will have on the ability of the refuges to implement habitat management. Limited staff and funding will be directed toward habitat management first. Lack of funding and personnel may result in decreased opportunities and/or facilities.

Temporary disturbance will exist to wildlife near the activity. Animals surplus to populations will be removed by hunting. A temporary decrease in populations of wild animals will be experienced which may help ensure that carrying capacity (especially for big-game species) is not exceeded.

Closed areas will provide some sanctuary for game and nongame species, minimize conflicts between hunters and other visitors, and provide a safety zone around communities and administrative areas.

Public Review and Comment

Public review and comment will be solicited through public posting of notices at each refuge, notices in local newspapers, and public meetings held during the CCP process.

Determination

Recreational hunting is compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

Current hunting regulations will be retained. The following stipulations will apply to all three refuges:

- Hunting will be permitted in accordance with state regulations.
- Overnight camping and open fires will not be allowed.
- The areas around refuge offices, visitor centers, and residences will be posted closed to hunting. State law prohibits hunting within one-quarter mile of an occupied building.
- It will be unlawful to carry a loaded firearm in any vehicle on refuge lands or roads.
- Nontoxic shot will be required for hunting upland game and waterfowl. No other type of shot may be possessed while in the field.
- Collecting, injuring, disturbing, destroying, or harming any animal or plant except legally taken game animals will be prohibited.
- Searching for, disturbing, or collecting prehistoric or historic artifacts will be prohibited.
- Archery and gun seasons for deer hunting will coincide with state hunting seasons.
- A deer hunter will need a special state permit to hunt on a refuge during rifle season. A hunter with a state, muzzleloader, deer permit will be allowed to hunt without a refuge permit.
- Trash, including shell casings, will be required to be packed out so the areas remain clean, natural, and enjoyable.
- Possession of fireworks will be prohibited.
- Possessing alcohol will be prohibited. Intoxicated and disorderly conduct will not be permitted. Open container of alcoholic beverage in a vehicle will be prohibited.

The following stipulations will apply only to J. Clark Salyer NWR:

- Nine designated areas will be open for hunting waterfowl, sharp-tailed grouse, partridge, pheasant, and deer.
- The entire refuge will be open for late-season sharp-tailed grouse, partridge, pheasant, and fox hunting following the close of firearm deer season, in accordance with state hunting seasons.
- Entry without a firearm to retrieve legally taken waterfowl will be permitted within 100 yards of exterior refuge boundaries and interior boundaries of designated public hunting areas.

The following stipulations will apply only to Upper Souris NWR:

- Vehicle travel will be restricted to public roads and recreation area parking lots. The use of all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, and other off-road vehicles will not be allowed.
- Horses will not be permitted.
- Weapons will not be allowed in boats and canoes.
- Preseason scouting for deer will be allowed only in open public use areas and areas marked "Foot Traffic Only."
- Baiting for deer will not be allowed.
- Portable tree stands during deer hunting will be allowed, but daily removal will be required. Only strap-on steps or removable climbing ladders will be allowed.
- Hunters will be allowed to carry, drag, or use carts to remove their deer.
- Once hunters filled their deer tags, they will not be allowed to return to the refuge with weapons. However, they will be allowed to carry shotguns while hunting upland game birds in open bird-hunting areas.
- Land south of Lake Darling Dam will be closed to all upland game bird hunting.
- Wearing of a blaze orange vest and cap will be required when hunting game birds during the deer firearm season.
- Dogs will be allowed during hunting of grouse, partridge, and pheasant.

Justification

Recreational public hunting is an historical wildlife-dependent use of the refuges, and is designated as one of the priority public uses in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. Infrastructure is in place to support hunting programs, while current staffing levels and funding

are adequate. Special regulations are in place to minimize negative impacts to the refuges and associated wildlife, and state of North Dakota law further controls hunter activities.

Hunting is a legitimate wildlife management tool that can be used to control wildlife populations.

Hunting harvests a small percentage of the renewable resources, which is in accordance with wildlife management objectives and principals.

Mandatory 15-Year Reevaluation Date:
2021

Review



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8/20/2007

Date

Concurrence



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8/21/07

Date



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