

Draft Compatibility Determination

Use: Fishing with the use of non-motorized boats, canoes, and kayaks

Station: Waubay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR, refuge), South Dakota

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies):

- For lands acquired under Executive Order 7245, dated December 10, 1935, the purpose of the acquisition is “as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife...”

National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) Mission:

“The mission of the 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.” (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act [NWRSA], as amended [16 U.S. Code 668dd-ee]).

Description of Use:

What is the use?

The use allows fishing from non-motorized boats, canoes, and kayaks on open water areas of Waubay NWR.

Where would the use be conducted?

The use would be conducted on the refuge in Day County, South Dakota.

When would the use be conducted?

The use would be initiated in the spring of 2021.

Why is the use being proposed?

The use will allow fishing during open water periods. Fishing is currently restricted to ice fishing during the winter months. This use increases public access to the refuge to take part in a priority public use.

Availability of Resources:

Financial and staff resources are determined to be sufficient to administer this request. Staff time will be needed to evaluate the proposed use, prepare the site-specific regulations, and ensure compliance with the public regulations.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use:

Short-term impacts:

Wildlife, including waterfowl and other migratory birds, may be temporarily displaced from use areas as boats approach, but the level of use and disturbance is expected to be low.

Long-term impacts:

No long-term impacts are expected for wildlife.

Public Review and Comment:

This compatibility determination is part of a minor amendment to the Waubay NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan (2002) and the accompanying Draft Environmental Action Statement for Categorical Exclusion. Public notification and review of this compatibility determination will include a 30-day comment period. We will inform the public through the USFWS Legacy Region 6 New Hunting and Fishing Opportunities website (www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/huntfish.php) and social media. Comments received from the public will be considered and modifications may be incorporated into the final decision documents.

Determination:

- Use is not compatible
- Use is compatible with the following stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

- Restricted to the use of manually powered, non-motorized boats, canoes, and kayaks.

Justification:

Waubay NWR historically contained a number of shallow lakes and wetlands surrounded by grassland and woodland habitat. Beginning in the mid 1990's, a number of high precipitation years caused many lakes in the area, including Waubay Lake, to greatly expand in size. The lakes and wetlands on the refuge joined with Waubay Lake and deep water lake habitat has since dominated the refuge. Because fishing is a popular recreational activity in the area, the use of non-motorized boats, canoes, and kayaks for the activity will provide the public with an added opportunity to enjoy the refuge.

Signatures:

Station Manager
Waubay National Wildlife Refuge

Date

Review:

Project Leader
Eastern South Dakota Complex

Date

Approval:

Region 6 Assistant Regional Director, Refuges

Date

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-Evaluation Date: 2036