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Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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INTERIOR APPROVES ADDITIONAL OIL LEASING ON REFUGE IN NORTH DAKOTA

Competitive oil and gas leasing on an additional 368 acres of the Lower
Souris National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota has been authorized, the
Department of the Interior announced today. A total of 1,574 acres on the
Refuge were opened for oil and gas leasing in September 1964.

Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, which manages the
58,693-acre waterfowl area, recommended opening the additional lands to oil and
gas leasing.

The recommendation was based on studies by the Geological Survey which
indicated underground drainage of oil and gas from the refuge, and past experience
with oil operators who have taken adequate precautions to protect the area. The
1964 opening and subsequent leasing of 1,574 acres was also based on Geological
Survey findings that underground drainage was occurring.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said, "Drainage of oil and gas
from under Federal lands represents a financial loss to the Government. Leasing
such areas for oil and gas production, under contracts that will adequately
protect surface features, is sound resource management."

The authorization to lease the 368 acres includes several stipulations
that would protect the refuge. These provide for suspension of oil and gas
operations by the Refuge Manager if there are violations of the lease terms
that would endanger wildlife habitat or refuge property. Such suspension would
remain in effect until the lessee takes satisfactory corrective action.

Other stipulations limit the size of location sites to 1½ acres, require
storage tanks and slush pits to protect the refuge from pollution, and the removal
of all sludge, toxic drilling materials and products used in drilling that could
contaminate the water and soil.

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