

Deer Hunting Plan

for

William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

March 2012

1. Introduction

The Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex was created in the 1960s primarily for the benefit of wintering dusky Canada geese and other migratory waterfowl and birds. The three refuges that comprise the Complex are spread north to south through the Valley with the northernmost being Baskett Slough NWR located near Salem; Ankeny NWR located near Jefferson; and William L. Finley NWR to the south of Corvallis. Map 1 shows the location of the refuges within the Valley.

In September 2011 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) adopted a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Ankeny, Baskett Slough, and William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuges. The CCP was adopted for implementation after developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (CCP/EA) for the three Refuges. This CCP/EA evaluated three management options (alternatives) for the CCP and disclosed anticipated effects for each alternative, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended ([42 U.S.C. 4321-4347](#)). Appendices provided supporting information. The CCP/EA was available for public comment and review from May 25, 2011 through June 30, 2011. After evaluating comments received on the CCP/EA and responding to public comments, the Service adopted Alternative 2 in the CCP/EA, which had been identified as the Service's Preferred Alternative, for implementation.

The CCP sets forth management guidance for the Refuges over the next 15 years, as required by the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 ([16 U.S.C. 688dd-688ee](#), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997). The Improvement Act mandated that CCPs be developed for all refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

As part of setting forth future management guidance, the CCP and accompanying hunt plan introduced and evaluated minor modifications to the deer hunting program at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge (W.L. Finley Refuge or NWR).

A new option to hunt either sex deer (more consistent with State of Oregon regulations and management plan) was planned to be added on W.L. Finley Refuge and new upland locations are slated to be available for deer hunting during a portion of the restricted firearms season. These program modifications are designed to be more consistent with State of Oregon regulations and black-tailed deer management plan (ODFW 2008).

This hunt plan has been prepared as a step-down plan to the CCP and developed to consolidate the information pertaining to modified deer hunting opportunities at W.L. Finley Refuge.

Species That Can Be Hunted On W.L. Finley NWR

- Deer (Black-tailed deer) (*Odocoileus hemionus*).

Black-tailed deer have populations sufficient to allow for recreational harvest (ODFW 2008). No commercial harvesting of wildlife or use of hunting guides would be allowed to assure continued healthy populations and general public opportunity.

1.2 Game Species Not Hunted

Due to conflicts with refuge purposes and other forms of wildlife-dependent recreation, hunting of any other game species is not allowed on the refuges.

2. Conformance with Statutory Authority

2.1 Conformance with Statutory Objectives

Any use of a national wildlife refuge must be compatible with resource protection and conform to applicable laws, regulations, and Service policies. Recreational use, in this case hunting, is allowed under the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 (16 U.S.C. 460K, amended), which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use. The Refuge Recreation Act requires: 1) that any recreational use permitted will not interfere with the primary purpose for which the refuge was established; and 2) that funds are available for the development, operation, and maintenance of the permitted forms of recreation.

Likewise, statutory authority for Service management and associated habitat/wildlife management planning on units of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) is derived from the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee). The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act provided a mission for the NWRS and clear standards for its management, use, planning, and growth. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act recognizes that wildlife-dependent recreational uses—hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation—when determined to be compatible with the mission of the NWRS and the purposes of the refuge—are legitimate and appropriate public uses of National Wildlife Refuges. Sections 5(c) and (d) of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act states “compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses are the priority general public uses of the NWRS and shall receive priority consideration in planning and management; and when the Secretary [of the Interior] determines that a proposed wildlife-dependent recreational use is a compatible use within a refuge, that activity should be facilitated, subject to such restrictions or regulations as may be necessary, reasonable, and appropriate.”

2.2 Conformance with Refuge Purposes

Conformance of refuge uses with refuge purposes is determined through a formal compatibility determination process. Compatibility means that the use would not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the purposes of the refuge(s) or mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (603 FW2).

The deer hunt, as described below in Section 4, was determined to be compatible with refuge purposes, with stipulations (USFWS, 2011).

3. Statement of Goals and Objectives

3.1 Refuge Goals

Thirteen goals were developed for the Willamette Valley Refuges during the Comprehensive Conservation Planning process. They include:

1. Provide agricultural crops for all Canada geese, especially dusks, which, together with wetland management and sanctuary, ensures a healthy, viable wintering goose population in support of

Pacific Flyway management and depredation control plans.

2. Maintain, enhance, and restore a diversity of wetland habitats characteristic of the historic Willamette Valley.
3. Maintain and restore native Willamette Valley wet prairie habitats, with an emphasis on management for rare and listed plant species, native species diversity, and functional attributes for declining grassland birds.
4. Restore and enhance the native upland prairie/oak savanna habitats characteristic of the historic Willamette Valley, with an emphasis on management for rare and listed plant species, native species diversity and functional attributes for declining grassland birds.
5. Protect and maintain oak woodland habitats representative of the historic Willamette Valley.
6. Maintain and enhance mixed deciduous/coniferous habitats characteristic of the historic Willamette Valley.
7. Maintain and restore a diversity of native riparian floodplain habitats characteristic of the historic Willamette Valley.
8. Protect and maintain natural riverine habitats representative of the historic Willamette Valley.
9. Contribute to the protection and recovery of Federally threatened and endangered species and their habitats within the Willamette Valley.
10. Provide compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities for visitors, fostering appreciation and understanding of the refuges' fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats.
11. Protect, preserve, evaluate, and interpret the cultural heritage and resources of the refuges while consulting with appropriate Native American groups and preservation organizations and complying with historic preservation legislation.
12. Protect, restore, and maintain off-refuge habitats to achieve conservation goals at the landscape level throughout the Willamette Valley.
13. Collect scientific information (inventories, monitoring, research, or scientific assessments) necessary to support refuge management.

3.2 Refuge Objectives for Hunting

CCP Goal 10 pertains directly to the provision of wildlife dependent recreational opportunities on the refuges. The W.L. Finley Refuge hunt program objectives were developed as part of the CCP development process and are repeated below. The objective numeric identifier (e.g. 10d) is consistent with the objective numbering system in the CCP/EA. The more complete program description is found in Section 4 of this hunt plan.

Objective 10f: Provide opportunities for quality waterfowl hunting

Provide new opportunities for the public to participate in quality waterfowl hunting at Baskett Slough Refuge while minimizing impact to wintering geese, other wildlife and other recreational users. Provide a quality hunting experience that:

- Places a priority on safety (hunters are spaced appropriately, spatial separation exists between hunt areas and areas open to other recreational use, having adequate law enforcement presence, etc.).
- Includes clear and concise regulations readily available at the refuge website and posted clearly in the field.
- Poses minimal conflict with wildlife/habitat objectives.
- Poses minimal conflict with other Big Six activities.
- Poses minimal conflict with neighboring lands.
- Is accessible to a broad spectrum of visitors.
- Promotes stewardship & conservation.
- Promotes understanding and appreciation of natural resources and FWS role.
- Provides reliable / reasonable opportunity to experience wildlife.
- Uses accessible facilities that blend into landscape.
- Uses visitor satisfaction to define and evaluate programs.

4. Description of Hunting Program

The areas open to big game hunting at W.L. Finley Refuge are shown on Map 2.

4.1 Big Game Hunting

Table 1. Deer Archery Hunt

Aspect	Description
Location	Finley main unit – selected locations. See Map 14.
Season	Approximately last weekend in August until approximately September 30.)
Sex	Either
Days/Week	Seven
Fees	None
Possession Limit	1 deer
Permits	On-site self-registration required
Other hunt regulations	Per state (ODFW) rules

Table 2. Restricted Firearms Hunt

Aspect	Description
Location	W.L. Finley main unit. During the first week, this hunt would be located within most of the main unit of W.L. Finley Refuge except for two closed areas near refuge facilities (See Map 14). During the second week of this hunt, Bald Top and Mill Hill trail areas would be the only areas open to hunting, and these areas would be closed to all other public use activities during this week.
Season	Approximately last week of October through the first week of November.
Sex	Either
Days/Week	Seven
Fees	None
Possession Limit	1 deer
Permits	On- site self-registration required
Other hunt regulations	Per state (ODFW) rules. In addition, only shotguns using buckshot or slugs and muzzleloaders are allowed.

4.3 Procedures for Consultation and Coordination with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Service staff has coordinated with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) staff regarding annual hunt season dates, areas open to hunting, etc. The Service requests that ODFW publish information on the refuge deer hunt and waterfowl hunt annually in the State hunting regulations.

5. Measures Taken to Avoid Conflicts with Other Management Objectives

5.1 Measures to Avoid Biological Conflicts

Disturbance to wintering geese from deer hunters would be minimized after November 1, by ensuring that the deer hunting zone is located well away from wintering goose areas and that deer hunting would only occur for the first week of November and only at Finley Refuge. See Map 2.

Harm to other biological resources would be avoided, since hunters would only be allowed in designated areas and will be limited to a short time period in early-mid fall.

5.2 Measures to Avoid Public Use Conflicts

Various aspects of the proposed hunt programs, including temporal restrictions and spatial restrictions, combined with the seasonal nature of recreational activities on the refuges, would reduce the potential for conflict. Other measures taken to avoid or reduce potential conflicts with these programs include posting hunt signs to maintain public awareness during hunting periods, and posting information about hunt periods on the refuge website. The restrictions on weapon type - archery and restricted firearms only for the deer hunt program - reduces trajectory and lowers the risk of third-party injury.

5.3 Measures to Avoid Administrative Conflicts

The hunt program has the potential to conflict with some of the normal management, maintenance, and biological monitoring activities that might be occurring in the same vicinity as the hunt program. Safety briefings for staff working in hunt areas would occur. Hunters would be warned of refuge activities that might be occurring in the hunt units. These measures would ensure the safety of refuge staff and Service authorized agents and allow the completion of refuge management activities as well as other refuge uses. The project leader would retain the discretion to close areas to hunting when necessary for the protection of refuge staff and authorized agents who are conducting refuge management activities or for the safety of hunters who could be at risk from refuge management activities (e.g., prescribed fire). Overall, there would be minimal administrative conflicts expected.

Outreach about the new hunting programs will require minimal reprogramming of existing resources.

6. Assessment

6.1 Compatibility with Refuge Objectives

Hunting is one of the six wildlife-dependent recreational uses included in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. Conducting a well-managed hunt on W.L. Finley Refuge will assist the refuges in meeting one of the Refuge System's primary goals (providing the public opportunities to participate in compatible wildlife-dependent recreational programs). Compatibility with other refuge programs is addressed below.

6.2 Biological and Other Considerations

Black-tailed Deer

Potential effects of deer hunting to target populations, non-target species, listed species, refuge habitats, and other public use programs are summarized in Table 3. Section 5 examines measures to avoid conflicts with these resources.

6.3 Funding and Staffing Requirements for the Hunt

The proposed deer hunt program at W.L. Finley Refuge would require administrative staff time from a visitor services manager, maintenance staff, and a law enforcement officer. Approximately \$6,000 in one-time costs are projected, and the total annual cost to administer the hunt with the changes proposed is projected to be approximately \$5,000 per year. There are currently enough funds in refuge operations to implement this program.

The proposed waterfowl hunt at Baskett Slough Refuge would require staff time by the Refuge Manager, maintenance staff, and the law enforcement officer. Approximately \$56,000 in one-time costs are projected, and the total annual cost to administer the hunt with the changes proposed is projected to be approximately \$13,000 per year. Additional operational funding would be requested in order to administer this hunt.

Table 3. Anticipated Effects of the Deer Hunts

Effects	Conclusion*
Effects to target populations	Negligible; unlikely that more than 20 deer would be taken annually which equates to 0.2% of 2008 deer harvest in the Willamette Unit.
Effects to non-target species	Negligible to minor. Hunting occurs outside of the breeding season and the low level of hunting expected would be unlikely to pose any significant impacts to foraging or resting activities of resident or migratory species. The timing and locations of the deer hunt is designed to avoid disturbance to waterfowl, especially geese. Existing sanctuary areas would be maintained for the full wintering period under all alternatives.
Effects to refuge habitats	Approximately 85% of W.L. Finley Refuge would be open to hunting. However, because deer hunting is expected to remain a low intensity use with < 100 participants per year during a period when the vegetation is no longer actively growing, only temporary and minor effects are expected to vegetation from trampling. Riparian habitat may receive more visitation related disturbance from hunting than other habitat types.
Effects to listed species	Negligible impact; potential for minor trampling but any listed plants in the area will have senesced by the start of the season. No impact to Fender’s blue butterfly habitat or listed fish.
Effects to other priority public uses	Approximately 85% of Finley’s main unit would be open for hunting during archery season and during the first week of restricted firearms season. The impact to other priority public uses is expected to be minor, because the majority of other refuge users typically concentrate along trails and roads in the western part of the main unit, where hunting would remain closed. During the second week of the shotgun season, the Bald Top area and Mill Hill Trail would be closed for approximately 7 days each year to allow hunting in this area. Although other refuge users engaged in other priority public uses will experience some new restrictions, this effect is considered minor in the context of trail availability at the three refuges over the year.

* (see Deer Hunting Compatibility Determination in the CCP/EA and the William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge Modified Deer Hunt Program Supplemental Environmental Assessment for more detail).

7 Conduct of the Hunt

Location-specific regulations would provide for the safety of visitors and the accommodation of many uses.

7.1 Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunt

The existing hunting program is generally accepted locally and does not typically generate anti-hunting controversy. Nationally, there is a component of the population that is opposed to hunting, and some organizations are opposed to hunting, or at least the expansion of hunting, on national wildlife refuges and other public lands. During the review of the Draft CCP/EA during May-June 2011, some members of the public voiced objections to some or all of the hunts within this plan. There are some local hunters who strongly support expanded access and who would have liked to have seen an even larger expansion of the hunt program. See Appendix L for more details.

7.2 Hunter Application Procedures

Hunters must check in and out of the refuge by use of self-serve permits.

7.3 Description of Hunter Selection Process

There is no hunter selection process.

7.4 Media Selection for Publicizing the Hunt

Newspapers and television stations throughout Oregon would be provided copies of an annual news release covering the hunts. Descriptive tearsheets would be printed and dispensed at refuge offices, brochure boxes at refuge parking lots, and available online at the refuge web site.

7.5 Description of Hunter Orientation

Deer hunters at Finley would be required to complete a Big Game Harvest Report (FWS Form 3-2359) at designated self-serve hunt kiosks where hunt maps and regulations would be available.

7.6 Hunter Requirements and Regulations

- (1) Allowable equipment (Deer Hunt): Deer hunters may use portable or climbing deer stands. Stands must be removed daily. Driving or screwing nails, spikes, or other objects into trees or hunting from any tree into which such an object has been driven is prohibited. Limbing of trees is prohibited.
- (2) Wearing hunter orange is required for youth hunters as per State regulations.
- (3) Open fires are not allowed.
- (4) License and permits: Hunting permits are required. The license requirements are those required by the State of Oregon and the Federal duck stamp for waterfowl hunting.
- (5) Reporting harvest: Waterfowl and goose permit hunters must check back in to the check station at Baskett Slough. Deer hunters would be required to complete a Big Game Harvest Report (FWS Form 3-2359) at designated self-serve kiosks where hunt maps and regulations would be available.
- (6) Hunter safety requirements: Goose hunters would be required to space themselves no less than 200 yards apart from each other during the early September Goose Hunt. Designated hunt sites would be established for the Youth Duck Hunt. Wearing hunter orange would be required for all youth hunters as per State regulations..
- (7) Restricted firearms and archery deer hunting would be allowed on designated dates from ½ hour before sunrise until ½ hour after sunset.
- (8) Only shotguns using buckshot or slugs and muzzleloaders would be allowed for the deer hunt.

- (9) No overnight camping or after-hours parking is permitted on the refuges.
- (10) No hunting is permitted from refuge structures, observation blinds, boardwalks, etc.
- (11) All vehicles must remain parked in designated areas.
- (12) Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on national wildlife refuges must comply with all provisions of State and local laws. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in Part 32).

References:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2008. Oregon Black-tailed Deer Management Plan. November 2008.

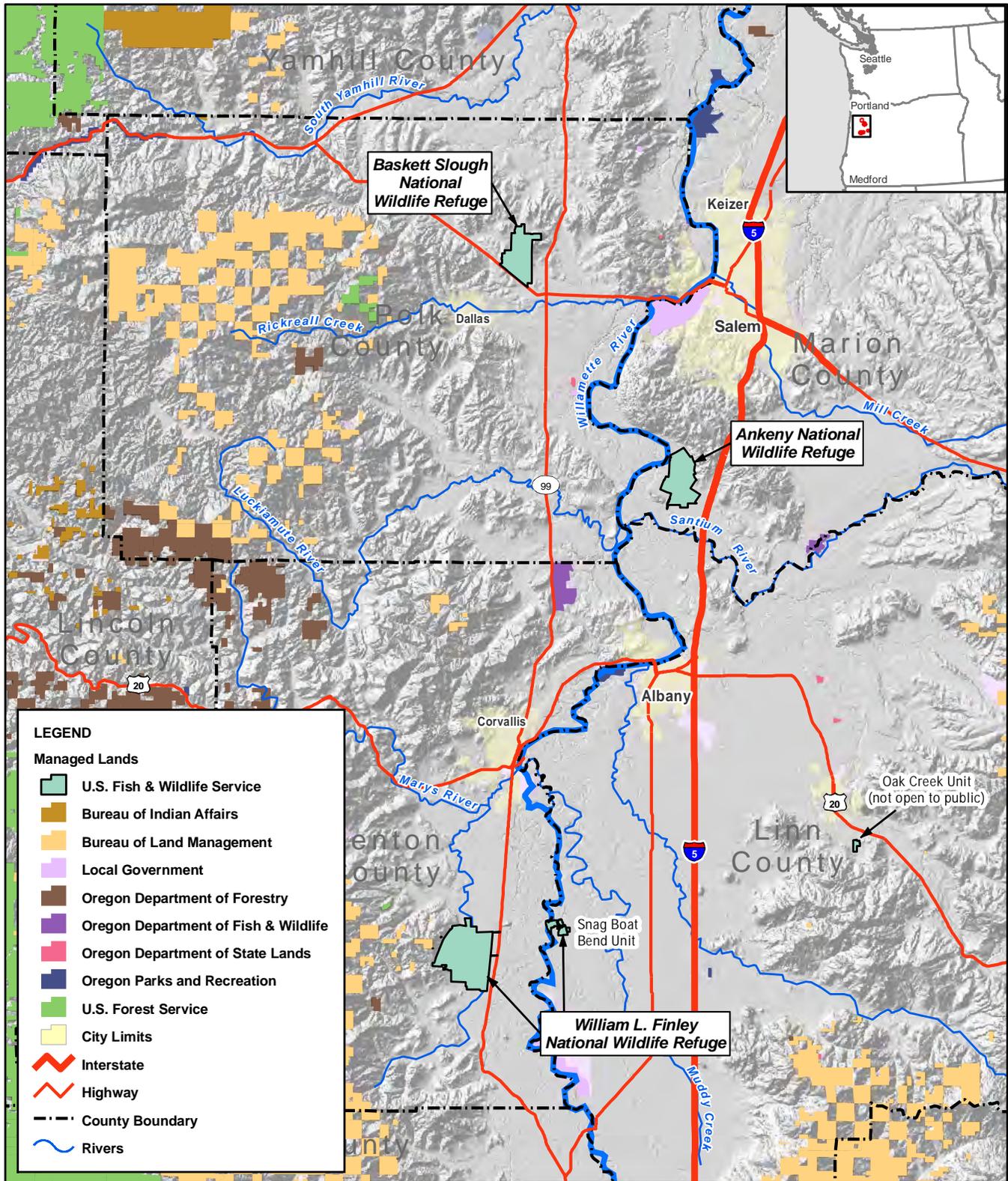
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment. 2011.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge Modified Deer hunt Program Supplemental Environmental Assessment. March 2012.

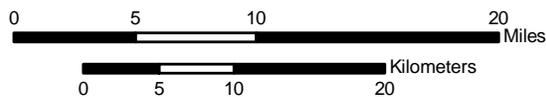
Appendix1 - Maps

Map 1 - *Willamette Valley NWRC Local Area*

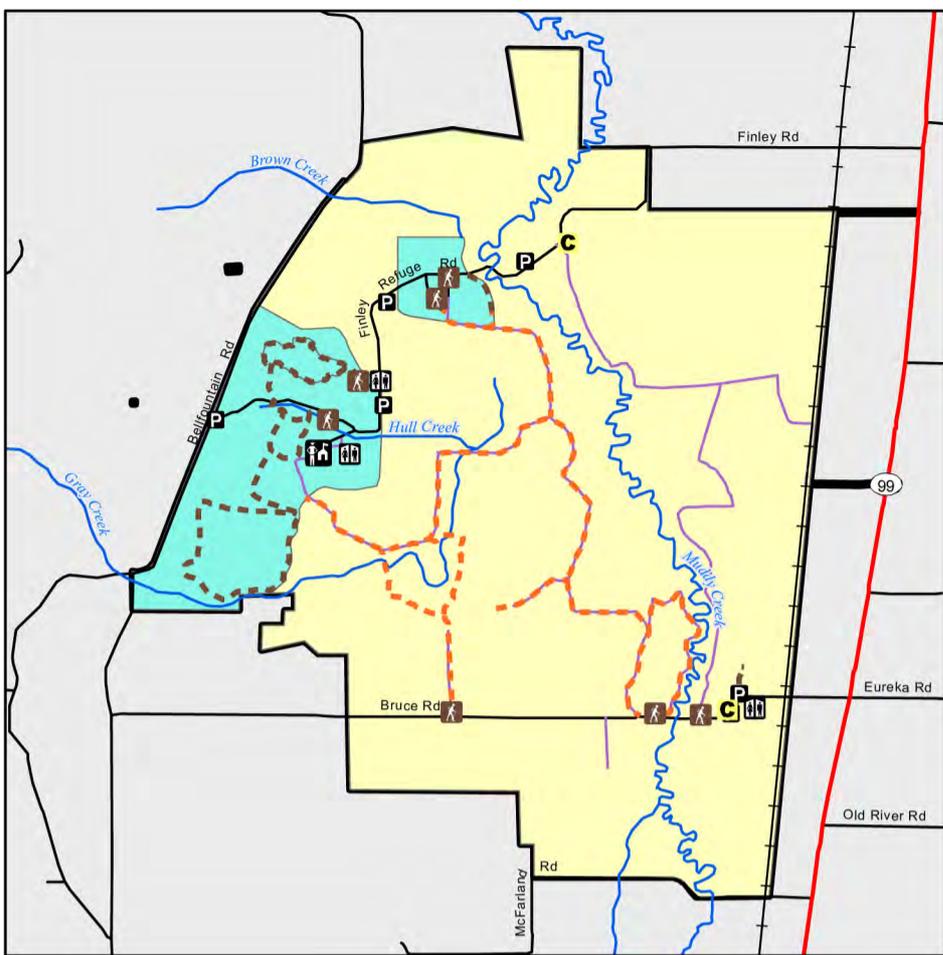
Map 2 - *William L. Finley NWR Hunt Plan Alternatives*



Produced by USFWS Region 1
 Refuge Information Branch
 Portland, Oregon
 Data: Public Ownership, BLM 2005
 Map Date: 9/7/2011
 File: 09-164-1.mxd

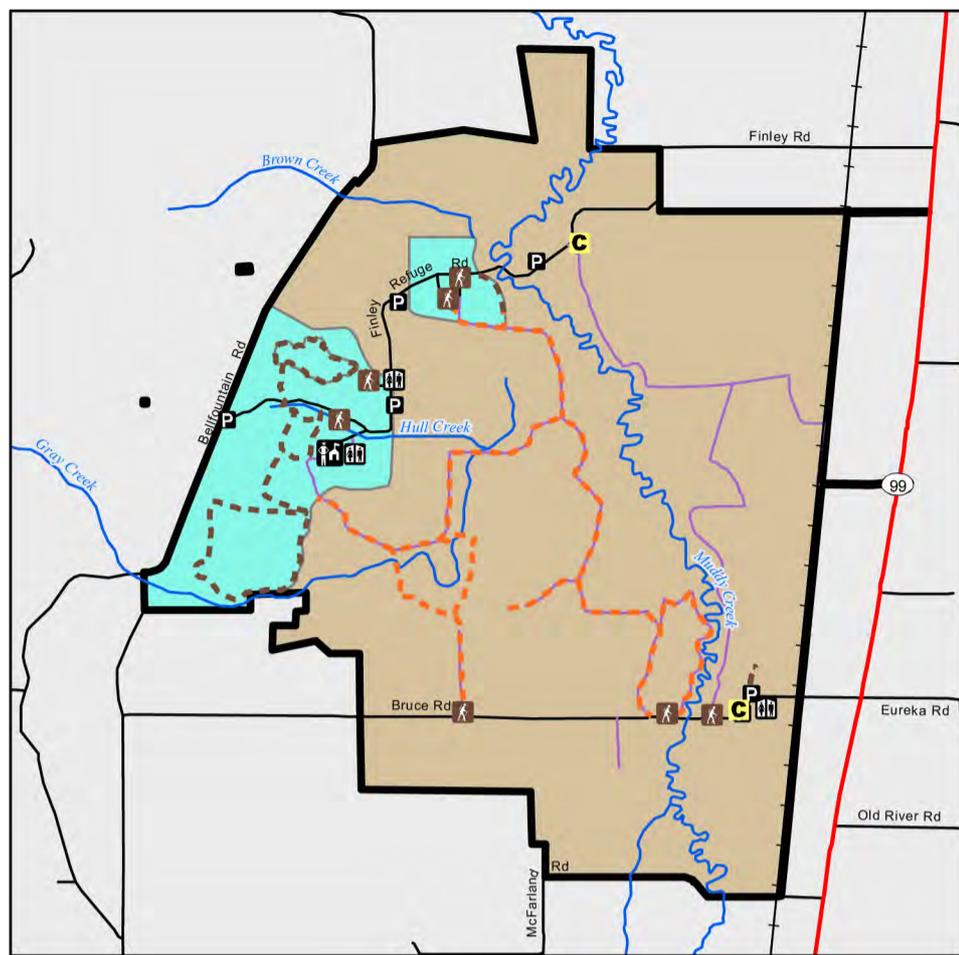


UTM ZONE 10
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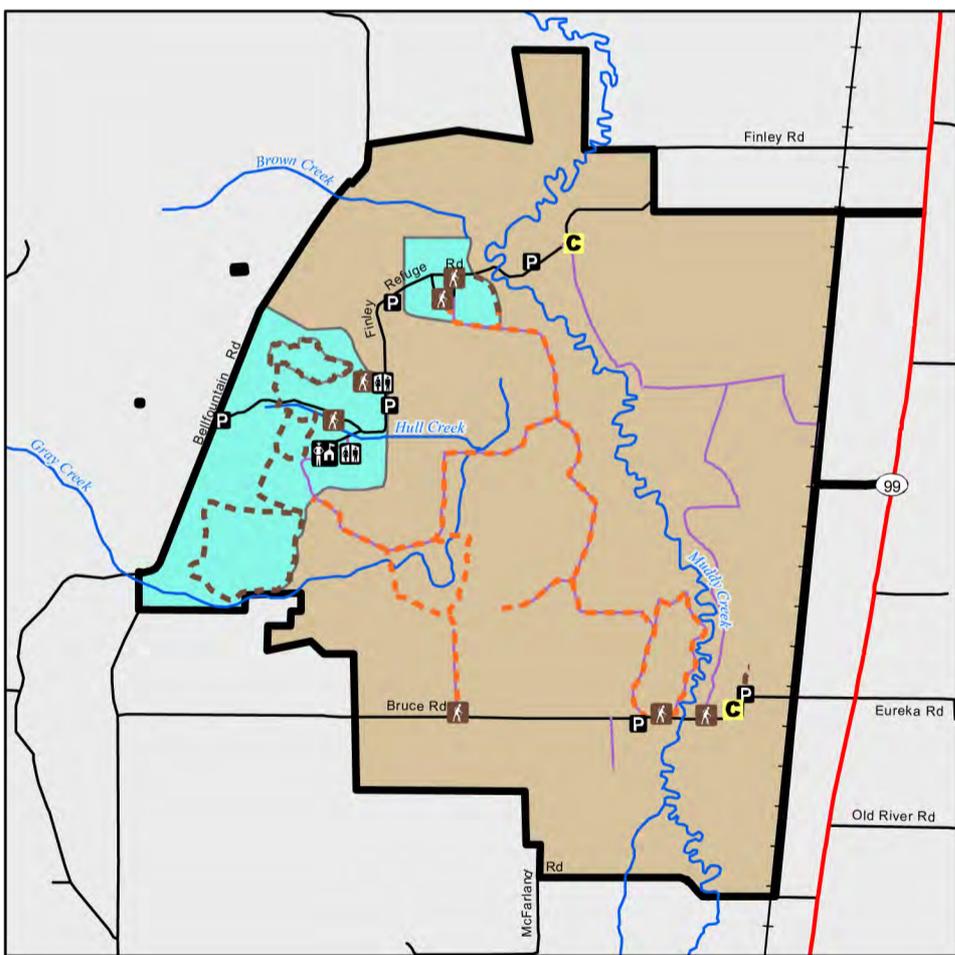
Deer Archery Hunt, All Alternatives

Season: Approximately late August through end of September



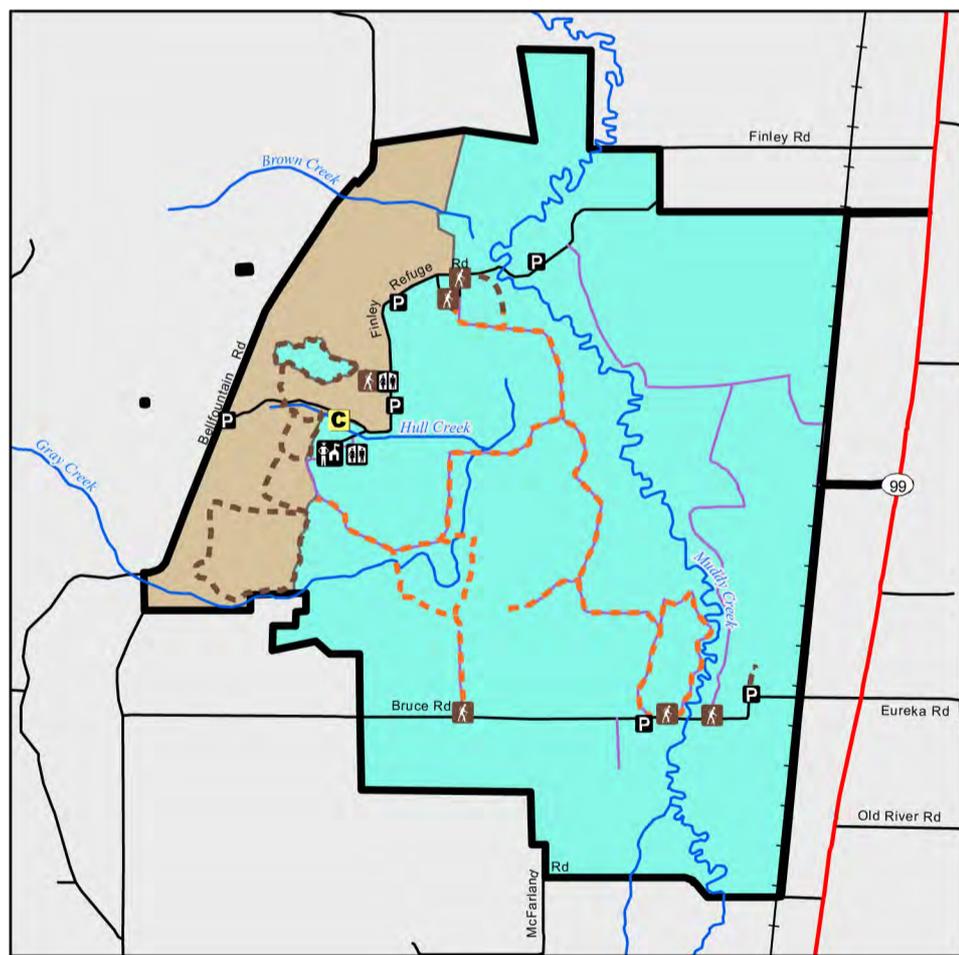
Deer Restricted Firearms Hunt, Alternative 1

Season: Approximately October 1 through October 31



Deer Restricted Firearms Hunt, Alternatives 2 and 3, Week 1

Season: Approximately the last week of October

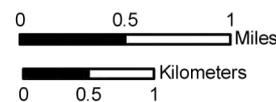
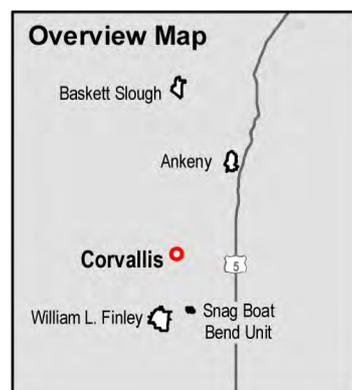


Deer Restricted Firearms Hunt, Alternatives 2 and 3, Week 2

Season: Approximately the first week of November

LEGEND

Refuge Ownership Boundary	Existing Seasonal Use Trail (Open Apr.1 - Oct. 31)
Deer Hunt Area- Archery	Existing All Year Use Trail
Deer Hunt Area- Restricted Firearms	Railroad Tracks
Closed to Hunting	County Roads
Complex Headquarters	State Route
Check Stations	Refuge Service Roads
Trailhead	Rivers and Streams - Riverine
Roadside Pullout	



Produced by USFWS Region 1
 Refuge Information Branch
 Portland, Oregon
 Map Date: 9/2/2011
 Data: USFWS (WVNWRC), 2010
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 File: 10-113-2b.mxd



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