



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Western South Dakota WMD Complex
Sand Lake NWR/WMD
39650 Sand Lake Drive
Columbia, South Dakota 57433

February 10, 2023

Dear Agricultural Producer:

The Sand Lake Wetland Management District (WMD) is seeking operators to submit applications for grazing opportunities within the WMD. A map showing lands offered within the Sand Lake WMD is enclosed. Please familiarize yourself with the WMD Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) that have been put forth for grazing. Please review the WPA maps and descriptions before submitting your application(s). Each grazing unit will have requirements for fencing (possibly boundary fence maintenance or replacement and/or internal electric fence), water (only if no source is available), and possible livestock rotation.

All applications will be opened on the same day and each applicant will be evaluated using a competitive ranking process. Applicants will be ranked by the WMD based on a series of questions included with the application(s). You may submit applications for multiple WPAs; however, only one WPA can be grazed. The exception to this will be if no other applications for a WPA are received, at which time an applicant who has already applied for and received a unit will be eligible for additional unit(s). If you have grazed more than one unit being offered in the past, please rank the units in your order of preference. Sand Lake WMD reserves the right to reject any or all applications that do not meet the requirements identified in the application. Furthermore, the Sand Lake WMD also reserves the right to reject applications from any operator that has previously violated the terms of grazing Special Use Permits (SUP).

Selected operators will be notified by the WMD March 7, 2023. Successful applicants must complete a Cooperative Agricultural Agreement (CAA) with a Sand Lake WMD Refuge Manager within three weeks of notification, and before any livestock is released onto the grazing unit. The CAA will include the: (1) Commercial SUP and (2) an Annual Plan of Operations.

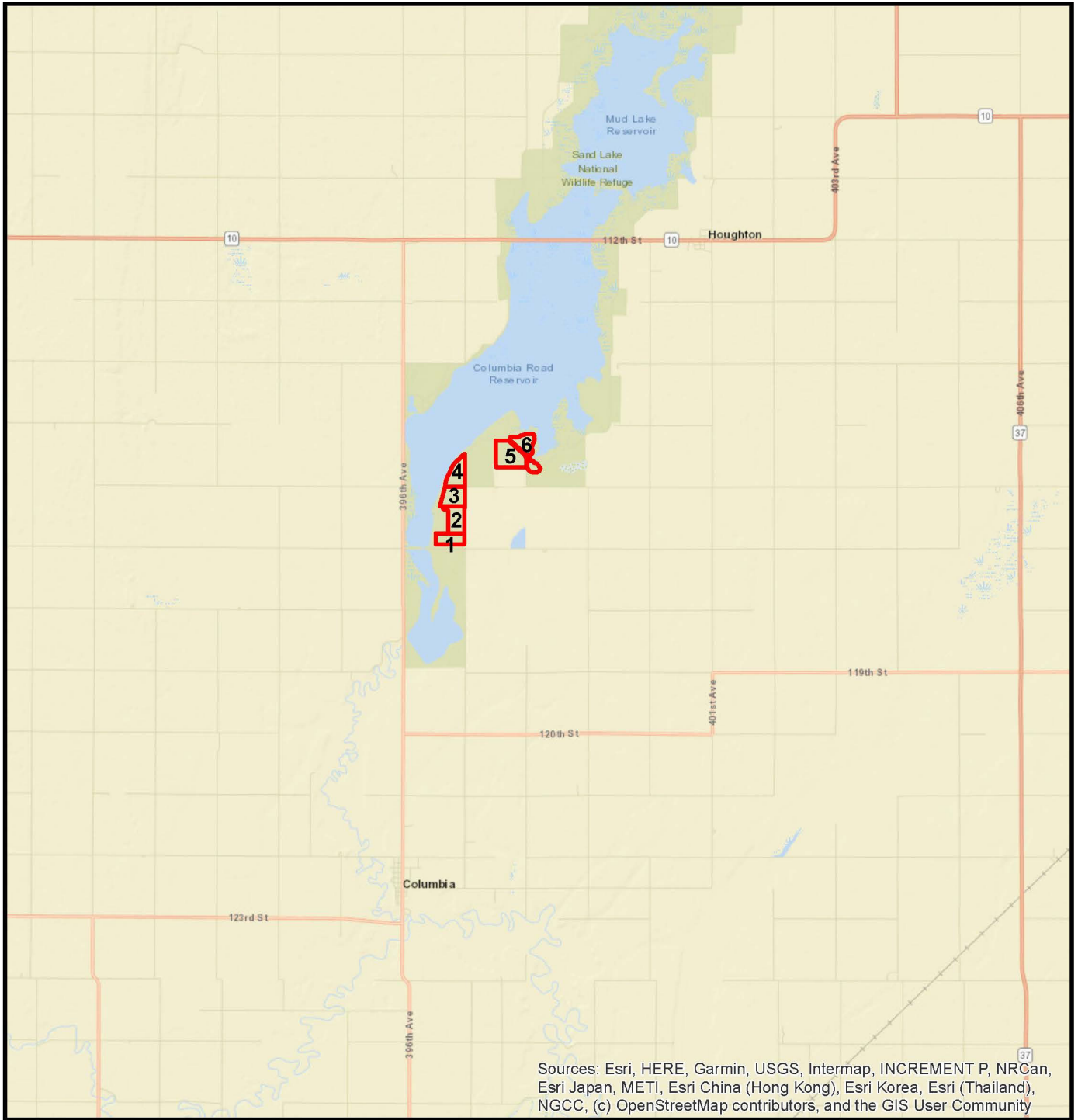
The application form can be submitted via the postal service, email, fax, or hand-delivered to our office. Grazing applications will be accepted until **March 1, 2023**. Applications received or post marked after March 1, 2023, will be returned unopened. Please mail to the address above, email (sydney_hanna@fws.gov), or fax (605-885-6333). Thank you for showing interest in our cooperative agriculture program and call me at (605)885-6272 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Sand Lake WMD Manager

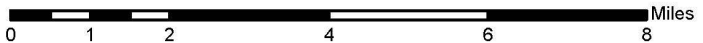


Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge 2023 Grazing Units Brown County



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

 2023 Refuge Grazing Units



Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge Units

You are applying to graze these units for 5 years (2023 to 2027) and the AUM application rate is for the life of the Cooperative Agricultural Agreement (CAA). Every year the permittee will be required to develop an annual Plan of Operations with Sand Lake WMD. There will be a minimum of 100 AUMs in 2023, but the AUMs in 2024 will be determined during the annual Plan of Operations. Grazing can start as early as May 1, 2023.

WPA Description and Conditions

The total acres of the Refuge Units are 465. These units have no fence and require electric fencing. Please inspect the area before bidding. There are three different water tanks that reach all 6 of these units. Vegetation in the WPA consists of a combination of grasses, sedges, and cool season tame grasses.

Legal Description: T. 126 R. 62 W., Section 28 (Brainard Township)

Acres Available for Grazing: A minimum of 465 acres annually.

Lessor Responsibilities

Fencing: Materials will be the responsibility of the permittee and all electric fences will be removed one month after the final grazing date.

Water Source(s): The available sources will likely provide adequate amounts for livestock during the length of the grazing period, but this is not guaranteed and should be checked throughout the grazing period. If circumstances arise where water is inadequate, then water will need to be supplied by the permittee and deductions from grazing fees will be applied.

Salt and Minerals: Salt and mineral containers need to be moved throughout the grazing period and placed away from water sites.

Rotation: Planned grazing rotation start and end dates are approximations and are a guide; it is understood by both parties that deviation from the planned dates will occur. The Cooperator must make a good faith effort to follow the grazing days more so than the grazing dates. The Cooperator must make the Refuge Manager aware of such deviations from the planned grazing dates. The Cooperator must maintain records of livestock stocking rates and grazing dates and provide them to the Refuge Manager within 15 days after the grazing period has concluded for the year.


Payment: The Sand Lake WMD will submit a bill to the Interior Business Center (IBC) by September 29th, then IBC will generate an invoice that will be sent to the permittee. Payment is due 30 days after the invoice is received and is accepted through a check or credit card.

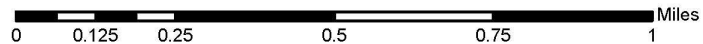
****Please refer to the Special Conditions section for all other permittee responsibilities.***



Sand Lake NWR Grazing Units



 2023 Refuge Grazing Units



Refuge Units 1-6 Grazing Management Plan

<u>Unit Acres</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Grazing Period</u>	<u>AUMs</u>	<u>Grazable</u>
#1	2023	May 1- May 31	100	Approx. 50
#2	2023	June 1- June30	100	Approx. 60
#3	2023	July 1- July 31	100	Approx. 65
#4	2023	August 31-August 31	100	Approx. 70
#5	2023	Sept 1- Sept 30	100	Approx. 100
#6	2023	Oct 1- Oct 31	100	Approx. 70

Livestock in year 2023

Unit 1-6 100 Cows

* The plan for 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027 is to be determined.

Grazing Special Conditions

- To be eligible to apply you must be a current livestock owner/operator.
- The entire amount of AUM's specified must be utilized during the period specified. More livestock for a shorter period will be allowed upon mutual agreement between the Cooperator and the WMD.
- Confinement of livestock to the unit is the responsibility of the permittee as is any damage to surrounding lands caused by the permittee's livestock.
- You are responsible for the care of your livestock, i.e., moving them on the specified dates and into the correct pastures, ensuring they have water, etc. You are liable for any damage to neighboring lands should your livestock escape the WPA. All liability relating to livestock and livestock management to include all persons working for the Cooperator, whether related, hired or as a partner is strictly that of the Cooperator as listed on the SUP.
- The permittee is responsible for all existing permanent and electric fence maintenance and repairs. The USFWS can provide materials used for a new or replacement permanent fence greater than a quarter mile or deduct the material costs from the grazing fee after receipts are provided. All permanent fences will become the property of the USFWS after the grazing agreement has expired. Temporary electric cross fences remain the property of the permittee and are to be removed one month after the removal of livestock.
- If permanent fence installation is needed, it will be required that the permittee follow the fence specifications of the USFWS. All new fences will have 4 strands of 12-gauge barbed wire; H-braces (if replaced) will be (2) 8-inch posts with associated cross-post and 9-gauge smooth wire; gates (if replaced) will be 4 strand wire with stays, and the maximum spacing for steel posts will be 16 feet.
- Natural water sources may exist on each WPA. Known water sources will be indicated on maps for each WPA. It is the permittee's responsibility to check the condition of the water sources. If water sources are inadequate, the permittee will need to provide water. Costs associated with providing water should be considered by the permittee before applying.
- The use of salt and minerals are allowed but should be located away from water sources to reduce overuse of the area by livestock. Mineral must be moved at the same time the livestock are rotated. All minerals must be removed at the end of the grazing period.

- All private property, including containers for minerals, salt, or other supplemental feeds or feeders, must be removed at the end of the grazing period.
- With the exceptions of ear tags, no insecticide may be used on livestock while they are on the WPA. Treatment may be done before livestock are brought to the WPA.
- The cooperator must own at least 50% of the livestock that are to be grazed under the permit. If you use another person's livestock, you can only collect the same dollar amount per AUM as you are being charged by the USFWS. As the person named on the permit, you are responsible for 100% of the livestock grazed, the amount paid and compliance with all conditions of this permit. Subletting is not permitted. **We urge you not to increase the size of your herd based on the availability or the expectation of annually grazing FWS lands.**
- The permittee must notify the Refuge Manager of deceased livestock. Deceased livestock must be removed from the WPA within 48 hours of discovery.
- Any damage to government property must be reported to the local Refuge Manager immediately and replaced by the permittee.
- All liability relating to livestock and livestock management, including all persons working for the permittee, is strictly that of the permittee listed on the CAA.
- Permittee must comply with all state and local livestock health regulations.
- The Cooperator must maintain records of livestock stocking rates and grazing dates and provide them to the Refuge Manager within 15 days after the grazing period has concluded for the year.

THE USFWS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MODIFY OR TERMINATE THE CAA IF HABITAT CONDITIONS WARRANT. IF CHANGES TO THE PERMIT ARE DEEMED NECESSARY, THE PERMITTEE AGREES TO APPLICATIONS BY THE CHANGES OR THE PERMIT WILL BE VOIDED. THE PERMITTEE WILL BE NOTIFIED AHEAD OF TIME IF ANY SUCH CHANGES ARE IMPLEMENTED.

ANY VIOLATION OF THE ABOVE REGULATIONS MAY RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION OF YOUR GRAZING PERMIT AND FORFEITURE OF FUTURE APPLICATIONS ON GRAZING UNITS.

To apply please submit the Sand Lake WMD application form and the ranking questionnaire. Please turn in your applications to the FWS Sand Lake Wetland Management District office no later than **March 1st, 2023**. **All envelopes must be marked WPA Grazing Application in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope.** Applications will be received in person or by:

Mail: Sand Lake WMD
39650 Sand Lake Drive
Columbia, SD 57433
e-mail: sydney_hanna@fws.gov
Fax: (605)885-6333

For any questions or further information please contact me (605)885-6272 at the Sand Lake Wetland Management District.

Grazing Fee Rates

The Cooperator will be charged the rates consistent with Service policy and based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) annual publication “Grazing Fee Rates for Cattle –States, Regions, and United States”. Grazing fee rates will be for the term of the SUP and annual stocking rates (AUMS) are specified on the annual Plan of Operations.

Examples of how to calculate stocking rates:

The stocking rate for cow/calf pairs, using 180 AUM’s (Animal Unit Months), 1.2 AUE (Animal Unit Equivalents), and the grazing period ratio of 42 days/30.5 days= 1.38 months

Step 1: AUM’s / AUE → 180 AUM’s / 1.2 AUE = 150 Animals

Step 2: Number of Animals/Grazing Period → 150 Animals/1.38 Months= 109 cow/calf pairs

The stocking rate for yearlings, using 180 AUM’s (Animal Unit Months) and 0.7 AUE (Animal Unit Equivalents)

Step 1: AUM’s / AUE → 180 AUM’s / 0.7 AUE = 257 Animals

Step 2: Number of Animals/Grazing Period → 257 Animals/1.38 Months= 186 yearlings

Stocking Requirements: Sand Lake Wetland Management District will use 1.2 AUE’s (Animal Unit Equivalents) to define a cow with a nursing calf less than 6 months of age. Other livestock will have AUE rates calculated according to the chart below.

Animal Unit Equivalents:

1 mature cow	1.0 AUE
1 cow/calf pair	1.2 AUE
1 bull	1.5 AUE
1 weaner calf.....	0.6 AUE
1 yearling (9-18 months).....	0.7 AUE

Sand Lake WMD Grazing Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone Number: _____

Name of Waterfowl Production Area and Rank*: _____ Rank _____
 (*If you are applying for multiple WPAs please rank your preferences- 1 being the highest, 2 being the second highest)

Grazing rate fee per AUM: \$33 (qualifying deductions may apply)

Please check Yes or No to the following questions and return with the application.

Competitive Ranking Factor	Yes	No
Have you ever been involved with the planning, infrastructure maintenance and/or grazing management on this unit?		
Have you ever had grazing privileges revoked by the USFWS?		
Do you own or rent grazing lands immediately adjacent to this unit?		
Are you able to respond to an animal or infrastructure emergency within 2 hours (e.g., cattle outside unit)?		
Are you willing to follow prescribed grazing management based on vegetation utilization which may vary from year to year?		
Do you have the number of grazing animals needed to meet grazing objective?		
Can you demonstrate that you have followed a rotational grazing program in the past on your own or rented land?		
Are you willing to maintain fences and remove temporary fences at the end of the grazing season? (boundary fence materials may be provided by the Refuge)?		
Are you willing to provide water to grazing unit that may not have a reliable water source?		
Are you willing to mow the ROW adjacent to maintained county or township road as requested by the FWS?		

Qualifying Deductions with verification-

- Deductible expenses may be the cost of materials, labor, equipment, or infrastructure necessary to implement practices within the management unit e.g., fixing existing boundary fence
- Grass and forb seed
- Fencing materials, fence removal/construction including the installation and removal of electric fence
- Hauling and pumping water
- Livestock watering infrastructure maintenance, repair, or installation
- Livestock rotations and transportation as directed by the annual Plan of Operations
- Onsite livestock herder(s)