



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 12, 2024

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 19, 2024. 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.

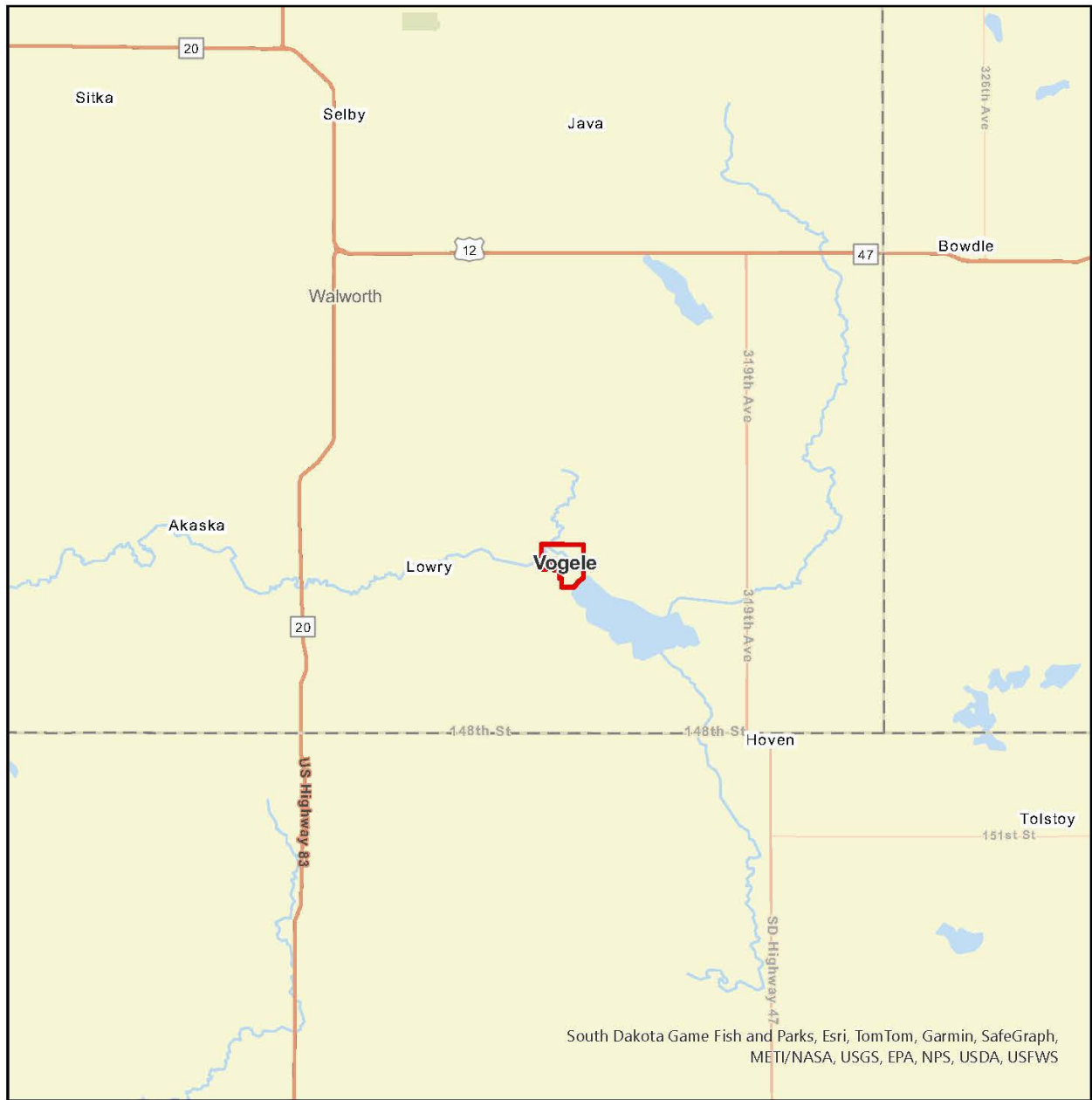
The application form can be submitted via the postal service, email, fax, or hand-delivered to our office. Grazing applications will be accepted until **March 15, 2024**. Applications received or post marked after March 15, 2024, will be returned unopened. Please mail to the address above, email (sydney_hanna@fws.gov), 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 Wetland Management District 2024 Grazing Units Walworth County



0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10 Miles

 Walworth County Grazing Unit

Vogele Waterfowl Production Area (WPA)- Walworth County

You are applying to graze this unit for 5 years (2024-2028), 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 450 AUMs in 2024, but the AUMs in 2025-2028 will be determined during the annual Plan of Operations. Grazing will be conducted for (150 days) which can start as early as April 20th.

This WPA has a prescribed fire planned for this Spring (2024). If the prescribed fire is completed, the grazing start date may be adjusted depending on forage availability.

WPA Description and Conditions

The WPA is a total of 765 acres containing a mix of wetland habitat. This WPA has fair fence condition. Please inspect fences before bidding. Natural wetlands provide water in each paddock. Vegetation in the WPA consists of a combination of grasses, sedges, cool season tame grass, and cattails.

Legal Description: T. 121 N., R 75., Section 04 (Map 120)

Acres Available for Grazing: A minimum of 400 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.

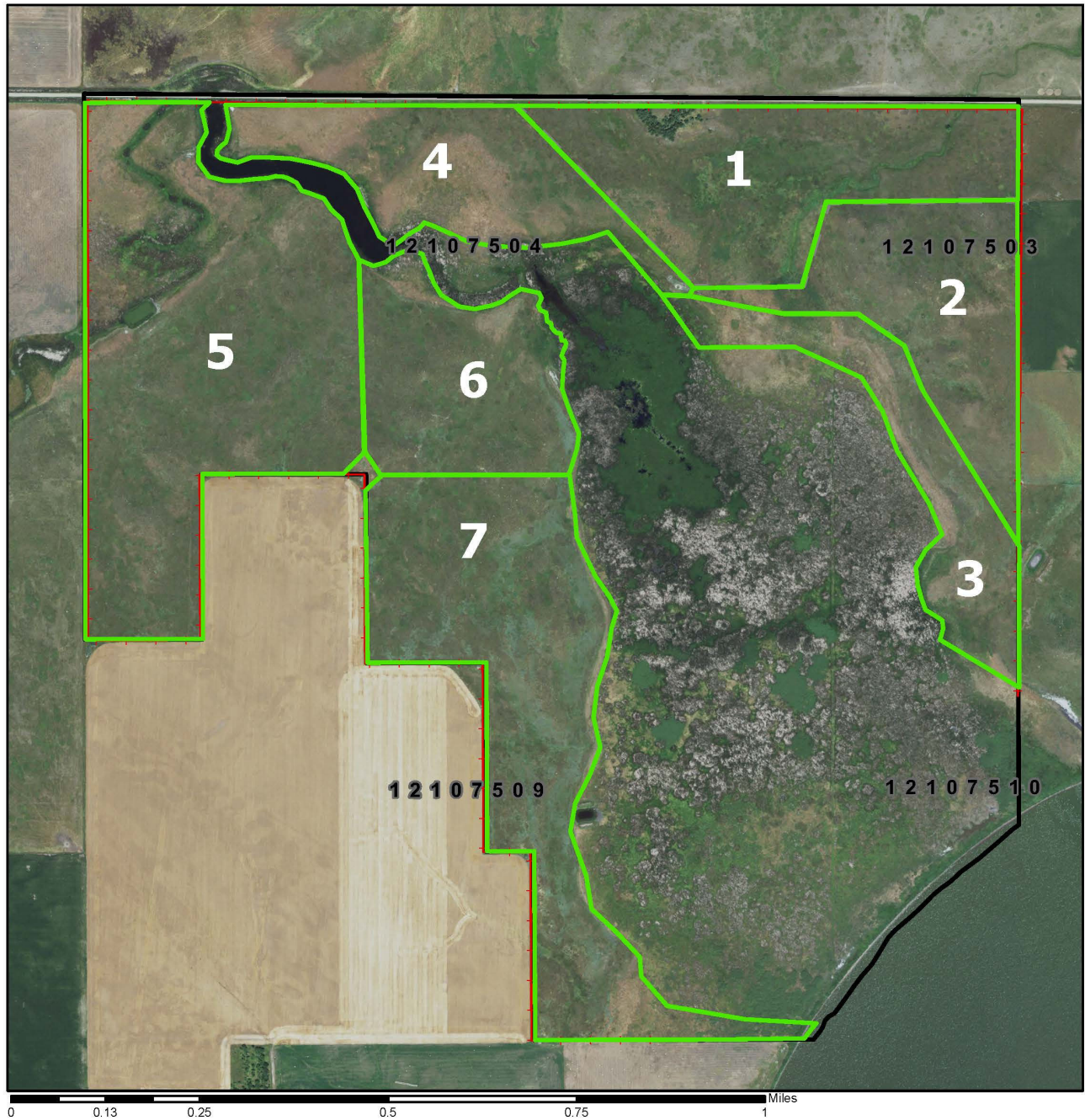
Water Source(s): The available sources will likely provide adequate amounts for livestock during the length of the grazing period, but this is not guaranteed and should be checked throughout the grazing period. If circumstances arise where water is inadequate, then water will need to be supplied by the 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: The permittee must make a good faith effort to follow the grazing days more so than the grazing dates. The permittee must make the Refuge Manager aware of such deviations from the planned grazing dates before change occurs. The permittee 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.

Vogele Waterfowl Production Area



**Walworth County: 121-75-04,
121-75-03, 121-75-09, 121-75-10**

— Exterior Boundary Fence

■ Interior Cross Fence

□ WPA Boundary

□ Grazing Units

2024 Grazing Management Plan

Unit	Year	Grazing Period	AUMS	Acres
1	2024	May 1- May 25	70	65
2	2024	May 26- June 15	56	45
3	2024	June 16- July 1	42	35
4	2024	July 2- July 22	56	45
5	2024	July 23- August 23	84	120
6	2024	August 24- September 13	56	40
7	2024	September 14- October 9	70	100

*The plan for 2025, 2026, 2027, and 2028 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 permittee 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 permittee, whether related, hired or as a partner is strictly that of the permittee 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 permittee must own at least 50% of the livestock that are to be grazed under the permit. 6 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 permittee 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 AAPPLICATIONE 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 APPLICATIONDING 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 15th, 2024**. **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

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

Grazing Fee Rates

The permittee will be charged \$1 over rates consistent with the South Dakota State University Extension Report Grazing Rental Rate Survey for 2023. Grazing fee rates will be for the term of the CAA 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: _____

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Name of Waterfowl Production Area and Rank*: _____ Rank _____

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: \$34 (qualifying deductions may apply)

Competitive Ranking Factors

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

Have you ever been involved with the planning and/or grazing management on this unit?

Yes _____ No _____

- If not, have you ever been involved with the planning and/or grazing management on Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge or WPA within Sand Lake Wetland Management District (WMD)?

Yes _____ No _____

- Have you ever been involved with the planning and/or grazing management of any Refuge or WPA in the Dakotas? Year Grazed?

Yes _____ No _____ Year _____

Have you ever had grazing privileges revoked by the USFWS?

- If yes, please explain when privileges were revoked and the circumstances that lead to privileges being revoked.

Yes _____ No _____ Year _____

What is the approximate distance from land you own or rent from the WPA?

**Please check what best described the closest parcel of land you own or lease:*

- Shared boundary with the grazing unit being offered _____
- 1 to 3 miles from the grazing unit being offered _____
- 4 to 10 miles from the grazing unit being offered _____
- >11 miles from the grazing unit being offered _____

Required: What is the location of the nearest pastureland you own or rent?

Are you willing to maintain fences and use and remove temporary fence?

Yes _____ No _____

Are you willing to do significant quality repairs to permanent fences?

Yes _____ No _____

Are you willing to provide water to grazing unit that may not have a reliable water source?

Yes _____ No _____

Are you able to respond to an animal or infrastructure emergency within 2 hours (e.g., cattle outside unit)?

Yes _____ No _____

Do you have the number of livestock available for this unit that is required in the grazing plan?

Yes _____ No _____

Can you demonstrate that you have implemented a rotational grazing program in the past on your own or rented land?

Yes _____ No _____

Are you willing to communicate with USFWS Service management staff before and during the grazing period? Additionally, are you willing to adhere to prescribed grazing management practices based on vegetation utilization, which may vary from year to year?

**Examples of prescribed grazing practices are rotating cattle in a timely manner as directed, grazing during time periods determined in the plan or operations, and grazing the number of days specified by the manager.*

Yes _____ No _____

Are you able to mow the ROW adjacent to maintained county or township road as well as any WPA parking areas as requested by the USFWS?

Yes _____ No _____

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)

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I certify that all information provided above is true to the best of my knowledge and I meet all qualifying standards for this application. I further understand that selection as a permittee is not a guarantee of grazing rights on waterfowl production areas and can be cancelled by either party with 45 days' notice if either party is not carrying out their roles and responsibilities of the agreement.

Printed Name

Signature

Date