

Supplemental Instructions

Haying Opportunity

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is seeking qualified applicants for a Cooperative Agricultural Program at the Sand Lake Wetland Management District (District) in north-central South Dakota. Please familiarize yourself with the USFWS Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) that has been put forth for haying. Please review the bid prospectus for the unit before submitting your bid. To be considered for the program applicants must sign, date, and submit the Special Conditions and Bid Worksheet by July 24, 2026. The applicant must address in their application how they will meet the selection criteria outlined in the instructions.

Background

Sand Lake District was created in 1961. The Sand Lake District covers eight counties in east-central South Dakota. The district consists of 162 Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs), totaling 45,000 fee-owned acres, in Brown, Campbell, Edmunds, Faulk, McPherson, Potter, Spink, and Walworth counties. The topography in the eastern counties of the district is relatively flat while the western counties have both flat areas and rolling hills. The WPA's are a part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. National wildlife refuges and WPAs are vitally important to wildlife and people. These lands are managed to provide habitat for endangered species, migratory birds, and other wildlife. They also provide places for people to hunt, fish, learn about and enjoy wildlife.

The purpose of haying in the Sand Lake District is to improve habitat conditions for migratory birds, prevent encroachment of woody vegetation on upland meadows, and reduce the cover of invasive plant species. The effects of the agricultural programs were explored in depth in the Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) (USFWS 2012). The plan provides management direction for grassland portions of the refuge by focusing on important groups of wildlife and their associated habitats identified in the CCP planning process. The prescriptive haying activity was determined to be a compatible use during the CCP process.

The Proposed Cooperative Agricultural Agreement

The selected applicants will operate under a Cooperative Agricultural Agreement (CAA) as “Cooperators” with the Service. Under this CAA the Service is proposing the Cooperator be responsible for haying an allotted acreage of pasture in the district to remove this year’s as well as previous years’ vegetative growth. The Cooperator will be allowed to hay from August 1st, 2026, to September 1st, 2026. A plan of operations will be developed before any Cooperator activity.

The district is seeking to award a CAA for the following Faulk County management units:

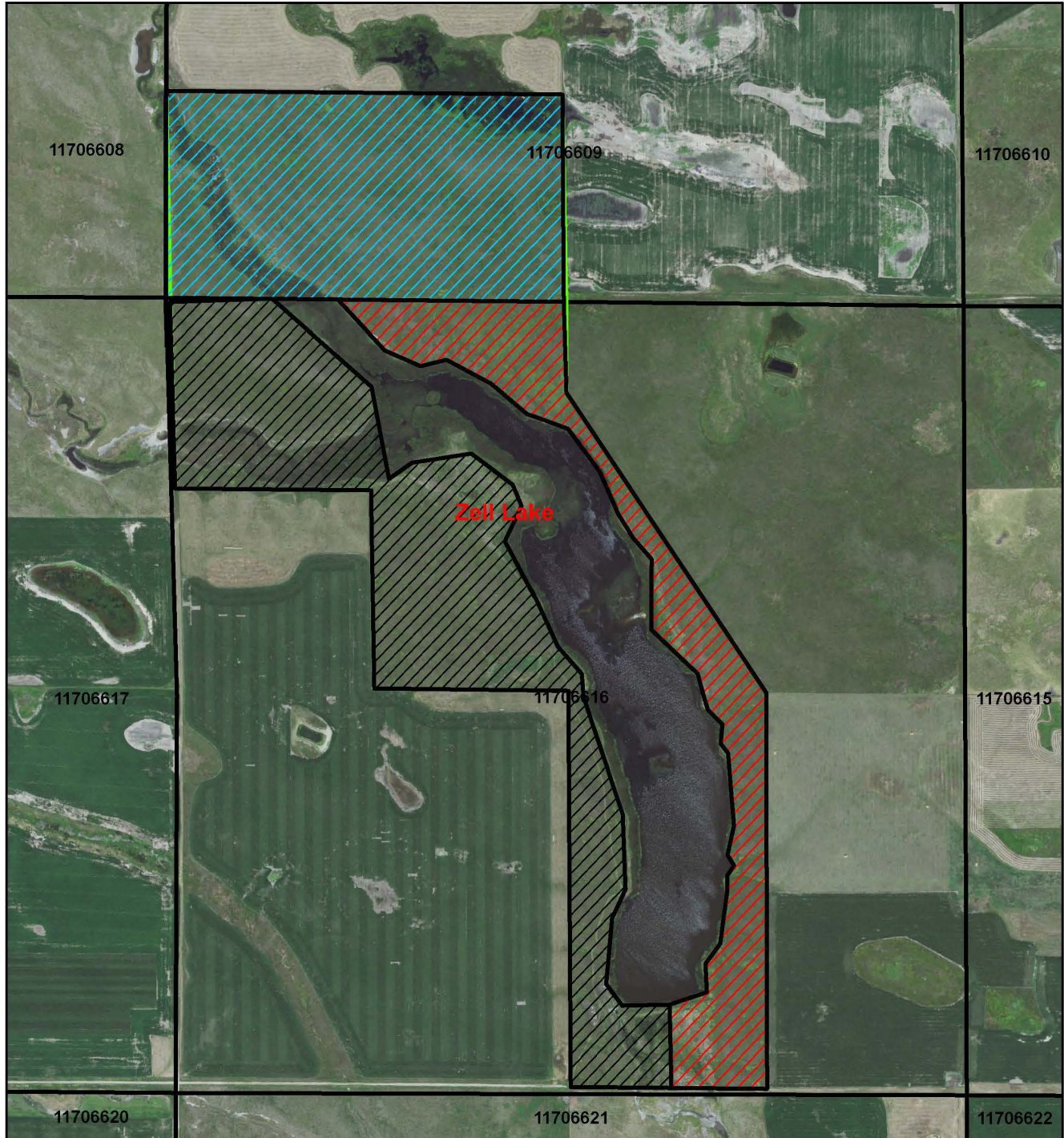
1). Zell Lake Waterfowl Production Area (WPA)– Faulk County

WPA Description:

The WPA has a total of 60 acres in 2026, 35 acres in 2027, and 65 acres in 2028, containing a combination of grasses and sedges including cool-season tame grass and limited amounts of warm-season native grass species.



Zell Lake WPA Faulk County South Dakota 117-66-16



-  Zell Lake Unit 1 2026 (60 hayable acres)
-  Zell Lake Unit 2 2027 (35 hayable acres)
-  Zell Lake Unit 3 2028 (65 hayable acres)
-  wpas
-  Sderpls

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles



CAA Selection and Application

The Cooperator will be selected through an open and competitive process. Interested Cooperators will be evaluated based on the proposed bid (\$/acre), and experience and qualifications that demonstrate an ability to meet the resource management objectives of the District. The objective criteria that will be utilized in the selection are further defined in the Supplemental Instructions in the bid packet.

All bids remain sealed and will be opened on the same day. Apparent high bidders will be notified promptly of their selection. Bids received after the closing date will be returned to the bidder unopened. Bids not in conformance with the advertised terms of the sale will be rejected. You may submit applications for multiple WPAs; however, only one WPA can be hayed. 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 the additional unit(s). If you apply for more than one unit, please rank the units in your order of preference. The Sand Lake District reserves the right to reject any or all bids that do not meet the requirements identified in the bid prospectus. Furthermore, the Sand Lake District also reserves the right to reject bids from any bidders that have previously violated the terms of any Special Use Permits (SUP).

Winning bidders must complete a Cooperative Agricultural Agreement (CAA) with the Sand Lake District Refuge Manager within two weeks of winning bid notification and before any haying on to the WPA. The CAA will include the Special Use Permit and an Annual Plan of Operations.

To apply:

Your bid package must include (1) a signed Special Conditions form; (2) and a signed bid worksheet.

Please turn in your bids to the Sand Lake Wetland Management District office no later than 4:00 p.m. July 24th, 2026. Bids may be received by:

Mail: USFWS Sand Lake District

Attention: Sydney Hanna
39650 Sand Lake Drive
Columbia, SD 57433

Email: sydney_hanna@fws.gov

Sealed bids will be opened by the District and permittees selected on July 28th, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. For any questions or further information please contact Sydney Hanna, Wildlife Refuge Specialist 701-403-6728.

Special Conditions

General Operating Requirements of the Haying Program:

- 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 abide by the changes or the permit will be voided. The permittee will be notified ahead of time if any such changes are implemented.
- The Refuge provides the Cooperator with access to the WPA to perform haying activities. In exchange, the Cooperator utilizes labor and equipment to perform activities that help achieve District goals. Pastures will have an assessed value based on the number of harvestable acres and the accepted Cooperators bid proposal.
- Haying will occur after July 31st, 2026 and be completed by September 1st, 2026.
- **Litter and thatch will be removed from the hayed area using a rake or discbine etc.**
- All hay and equipment will be removed from the WPA by September 15th, 2026.
- All liability related to haying including all persons working for the cooperator is strictly that of the Cooperator.
- All equipment used in pasture management must be clean and free of invasive species plant material including seeds before entering the WPA.
- Haying privileges may not be sold, transferred, or sublet.
- Harvested hay must be used for the Cooperator's operation and may not be sold or traded.
- Any damage to Government property must be reported to the local Refuge Manager immediately and replaced by the permittee.

Signature

Date

Bid Worksheet

All bid amounts must be submitted in a dollar amount per acre (\$00.00/acre).

(Qualifying Deductions may apply. See Below)

Please fill out:

NAME: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

My Bid:

Name of Waterfowl Production Area: _____

Amount bid per acre: \$_____ (Minimum bid allowed \$48/acre)

Signature

Date

Qualifying Deductions with FWS verification:

Accessibility, terrain, forage quality, and other local conditions may impact the hay bill.