

# Cooperative Agricultural Opportunity at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking bids to farm 210 acres within the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve (Bellrose) which is part of Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Cooperative Agriculture is used at Bellrose to achieve waterfowl management objectives by providing habitat and supplementing natural food resources throughout the waterfowl migration. As a result, this farming program requires that agricultural crops be planted, cultivated, and harvested in accordance with Special Conditions for Farming (**Attachment 1**) and other requirements described below.

## **I. What & Where:**

Farm fields totaling 210 acres at Bellrose are described in the attached Crop Plan and Field Descriptions. (Five fields totaling 210 acres will be planted with row crop and 195 acres of those fields will be harvested. An additional 50 acres will be planted to rice within the moist soil units and will be left unharvested to supply food for migrating waterfowl as the remainder of the refuge's share. (see crop plan)).

### **(Attachment 2)**

1. Acreage will be rented for a period of one crop year beginning **Mar 1, 2024**, and ending **Dec. 31, 2024**.
2. Fields are located within the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve off Butter Ridge Road east of Ullin, IL in Pulaski County, T14S, R1E Section 17 & 18 – **Attachment 3** includes Map of Field Locations.

## **II. How to bid:**

1. Review General Conditions for Bids (see Section III below).
2. Complete and return/email Bid Sheet (**Attachment 4**) along with the Special Use Permit Application (**Attachment 5**) to: Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge office, 137 Rustic Campus Drive Ullin, IL 62992 or email Karen\_Mangan@fws.gov by 2p.m. **Thursday, February 8, 2024**
3. The highest bidder will be selected as the permittee, assuming they can document comparable farming experience. In the event of a tie, a random drawing will decide the permittee.
4. Refuge staff will notify the highest bidder.
5. Questions regarding the bid process: contact Karen Mangan at 618-634-2231.

6. Site visits can be arranged by calling the Refuge office at 618-634-2231.

**III. General Conditions for Bids:**

1. Bids will be on a per acre basis. Bidders will need to determine what they are willing to pay per acre farmed to determine the bid. This is the price the bidder will pay each year for acres farmed. The highest bidder will be selected as the permittee.
2. Bids will be valid for a 1-year period (2024) with a Special Use Permit. If the permittee does not honor the bid, farming rights will be given to the next highest bidder in this bid cycle or re-bid at the discretion of the Service. If it is re-bid, the original permittee will not be allowed to bid at that time.
3. Once a bid is accepted, 25% of the annual payment must be made by **March 1** upon the issuance of the Special Use Permit.

Example: \$100/acre x 195 acres = \$19,500 total annual rental payment.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>March 1</b> | <b>Dec. 1</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 2024        | \$4,923        | \$14,577      | \$19,500     |

Arrangements may be made for in-kind services to be performed in lieu of cash payment at the discretion of the Refuge manager.

**IV. Crop Plan:**

The Crop Plan includes planting 210 acres of row crops, and 50 acres of rice. The permittee must agree with Special Conditions for Farming (**Attachment 1**). Corn, soybeans, milo or other row crop will be planted on 210 acres and 195 acres will be harvested by the permittee, leaving 15 acres in the field unharvested. Refuge staff will designate where row crop will be left standing. As an additional part of the farm agreement, fifty acres of rice will be planted as supplemental waterfowl food. Refuge staff reserve the right to change the crop plan due to flooding. Acreages will remain the same, but locations planted within fields are subject to change if high water does not allow for farming in the areas designated. In the rare occasion that more than ½ of the acres are not able to be farmed during a year because of flooding, the permittee will pay only for the acres farmed that year and the Refuge Manager may allow the permittee an additional year of farming at the original accepted bid rate. If crops were planted and destroyed by flooding and the permittee received insurance payments and/or replanted crops, this would be considered a year farmed and an additional year would not be given.

## **V. Permitting Requirements:**

1. Before working onsite, the permittee must have an approved Special Use Permit (FWS form 3-1383-C) for the year farmed. The Special Use Permit will be issued and approved by the Refuge Manager and include an annual farm plan that identifies crops to be planted and harvested, use of pesticides, use of best management practices, and special conditions. The Special Use Permit also requires the permittee to submit a final Harvest Report identifying acres planted, acres harvested, and herbicides applied. The Special Use Permit is completed, issued, and signed by the Refuge Manager.
2. The permittee will be required to sign the Special Conditions for Farming (**Attachment 1**)

## **VI. Reporting Requirements**

1. The permittee will be required to submit a final Harvest Report (**Attachment 6**) by December 31, 2024.
2. Seed labels and receipts must be submitted to the Refuge Manager by the permittee before any planting occurs.
3. The permittee must report pesticide use in writing to Refuge Manager within 10 days after applying any chemicals. The report must identify chemicals used, application methods, and application rates.
4. Upon completion of the farming year, the permittee will receive a successful or unsuccessful rating from the Refuge Manager. The permittee may receive an unsuccessful rating for not complying with crop plans, following pesticide use guidelines, meeting planting deadlines of specified crops or other general conditions. This determination will be made by using the Farming Checklist and Evaluation (**Attachment 7**). If the permittee receives an unsuccessful rating, farming rights will be given to the next highest bidder from the bidding process. If none of the original bidders are interested, the bidding process will be restarted.

## **VII. Summary of Cooperative Agriculture Program**

Individuals can submit a bid/per acre for the Cooperative Agricultural opportunity at Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve which is part of Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. The selected permittee will be responsible for the following specifications for the Cooperative Agriculture Program:

1. Plant 210 acres within the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve to corn, soybeans, milo or other crop, and 50 acres to rice for a 1-year period, as outlined in the crop plan.
2. Harvest 195 acres of row crop and leave 15 acres of row crop standing and

50 acres of rice (25%) standing in designated field locations for migrating waterfowl.

3. Follow Special Conditions for Farming (**Attachment 1**).
4. Submit Harvest Report (**Attachment 6**).
5. Follow guidelines on pesticide use and end of year reporting requirements (**Attachments 1 & 8**).

## Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge –Attachment 1

### Special Conditions for Farming

- A. The government share of the total farm acreage will consist of designated crops provided by the permittee. See the attached farm plan for the total farmable acreage of crop and the government share of unharvested crop.
- B. Permittee is required to implement and/or maintain site specific Best Management Practices (BMPs):
  1. Land alterations including but not limited to, ditching, land leveling, filling, and clearing will be done only upon approval of Refuge Manager.
  2. No fall disking is allowed without prior approval from Refuge Manager. Any acreage disked in the fall will require a winter cover crop.
  3. Buffers/filter strips will be maintained on field borders and primary field drains. Strips will be 30 feet wide and composed of native grasses maintained by mowing. No ditching, disking, or other farm practices will be allowed in filter strips, except for mowing.
- C. The use of GMO (genetically modified organisms) crops is not allowed on the Refuge. Use of GMOs will result in forfeiture of the crops at no cost to the Government.
- D. Neonicotinoid-treated (or other insecticide-treated) seed is not permitted. Use of neonicotinoid-treated seed will result in forfeiture of the crops at no cost to the Government.
- E. An approved Pesticide Use Proposal is required before pesticide application and the permittee is required to follow associated guidelines:
  1. Only pesticides from the attached list may be requested for use on crops (**Attachment 8**)
  2. Approved pesticides will only be used when the level of pest occurrence observed through crop scouting indicates pest density is at the economic threshold level. Pesticides may also be used if recommended by extension specialists in response to disease or pest outbreaks, when approved by the Refuge Manager
  3. Pesticide application on any other vegetation is allowed only with approval by the Refuge Manager.
  4. Pesticide label application instructions will be adhered to and efforts will be made by the permittee to reduce use of chemicals through alternative nonchemical pest control techniques.
  5. The permittee is required to report pesticide application on the Harvest Report (**Attachment 6**) and furnish to Refuge Manager by **December 31**.

- 6. Misuse of approved pesticides or use of any unapproved pesticides will result in termination of the Special Use Permit.
  
- F. The permittee may begin farming operations **March 1**.
  
- G. The permittee is required to notify Refuge Manager of enrollment in FSA program(s). All acreage reporting will be the responsibility of the permittee.
  
- H. All crops shall be planted and harvested as early as possible with a target date for completion of harvesting operations of **November 15**. Refuge crops will be fertilized at the same rate as the permittee's and receive every other like kind treatment (crop scouting, pesticides, tillage, etc.).
  
- I. The permittee will abide by all appropriate State and Federal Regulations pertaining to storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials (oils, solvents, pesticides, pesticide containers, etc.). The permittee will immediately notify Refuge Manager in event of any accidental hazardous material release and take appropriate measures to contain the release.
  
- J. Burning of any kind is not permitted on the refuge by the permittee.
  
- K. Any violation of these conditions will be grounds for termination or non-renewal of the Special Use Permit.

**I understand and agree to all special conditions of the Cooperative Farming Agreement.**

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**Permittee's signature**

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**Date**

## Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge –Attachment 2

### Crop Plan and Unit Acreages

#### Cropping Plan-acreage does not include buffer strips \*

| Field                                 | Crop Acres | 2024     |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------|
| 13                                    | 89         | Row crop |
| 10                                    | 19         | Row crop |
| 11                                    | 18         | Row crop |
| Unit 2                                | 34         | Row crop |
| Unit 1 or 16*                         | 50         | Row crop |
| <b>Total Row Crop Space Available</b> | 260        |          |
| Unit 8 or 9*                          | 50         | Rice     |

\*one of these units will be planted

## Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge-Attachment 3

### Descriptions of fields

| Field | Acres | Field Description   |
|-------|-------|---|
| 13    | 89    | 38% Ginat silt loam, 0-2 percent slopes, rarely flooded, 27.4% Okaw silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded, 24% Bonnie silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded, 2.3% Belknap Silt Loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded, 2.4% Hatfield silt loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes, rarely flooded, .5% Okaw silty clay loam, 0 to 2 % slopes, rarely flooded |
| 10    | 19    | 40% Ginat silt loam, 0-2 percent slopes, rarely flooded, 39% Belknap silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded, 12.3% Alvin fine sandy loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes, rarely flooded, 5.9% Birds silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded, 1.9 % Bonnie silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded   |
| 11    | 18    | 100 % Ginat silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded  |
| 2     | 34    | 84.6% Birds Silt Loam, 0 to 2 % slopes, frequently flooded, 15.4% Bonnie and Petrolia soils, undrained, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded   |
| 1     | 50    | 86.8 % Bonnie and Petrolia soils undrained, 0-2 percent slope, frequently flooded, 13.0%, Birds Silt Loam 0 to 2 percent slope, frequently flooded, 1% Alvin fine sandy loam 2-5 percent slopes, rarely flooded   |
| 16    | 50    | 99 % Bonnie and Petrolia soils, undrained, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded, 1% Birds silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded   |
| 8     | 50    | 85.3% Birds Silt Loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded, 14.7% Bonnie and Petrolia soils, undrained, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded   |
| 9     | 50    | 86.7% Birds Silt Loam 0 to 2 percent slope, frequently flooded, 13.3% Bonnie and Petrolia soils undrained, 0-2 percent slope, frequently flooded, 4% Belknap Silt Loam, 0-2% slope, frequently flooded  |

Figure 1. Map of Farm Fields at Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve

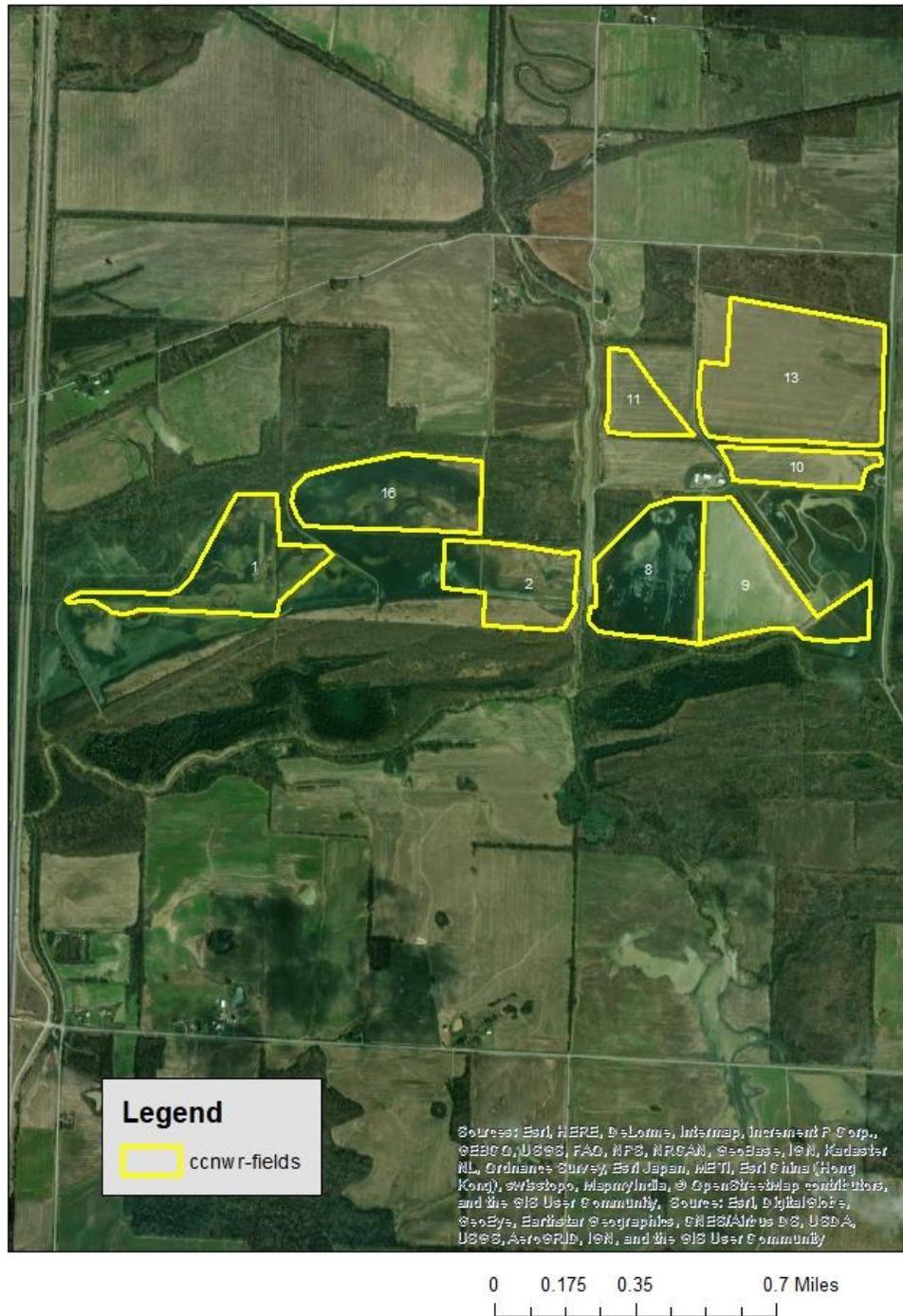
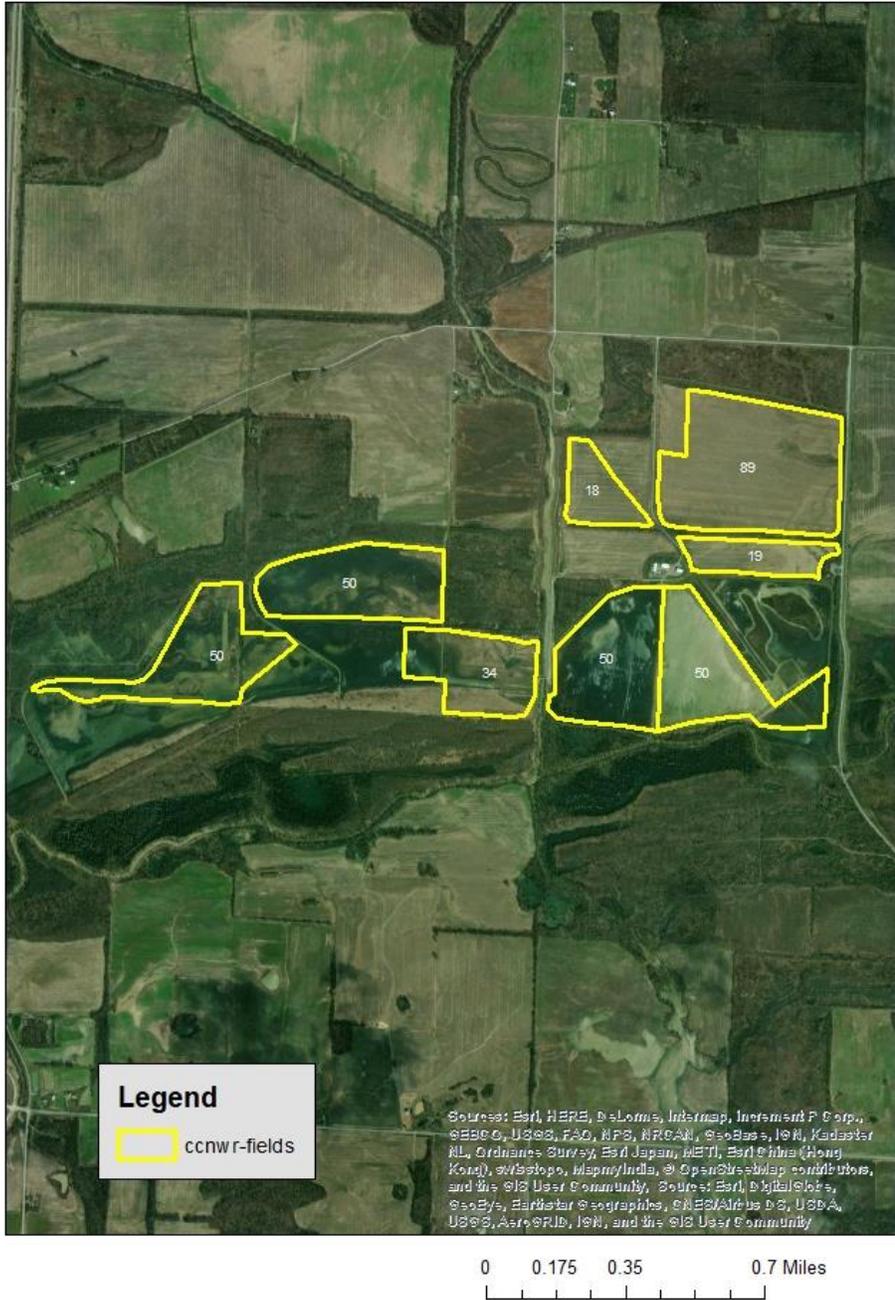


Figure 2. Map of Acreages of Farm Fields at Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve



## Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge – Attachment 4

Bid Sheet for Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve

### Instructions:

1. Read entire Cooperative Agricultural document.
2. Complete this Bid Sheet (**Attachment 4**).
3. Complete 1<sup>st</sup> Page of Special Use Permit Application (**Attachment 5**).
4. Place Bid Sheet and Special Use Permit Application in an envelope and seal.
5. Mail or deliver sealed envelope to Cypress Creek NWR by Thursday, **February 8, 2024** at 2:00 p.m.
6. Public Bid Opening: Bidders may submit bids beginning at 2:00 p.m. January 5, 2024 via email to Karen\_Mangan@fws.gov or deliver to office by scheduling a drop-off time

*If bid sheet is not completed correctly and clearly legible or the Special Use Permit Application page 1 is not completed or the envelope is not sealed the bid will not be considered.*

**Bidding:** Please evaluate the attached Crop Plan and place your bid based upon the average you would pay per acre each year. This will be your competing bid and the highest bidder will be selected, assuming they can document comparable farming experience. Your annual rent will be your bid amount per acre multiplied by 210 acres for each year. In the event of a tie, the winning bidder will be randomly drawn from the competing bidders. Feel free to end your bid with cents to help avoid ties such as \$100.08/acre rather than \$100/acre.

**Bid Amount** (\$/acre): \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Can you document comparable farming experience?** (The highest bidder will be asked to provide documentation, for example data from FSA). \_\_\_\_\_ Yes or \_\_\_\_\_ No

I have read and if selected agree to the permit conditions listed in the bid package.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge is located at 137 Rustic Campus Rd, Ullin, IL 62992*

# Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Attachment 5

## Special Use Permit Application



Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Attachment 5

### Commercial Activities Special Use Permit Application

OMB Control Number 1018-0102-1  
Expiration Date: 08/31/2020

Refuge Name:

Address:

Attn: (Refuge Official)

E-Mail:

Phone #:

| For Official Use Only: |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Approved Permit #:     | <input type="text"/>                         |
| Station #:             | <input type="text"/>                         |
| Permit Term: from      | <input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/> |

**Note: We do not require all information for each use. See instructions at the end of the notice and contact the refuge to determine applicability of a particular item.**

- 1a) Identify the type of Permit you are applying for: New  Renewal  Modification  Other
- 1b) Have you applied, or do you intend to apply, to any other refuges for this same activity?  Yes  No
- 1c) If yes, which refuges?

### Applicant Information

- 2) Full Name:  3) Title:
- 4) Business Name:
- 5) Physical Address:
- City/State/Zip:
- 6) Mailing Address: (if different than above)
- City/State/Zip:
- 7) Business Phone #:  8) Business Fax #:
- 9) E-mail:  10) Business Tax ID #:

11a) Within the past 5 years, has the company (entity), its owners, or any employees who have or will be expected to operate on the refuge, been convicted, pled nolo contendere, forfeited collateral, or are currently under charges for any violations of any State, Federal, or local law, or regulations related to fish and wildlife or permit activities?  Yes  No

11b) If you answered "YES" to question # 11a, provide the individual's name, date of charge, charge(s), location of incident, court, and action taken for each violation.

## Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Attachment 6

### Final Harvest Report

| <b>Field</b> | <b>Crop Acres</b> | <b>Acres Harvested</b> | <b>Crop</b> | <b>Pesticide</b> | <b>Number of Applications</b> | <b>Gallons Used</b> | <b>Acres Treated</b> |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 13           | 89                |                        |             |                  |                               |                     |                      |
| 10           | 19                |                        |             |                  |                               |                     |                      |
| 11           | 18                |                        |             |                  |                               |                     |                      |
| 1            | 50                |                        |             |                  |                               |                     |                      |
| 2            | 34                |                        |             |                  |                               |                     |                      |
| 16 or 1      | 50                |                        |             |                  |                               |                     |                      |
| 8 or 9       | 50                |                        | Rice        |                  |                               |                     |                      |

\*Fields totaling 260 acres will be planted

**Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Attachment 7  
Farming Checklist and Evaluation**

Special Use Permit# \_\_\_\_\_

Permittee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| Special Use Permit signed and issued prior to start of farming activities?          | Yes | No |
| 25% of annual payment received by March 1?  | Yes | No |
| Pesticide Use Proposal Requested and issued prior to pesticide application?         | Yes | No |
| Special Use Permit submitted to county Farm Service Agent?                          | Yes | No |
| Seed labels and receipts submitted to Refuge Manager prior to seeding.              | Yes | No |
| Pesticide use reported within 10 days of all pesticide applications.                | Yes | No |
| Unauthorized pesticides applied.  | Yes | No |
| Crop Plan as identified in the SUP was carried out.                                 | Yes | No |
| Final Harvest Report submitted to the Refuge Manager by December 31 <sup>st</sup> . | Yes | No |
| 75% of payment received by December 1 <sup>st</sup> ?                               | Yes | No |

Comments:

## Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Attachment 8

Pesticides granted field station level approval in Region 3 under limited conditions.

| Pesticide            | Common Trade names  |
|----------------------|---|
| Sethoxydim           | Grass Getter, Poast, Poast Plus, Sethoxydim SPC, Sethoxydim E-Pro   |
| Imazapic             | Plateau, Cadre  |
| Imazapyr             | Arsenal, Chopper, Ecomazapyr 2 SL, Gullwing, Groundclear, Habitat, Imazapyr 2 SL, Imazapyr 4 SL, Polaris, Polaris AC, Polaris SP, Rotary 2 SL, Stalker, etc.    |
| Imazethapyr          | Clearpath, Newpath, Pursuit, Thunder  |
| Metsulfuron          | Accurate, Escort, Manor, MSM 60, Patriot, Rometsol  |
| Rimsulfuron          | Basis, Matrix, Matrix FNV, Matrix SG, Resolve DF, Resolve SG, Resolve Q   |
| Thifensulfuronmethyl | Harmony, Affinity Broadspec, First Shot SG, Resolve Q   |
| Tribenuronmethyl     | Express, First Shot SG, Afinity, Harmony Extra SG   |
| 2,4-D amine          | 2,4-D Amine 4, Amine 4 2,4-D Weed Killer, Clean Amine, DMA 4 IVM, Dri-Clean, Orchard Star, Saber, Temstyle, Weedar 64, Weedaxe, Weedestroy, AM-40 Amine, etc.   |
| Aminopyralid         | Milestone Specialty, Milestone VM   |
| Clopyralid           | Clopyralid 3, Clean Slate, Garrison, Spur, Star Thistle Killer, Stinger, Transline, etc   |
| Triclopyr amine      | Element 3A, Garlon 3A, Grandstand CA, Green Light Cut Vine & Stump Killer, Image, Kraken, Platform, Renovate 3, Tahoe 3A Turflon Amine, etc.                    |
| Triclopyr ester      | Element 4, Forestry Garlon XRT, Garlon 4, Garlon 4Ultra, Pathfinder II, Relegate RTU, Remedy , Remedy Ultra, Tahoe 4E, Turflon Ester, etc.                      |
| Glyphosate           | Rodeo, Roundup Original, Roundup OriginalMAX, Roundup PowerMax, Roundup Pro, Roundu Pro Concentrate, Roundup ProMax, Roundup UltraMax, Roundup WeatherMAX, etc. |

