



FAQs: Tualatin River NWR Proposed Youth Waterfowl Hunt

Intro

The National Wildlife Refuge System was created to ensure the future of wildlife for the continuing benefit of the American people. At refuges, we are directed by Congress to balance our priority - which is wildlife - with providing six types of public use, when compatible, with our conservation work - hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation. At Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), the public can enjoy four of the six types of public use: wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation.

Proposed for the fall of 2015, youth 17 and younger will have the opportunity to participate in waterfowl hunting events at the Refuge. Providing hunting two to four days a month, during waterfowl hunting season, provides those youth in an urban area the opportunity to participate in additional wildlife-dependent public use activities. Hunting is a heritage outdoor opportunity that connects Refuge visitors with wildlife, the land, and offers another type of environmental education.

The proposed youth hunt will take place in the Refuge's Riverboat Unit, which is several miles away from the visitors' center, busy roads, or neighborhoods. The proposed youth hunting program will provide a safe, high quality outdoor experience and will also be accessible to area youth using wheelchairs or other types of mobility assistance.

Why is the refuge allowing hunting?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is directed by Congress to provide six types of public uses, including hunting, on a national wildlife refuge when compatible with the refuge's establishing purposes. Tualatin River NWR's establishing purposes are to manage, conserve, and protect fish and wildlife resources. In addition, the Refuge was established under the Urban Refuge Policy to foster environmental awareness and outreach programs. The Youth Waterfowl Hunt was identified as

an action in the Refuge's completed Comprehensive Conservation Plan — a 15 year management plan that goes through several public review processes. The Refuge's planning team considered the hunt's biological soundness, economic feasibility, effects on other Refuge programs, and public demand in the Refuge's 2013 Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and in the 2014 Draft Youth Waterfowl Hunt Plan (Youth Hunt Plan). A compatibility determination was completed with public input as part of the CCP and the proposed hunt was found to be compatible with the Refuge's purposes.

How can we allow hunting on a national wildlife refuge?

National wildlife refuges exist primarily to safeguard wildlife populations through habitat preservation. The word "refuge" includes the idea of providing a haven of safety for wildlife, and as such, hunting might seem an inconsistent use of the national wildlife refuge. Providing a haven for wildlife and allowing hunting may seem contradictory, however, hunting is a priority public use of the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System), along with fishing, wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

Hunting is a legitimate, traditional recreational use in the Refuge System and hunters are important supporters of conserving land for wildlife. Hunting is also a way to provide food for their families. The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, other laws, and the Service's policies support hunting on a national wildlife refuge when it is compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established and acquired. The Tualatin River NWR has completed a compatibility determination for hunting on the Riverboat Unit of the Refuge and hunting was found to be compatible. Many other refuges throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System provide hunting and nearby examples of other national wildlife refuges that offer hunting include: Ridgefield, Nisqually, and McNary Refuges in Washington and Upper Klamath and Finley Refuges in Oregon.

Hunters and other sportsmen and women have played a critical role in preserving wildlife habitat for more than 100 years. It is important to continue to educate future generations about our heritage of conservationist sportsmen and women.

How will hunting impact bird populations?

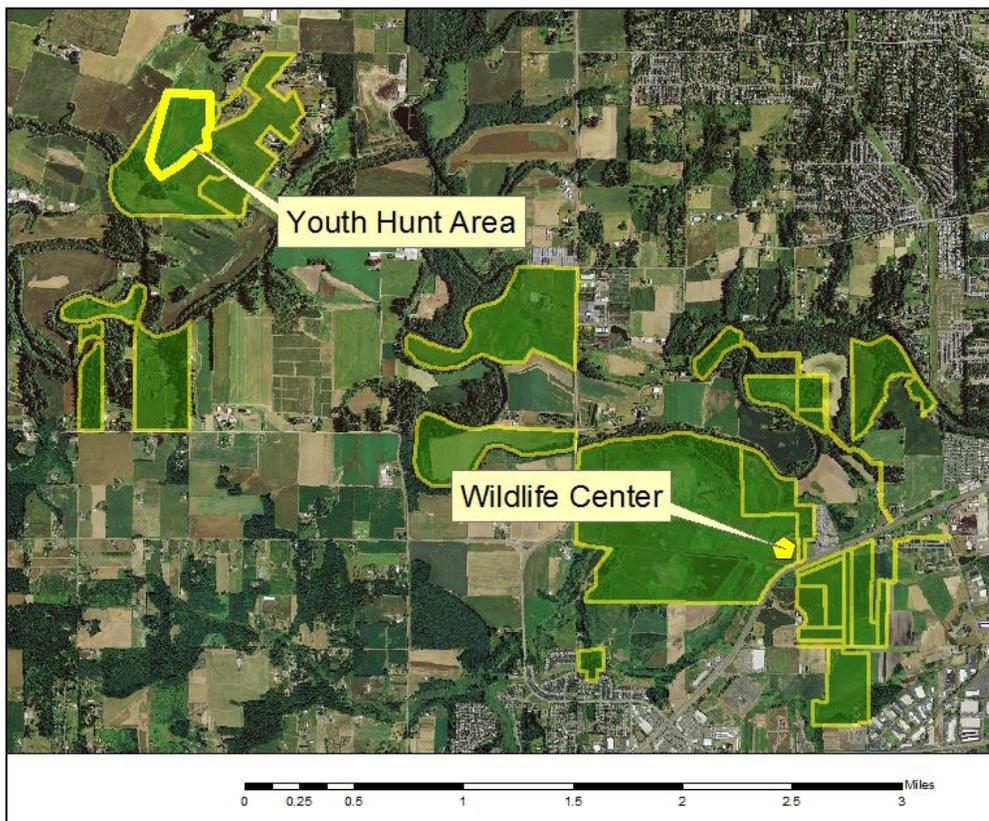
The Refuge's planning team examined the biological impacts of the proposed youth hunt and worked closely with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) during its development. We estimated that youth hunters will harvest an average of 214 waterfowl annually, representing less than one tenth of one percent of Oregon's annual waterfowl harvest. The projected harvest would easily be supported by the Refuge's waterfowl populations, which would be monitored to ensure healthy population levels are maintained.

What other activities does the Refuge provide?

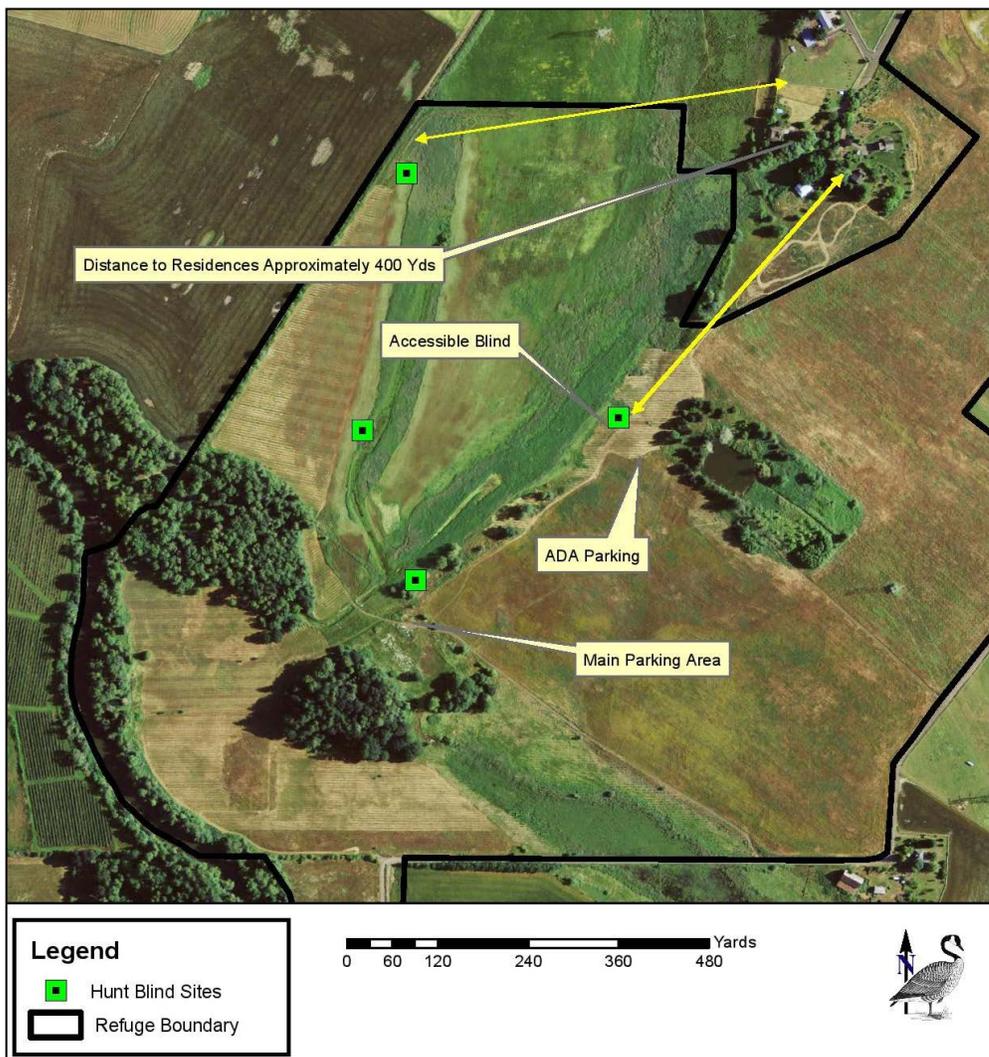
The Refuge provides wildlife-dependent recreation for the public, including wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. At Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, we provide lots of different opportunities for the public to enjoy the Refuge. You can participate in educational programs at the Wildlife Center; join a guided bird walk hosted by the Friends of Tualatin River NWR, enroll preschool children in our Puddle Stomper program, learn about the cultural history of the area, learn photography, or go for a walk on our trails. For more information and schedule of events, please visit our Refuge website, <http://www.fws.gov/tualatinriver/> and our Friends website, www.friendsoftualatinrefuge.org.

Are hunters conservationists?

Yes, some consider hunters, like President Theodore Roosevelt – the creator of the National Wildlife Refuge System – to be the original conservationists. Since the late 19th century, hunters concerned about the future of wildlife and the outdoor tradition have made countless contributions to the conservation of the nation's wildlife resources.



Tualatin River NWR Riverboat Unit Youth Hunt Area



Today, millions of Americans deepen their appreciation and understanding of the land and its wildlife through hunting. For example, hunters advocated for establishing the Federal Duck Stamp program in 1934, when Duck Stamps were sold as hunting licenses. The program has grown and is one of the most successful conservation programs ever initiated, raising more than \$850 million to acquire and protect more than 6 million acres of wetlands habitat on hundreds of national wildlife refuges located across all 50 states and U.S. territories.

How often and where will the hunt occur? Is it safe to have hunting on the Refuge?

Safety is a priority. No other visitors are allowed in the hunt area and all hunting blinds are located a safe distance from one another and away from private residences. Hunting would occur in the fall on the Refuge, two to four days per month, in one of its four hunting blinds, located on 50 acres in the Riverboat Unit, approximately three miles from the Refuge Headquarters and Wildlife Center. The Refuge will partner with ODFW to conduct hunter education classes for hunt participants to promote safety and ethical hunting behavior.

Compliance with State and Federal regulations is required for Refuge visitors to engage in the youth hunt. Law enforcement for the program will be provided by the Service's Law Enforcement Officer and Oregon State Wildlife Conservation Officers.

How can the public comment on the hunt plan?

The Refuge requested public comments on the Draft Youth Hunt Plan September 1-30, 2014. The plan is available on the Refuge's website at www.fws.gov/tualatinriver/refugeplanning.htm. The public will have another opportunity to comment on the proposed Youth Hunt Plan and Refuge-specific regulations when the documents are published in the Federal Register during March 2015. A final decision could be made by July 2015.

For more information, contact:

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