

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Hiking

Refuge Name: Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies):

Refuge Established: August 1, 1958

Refuge Authorities: 16 U.S.C. § 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act); 16 U.S.C. § 460K-1 (Refuge Recreation Act)

Refuge Purpose(s):

“...for uses as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.” 16 U.S.C. § 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

“...suitable for – (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreation development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species...” 16 U.S.C. § 460K-1 (Refuge Recreation Act)

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission:

“The Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”

Description of Use: This Compatibility Determination updates and supersedes the Compatibility Determination developed concurrently with the refuge’s Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and authorized in 2004. This Compatibility Determination will provide for hiking opportunities on the Clarence Cannon NWR.

Except as prohibited by appropriate "closed area" signs or notification, areas on the Clarence Cannon NWR are open to hiking, year-long, with some exceptions to provide for undisturbed sanctuary for nesting American bald eagles, and migrating waterfowl.

Refuge roadways, access trails, dike tops and levees are open to hiking as well as "cross-country" areas with no defined trail systems. Insect populations and dense vegetation in the summer months as well as terrain are limiting physical factors.

Some limited interpretive signing, information kiosk and leaflets will enhance the use on certain areas. This activity, together with appropriate interpretation, will promote community stewardship of our public lands, increase public support and awareness of our rich wildlife/wildlands heritage, and provide for increased public use opportunities in the immediate area.

Hiking activities, when properly regulated by refuge signs and notices, will NOT conflict with other Refuge goals. It is expected to enhance overall Service image in the communities and enhance other FWS initiatives.

Availability of Resources: Funds have been available to maintain existing program level, and periodic funds have been available to adequately maintain existing facilities. Additional funds and/or staff would be required to cover expanded program opportunities or facilities outlined in the CCP.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Hiking throughout the refuge units will provide the public with an opportunity to view wildlife refuge programs, serve to educate and inform our visitors, and create an advocacy group supportive of our goals and purposes. Through appropriate demonstration and interpretation of programs, the "hiking" public will be able to gain an understanding of the interrelationships that link wildlife/wildlands with their habitats. Hiking, when properly regulated in time and space, is an environmentally friendly activity that does not detract from the area.

Controlled access and seasonal restrictions will limit any human disturbance to wildlife populations or threatened or endangered plant species.

Litter, resulting from this hiking use, is expected to be minimal and will be periodically collected by refuge staff and volunteers. Trash receptacles and information signing may be placed at strategic locations.

Little or no erosion or degradation of the environment is expected to take place; the areas open to hiking are flat fields and timbered areas with little gradient. Vegetation should not suffer any great degree of disturbance or is expected to rebound quickly. Heavy fescue sod on the levee and dike tops can withstand moderate to heavy use during the growing season with no ill effect.

