

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge
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News Release



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Project Leader

Clarks River NWR Accepting Comments on Permit Fees

Benton, KY....Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge (CRNWR) is accepting comments on the proposed fee structure for the initiation of refuge user fees.

Since 1981, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has had authority to collect recreation fees. Since 1997, the Service has been able to retain fees collected at the station level, first under the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program and then, in 2004, under the authority of Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA). The FLREA was established to provide funding for recreation program improvements.

The fee rates proposed by CRNWR are as follows:

- \$15 –Annual Hunting and Fishing Permit (including processing fee)
- \$50 minimum – Annual Recreational Special Use Permit (commercial activities)

A fee analysis has been conducted by CRNWR with fees proposed being based on rates requested on nearby public lands. The CRNWR is proposing to make fee changes effective May 31, 2017. Collected fees will be used to maintain and promote visitor amenities on the CRNWR. These amenities include activities such as road and parking lot maintenance, informational brochures, public education programs, law enforcement support, etc. The proposal provides for annual hunting and fishing permit sales to be conducted through the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) Agency's on-line or vendor dispersed license sales. Annual Recreational Special Use Permits will be processed through the CRNWR's administrative office located in Benton, KY.

It is proposed that CRNWR quota hunt applications will also be processed through KDFWR's on-line application system. KDFWR standard application fee and preference point awards for non-drawn users will apply.

The CRNWR is interested in hearing from the public affected by the changes proposed and is requesting public comments beginning May 26 through June 26, 2016. The CRNWR requests comments to be as specific as possible with an explanation of the comments basis. In addition, please include sufficient information with your comments to allow us to authenticate any scientific or commercial data you reference or provide. Such information may lead to a final decision that differs from this proposal.

Please submit written comments to Refuge Manager, Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge, via email (clarksriver@fws.gov), or by mail to P.O. Box 89, Benton, KY 42025. All relevant comments and additional information will be reviewed and considered before a final decision is made on the implementation of the proposed fee structure and permit processing. All comments and recommendations, including names and addresses, will become part of the public administrative record.

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The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook pages at <https://www.facebook.com/clarks.river/> or www.facebook.com/usfwsoutheast, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwsoutheast, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsoutheast>.