

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION CHECKLIST FOR NEPA COMPLIANCE

Proposed Action:

Hillside National Wildlife Refuge proposes to make a minor administrative changes to the station's hunt program reflected in 50 CFR 32.43 including;

- Prohibition on public use during limited draw turkey hunts in addition to muzzleloader deer hunts.
- Revision to refine incidental take of feral hog during deer and turkey hunts only.
- Removal of regulation allowing only shotguns and .22 and .17 caliber rimfire rifles for small game hunting.
- Language on take of feral hog for Big Game Hunting is removed because it is repetitive with language in 1(v).
- Item 3(iv) is modified to provide instructions to hunters to refer to the hunt brochure for deer check in stations, locations and requirements and to check in to stations before leaving the refuge.
- The term "ball" was changed to "projectile" in Item 3(v) for Big Game Hunting.
- Item 3(vii) is modified to update permit requirements.
- The word "sport" is removed from the first line of "(4) Sport Fishing".
- Clarification is provided in item 4(i) on conditions detailed in earlier sections of CFR 32 on public access for all activities.
- Item 4(iv) revised to remove the direction to refer to the brochure map.
- Prohibition on fishing from bridges is removed (Item 4(vi)).

These minor changes were made to add consistency across the Theodore Roosevelt NWR Complex, align with other NWRs in Mississippi, and align with Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. No change in species taken or amount of take is being proposed. The Hunting program on Hillside NWR is described in the Theodore Roosevelt NWR Complex Sporting Hunt Plan and Compatibility Determination and analyzed in the associated Environmental Assessment (USFWS 2009).

This proposed action is covered by the following categorical exclusion 516 DM 8.5 A1 (1) Changes or amendments to an approved action when such changes have no or minor potential environmental impact. B (7) Minor changes in the amounts or types of public use on Service or State-managed lands, in accordance with existing regulations, management plans, and procedures.

Extraordinary Circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) :

Could This Proposed Action (*check (✓) yes or no for each item below*):

Yes No

- X a. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety?

- X b. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); floodplains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas?
- X c. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2)(E)]?
- X d. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?
- X e. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?
- X f. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?
- X g. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau?
- X h. Have adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?
- X i. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?
- X j. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898).
- X k. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007).
- X l. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and EO 13112).
- X m. Have material adverse effects on resources requiring compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?

(If any of the above exceptions receive a “Yes” check (✓), an EA/EIS must be prepared.)

Within the spirit and intent of the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative

record and have determined:

X The proposed action is covered by a categorical exclusion as provided by 43 CFR §46.210 or 516 DM 8.5. No further NEPA documentation will therefore be made.

An Extraordinary Circumstance could exist for the proposed action and, so an EA/EIS must be prepared.

Service signature approval:

Signature _____ Date: _____

Title _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Title _____