

**DRAFT**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**Cypress Creek**  
**National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Hunt Plan**

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**Prepared by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Brown, Refuge Manager

**Concurred by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Matt Sprenger, Refuge Supervisor, Area 2

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Rick Schultz, Regional Chief  
National Wildlife Refuge System

Abstract: The United States Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to provide hunting opportunities on Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge that are compatible with the purpose of the Refuge. This document includes revisions to the Refuge Hunt Plan which has authorized and permitted hunting on Refuge fee title tracts since 1992. The revised plan includes modifications to Refuge specific regulations and provides an overview for hunting opportunities on newly acquired land within the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Newly acquired lands include 540 acres within eight separate tracts; all tracts were hunted prior to Refuge acquisition. Hunting opportunities have been developed to be consistent with state regulations whenever possible. Guidance for authorizing hunting on the Refuge is provided by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 and the Refuge Comprehensive Management Plan completed in 1996.

For further information about the Hunt Plan, please contact Mike Brown, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, 137 Rustic Campus Road, Ullin, IL 62992, 618-634-2231, fax:618-634-9656.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) was established on June 26, 1990 under the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 3901 b, 100Stat.3583, PL 99 645). The Refuge is located in southern Illinois approximately 7 miles north of the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. It is situated along forty miles of the Cache River and its tributaries in Alexander, Johnson, Pulaski and Union counties.

The Refuge is also part of a larger boundary delineated by the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture Project; this includes 60,000 acres shared by the Refuge, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (at Cache River State Natural Area and Horseshoe Lake Fish & Wildlife Area), and The Nature Conservancy (Appendix A).

The Refuge was established as a component of the New Madrid Wetland project which is part of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The Refuge provides important habitat for not only waterfowl, but also for a variety of wetland dependent shorebirds, wading birds and other wildlife. The Cache River basin has traditionally been a waterfowl breeding, wintering and migration stop-over area in the Mississippi flyway. The Cache River – Cypress Creek Wetlands were designated as “wetlands of international importance – especially as waterfowl habitat” in 1996 under terms of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).

The Refuge acquisition boundary encompasses 35,529 acres along the Cache River from Highway 37 then west and south to Mound City, IL. This area is primarily rural and most of the land that is not forested is used for agriculture. Land for inclusion in the Refuge is acquired from willing sellers on a continual basis. Approximately 16,000 acres within the Refuge acquisition boundary have been purchased. The Refuge is divided into seven management units that differ in soils, hydrology, topography, land use and vegetative cover. These individual units are described briefly in Appendix B. The following tables summarize total acreage and land cover within each management unit in the purchase boundary (Table 1) and the acreage in Refuge ownership (Table 2).

Table 1. Land Cover Acres within Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Management Units (Acquisition Boundary)

<b>Management Unit</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Forested</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Grass</b>	<b>Ag</b>	<b>Restored</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Cypress Creek	7	1092	314	32	793	2246	1791	<b>6280</b>
Limekiln	10	385	79	15	798	4505	902	<b>6694</b>
Cache River	15	339	828	188	170	2409	1327	<b>5276</b>
Butter Ridge	44	734	230	101	941	3410	474	<b>5936</b>
Indian Camp Creek	7	904	398	101	339	1208	35	<b>2992</b>
Sandy Creek	5	1250	339	32	343	1045	1151	<b>4180</b>
Lake Creek	2	1619	203	89	457	618	264	<b>3252</b>
Old Channel	49	272	84	133	106	1868	25	<b>2537</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>6595</b>	<b>2475</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>3947</b>	<b>17309</b>	<b>5869</b>	<b>35,320</b>

Table 2. Land Cover Acres within Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Management Units (Refuge Ownership)

<b>Management Unit</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Forested</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Grass</b>	<b>Ag</b>	<b>Restored</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Cypress Creek	2	863	208	12	353	450	1611	<b>3499</b>
Limekiln	0	142	42	10	163	351	992	<b>1700</b>
Cache River	2	148	168	72	37	27	751	<b>1205</b>
Butter Ridge	17	484	192	54	314	751	469	<b>2281</b>
Indian Creek	2	393	210	42	151	126	35	<b>959</b>
Sandy Creek	2	983	289	32	222	277	0	<b>1805</b>
Lake Creek	0	1650	185	72	378	531	264	<b>3080</b>
Old Channel	2	203	74	101	37	596	25	<b>1038</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4866</b>	<b>1368</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>1655</b>	<b>3109</b>	<b>4147</b>	<b>15,567</b>

## II. CONFORMANCE WITH STATUTORY AUTHORITY

This Hunt Plan formulates the general concept for hunting opportunities on lands acquired by the Refuge as identified in the Final Environmental Assessment for Refuge establishment dated June 26, 1990 (USDOJ, 1990), the Refuge Hunting Plan dated May 6, 1992, the Comprehensive Management Plan dated December 20, 1996 (USFWS, 1996), and the Environmental Assessment for hunting dated November 1, 2012 (USFWS, 2012).

Guidance for authorizing public uses on National Wildlife Refuges is provided in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Improvement Act). The Improvement Act recognizes that wildlife-dependent recreational uses involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and interpretation, when determined to be compatible, are a legitimate and appropriate uses of land within the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Improvement Act states that these six uses should receive priority consideration in refuge planning and management. Other uses not listed as priority

public uses may be allowed if they are determined to be appropriate and compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established.

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System as set forth by Congress in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 is:

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

The Refuge Recreation Act requires that funds be available for the development, operation, and maintenance of hunting programs. The operating budget of the Refuge is sufficient to support a basic hunting program. Hunting on the Refuge provides wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities and helps Refuge staff promote a better understanding and appreciation of Refuge habitats and their associated wildlife resources. Implementation of the proposed plan is consistent and compatible with the Refuge Recreation Act, the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act and is supported by Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge’s Final Environmental Assessment (USDOJ, 1990), the Comprehensive Management Plan (USFWS, 1996), and the Environmental Assessment for hunting dated November 1, 2012 (USFWS, 2012).

### **Relationship to other Plans and Documents**

The first Hunt Plan for the Refuge was approved in 1992. This included an environmental assessment which addressed impacts of hunting on the Refuge. In addition, the Refuge completed compatibility determinations for public uses, including hunting. Hunting was determined to be compatible with the mission of the Refuge and has minimal impact on Refuge resources.

The Hunt Plan is a step-down from the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) completed in 1996; during the CMP planning process hunting was determined to be compatible (USFWS 1996) with the mission of the Refuge and the Refuge system. Upon completion and adoption of the Hunt Plan and Final Environmental Assessment, the Service will publish in the Federal Register a Proposed Rule that updates the hunting program on the Refuge. Following the comment period on the Proposed Rule, a determination will be made to implement Refuge hunting as outlined in this plan. Subsequently, a Final Rule will be published outlining opportunities on the Refuge.

## **III. STATEMENT OF GOALS**

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1990 for the following purposes

(U.S. Department of the Interior. 1990. Environmental Assessment, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge):

...the conservation of wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions...16 U.S.C., Sec. 3901 (b) (Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986).

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge's purpose and importance to migratory birds, particularly waterfowl, was further described in the U.S. Department of the Interior's Environmental Assessment for the proposed establishment of the Refuge (1990):

1) to protect, restore and manage wetlands and bottomland forest habitats in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; 2) to provide resting, nesting, feeding and wintering habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds; 3) to protect endangered and threatened species and their habitats; 4) to provide for biodiversity; 5) to protect a National Natural Landmark, 6) and to increase public opportunities for compatible recreation and environmental education.

**Objectives for the Refuge hunting program are listed below:**

(Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Plan, 1992).

- Provide the public with safe and enjoyable hunts that are compatible with the Refuge purpose.
- Provide quality hunting opportunities that minimize conflict with other public use activities.
- Promote public understanding of and increase public appreciation for the Refuge's and surrounding area's natural resources;
- Control large build-up of wintering populations of snow geese (large build-ups would eventually disrupt distribution strategies that have been agreed upon by state and federal flyway groups).
- Manage white-tailed deer populations to ensure they do not exceed the carrying capacity of the Refuge and/or detrimentally impact habitat restoration and reforestation.

#### **IV. ASSESSMENT**

As land is purchased from willing sellers, the Refuge will continue to grow from 15,000 acres toward the acquisition boundary of 35,320 acres. Recently acquired land includes 540 acres within Tract 1 - 251 acres, Tract 2 -140 acres, Tract 3 -2 acres, Tract 4-80, Tract 5-69 acres. The Refuge has provided public hunting and administered a hunting program since 1992. Hunting and fishing opportunities are abundant within the Refuge. The area includes a diversity of habitats from floodplain and upland forests, to deep water swamps and shallow wetlands, to agriculture and early successional fields. These areas support waterfowl, deer, turkey, squirrels, rabbits, and other game species. Waterfowl and resident wildlife are monitored by Refuge and

Illinois DNR staff. Waterfowl assessments are based upon the distribution, abundance, and flight routes of migratory birds. The annual Waterfowl Population Status Report (USFWS 2011) includes the most current breeding and production information available and is a result of cooperative efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Canadian Wildlife Service, and state and private conservation organizations. This report has been used to aid in the development of waterfowl harvest regulations for Illinois, as well as the rest of the United States for the 2012-2013 hunting season. Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Illinois DNR) collects data on resident species through a variety of annual surveys, harvest data, population indices, and historical information which are used to determine hunting guidelines for each species. Recent assessments of game species hunted (i.e. white-tailed deer, waterfowl, other migratory birds, turkey, squirrel, etc.) in the vicinity of the Refuge indicate that there are no declines (Illinois DNR, 2011).

Hunting has been prevalent on private land prior to Refuge establishment. Many neighboring landowners leased property for hunting within and surrounding the Refuge acquisition boundary. The viability of the game species populations proposed to be hunted is not expected to be negatively affected by hunting following state season guidelines. In fact, some hunted species (e.g. white-tailed deer, resident Canada geese, and eastern turkey) populations have risen substantially according to the Illinois DNR Harvest Data.

## **V. DESCRIPTION OF HUNTING PROGRAM**

Hunting migratory game birds, small game, furbearers, deer and turkey is permitted on the Refuge. All hunting activities are planned and operated with the Refuge's primary goals and objectives as the guiding principles. The Refuge is proposing public hunting on newly acquired tracts and the revision of regulations in order to simplify and provide consistency between state and federal agency requirements. Currently, hunting is conducted in accordance with the State regulations and seasons (Appendices D: Illinois Hunting Information 2012-2013). However, there are exceptions to following applicable state laws when the Refuge administers further restrictions to ensure compatibility within the Refuge's mission. This exception includes the use of non-toxic shot which is required by hunters while in the field, including shot shells used for hunting wild turkey.

Approximately 15,000 acres is open to hunting on the Refuge. An additional 540 acres of newly acquired land will provide new opportunities for hunting on the Refuge; this land is found throughout Union, Alexander, and Pulaski counties and is further described in Section B. of this document. Additional revisions to the hunt plan will include the closure of the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve (Reserve) to hunting in order to provide a disturbance free sanctuary throughout the migration. This change in management is a result of changes in the distribution of geese during the migration. In 1993, this annual public goose hunt was established within the Reserve and took place after the duck season closed to the end of the regular goose season. The objective in establishing this hunt was to prevent a large buildup of wintering populations of Canada Geese while at the same time provide a public recreational opportunity. Traditionally, the Mississippi Valley Population of Canada Geese primarily migrated through and wintered in southern Illinois, Indiana, western Kentucky, and Tennessee; however, in recent years, they

rarely move farther south than central Illinois. In these areas, migration patterns have changed due to changes in habitat and food sources.

The prevention of large buildups of wintering populations of Canada Geese can no longer be considered a viable concern that warrants the disturbance caused by a public goose hunt within an area that is designated a waterfowl sanctuary. While hunting is a priority public use, it has direct effects on the waterfowl using the Reserve. Disturbance caused by hunting to waterfowl resources can: 1) modify the distribution and use of habitats by waterfowl; 2) affect their activity budget and decrease their foraging time; and 3) disrupt pair and family bonds . With the exception of the Reserve, approximately 15,000 Refuge acres are open to hunting for the entire waterfowl season; in addition there are numerous opportunities for goose hunters elsewhere on several wetlands owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and The Nature Conservancy. In contrast, Bellrose Reserve will provide the only public area within the watershed that is intensively managed for waterfowl and completely closed to public access throughout the entirety of the migration period.

Access is provided for hunting through parking lots and boat ramps. Twenty-one parking areas have been designated throughout the Refuge and three boat ramps provide access to the Cache River. All vehicles (with the exception of utility or all-terrain vehicles) are restricted to existing county roads or designated refuge access roads. Utility and all-terrain vehicles are not permitted except by individuals with a disability possessing a Refuge Special Use Permit (Appendix E). Hunting access by boat is permitted on waters owned by the Refuge; however the Cache River and associated tributaries are not designated as “public water bodies”. Hunters are permitted on the river where the Refuge owns one side or both sides of the channel. Otherwise use of the Cache River requires permission from the adjoining landowner. In addition the Refuge follows the state regulation of a 10-horsepower motor restriction for safety reasons due to fluctuating /shallow water levels and the presence of numerous debris dams.

#### **A. Current Regulations listed in the 50CFR32.32 for Cypress Creek Refuge**

Hunting has been permitted on the Refuge since 1992 and is open to hunting for migratory birds, small game, furbearers, deer and turkey. Non-toxic shot is required for all hunting on the Refuge with the following exceptions: lead ammunition is permitted for taking deer; small game and furbearers may be hunted with .22 and .17 caliber rimfire lead ammunition during open seasons. Current regulations listed in the 50CFR32.32 include the following:

##### Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

###### Section A. Migratory Game Bird Hunting.

We allow hunting of duck, goose, coot, woodcock, dove, and snipe on designated areas of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:

1. We require hunters to possess and carry a free refuge hunting permit while hunting on the refuge.

2. Hunters must remove all boats, decoys, blinds, blind materials, stands, and platforms brought onto the refuge at the end of each day's hunt.
3. We prohibit the construction or use of permanent blinds, platforms, and scaffolds
4. We prohibit outboard motors larger than 10 hp.
5. We prohibit the use of paint, flagging, reflectors, tacks, or other manmade materials to mark trails or hunting locations.
6. We allow dove hunting beginning on September 1 and continuing on the following Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays throughout the State season.
7. We allow the use of hunting dogs, provided the dogs are under the immediate control of the hunter at all times.
8. On the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve:
  - i. We prohibit all upland game hunting, big game hunting, dove, and duck hunting.
  - ii. You may hunt goose only following the closure of the State duck hunting season.
  - iii. We allow goose hunting only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.
  - iv. We allow hunting from 1/2 hour before legal sunrise until 1 p.m.
  - v. Hunters must exit the Reserve by 2 p.m.
  - vi. We prohibit entry to the Reserve prior to 4:30 a.m.
  - vii. We prohibit hunting during the special snow goose seasons after closure of the regular goose seasons.
  - viii. We prohibit construction or use of pit blinds (see ? 27.92 of this chapter).
  - ix. We prohibit hunting within 100 yards (90 m) of any private property boundary.
  - x. All hunting parties must be at least 200 yards (180 m) apart.
  - xi. All hunters must sign in and out and report daily harvest at the hunter registration station.
  - xii. All hunting parties must hunt over a minimum of 12 decoys at each blind site.

#### Section B. Upland Game Hunting

We allow hunting of squirrel, rabbit, bobwhite quail, raccoon, opossum, red fox, grey fox, and coyote on designated areas of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:

1. Conditions A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, and A7 apply.
2. We prohibit hunting after legal sunset, except we allow raccoon and opossum hunting after legal sunset.

#### Section C. Big Game Big Game Hunting:

We allow hunting of white-tailed deer and turkey on designated areas of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:

1. Conditions A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5 apply.

## **B. New Opportunities and Revisions to Current Regulations in the 50CFR32.32**

New opportunities and changes to the Refuge hunt program include opening newly acquired lands to public hunting; implementing revisions to Refuge specific regulations in order to simplify and provide consistency between state and federal agency requirements; and closing the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve to a special goose hunt in order to provide a sanctuary through the waterfowl season.

### New Opportunities

Newly acquired lands added to the Refuge hunting program include 608 acres divided among 8 tracts in Union, Alexander, and Pulaski counties (see map Appendix C). They include the following:

Tract 1: The 251-acre tract is located east of Highway 3 in Alexander County, IL. It connects Refuge property to the Mississippi River; the Cache River Diversion canal bisects the middle of the tract. This property was secured through the American Land Conservancy in 2007. The tract was previously managed by a private lumber company (Westvaco Corporation) as a pulp wood plantation. The property was acquired by a private lumber company in 1975 for pulp wood timber production and had been leased for hunting until Refuge acquisition. Currently the site contains approximately 220 acres of pulp wood plantations (sycamore, ash, sweetgum, sycamore, cottonwood) ranging in age from 10 to 30. The remaining 31 acres are remnant bottomland hardwood stands.

Tract 2: The 140-acre tract is located south of Shawnee College Road in Pulaski County. It adjoins the Brushy tract to the east and is primarily upland with a downward slope to the east. When acquired in 2008, the property was in agriculture; it was planted with native seedlings in 2010. It currently includes early successional vegetation in addition to a variety of seedlings.

Tract 3: The 2-acre tract abuts refuge land on its east boundary and the village of Ullin on its west boundary. This property is low, flat floodplain forest that is regularly flooded by the Cache River.

Tract 4 : The 80-acre tract abuts refuge land along its south and east boundary. This property has 30 acres of National Wetland Inventory wetlands and is bisected by Cypress Creek. It includes about 55 acres of forest and a 10-acre tilled agricultural field. This property is about 2.5 miles west of Cypress, IL and has frontage on Cypress Road.

Tract 5: The 69-acre tract abuts refuge land along its north boundary and IDNR land along its east and west boundary. This property is characterized by cypress-tupelo swamp. The Cache

River passes along the south boundary in through the southwest corner of this property. This property is about 1 mile south of Perks, Illinois along the Cache River.

Hunting opportunities on the Refuge are primarily developed to be consistent with Illinois DNR state seasons and regulations. As directed by Service Policy (605 FW2.7), the Refuge hunt program is planned, managed, conducted and evaluated in coordination with the Illinois DNR in ways that conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitat, ensure hunter and visitor safety, comply with State and Federal laws and regulations and promote respect for the resource. The revisions below will be implemented in order to simplify and provide consistency between state and federal agency regulations.

### Revised Refuge Specific Regulations

#### Section A. Migratory Game Bird Hunting

Remove - 1: Hunters are required to possess and carry a free Refuge hunting permit while hunting on the Refuge . With removal of this regulation there will be more consistency with State regulations; hunters will only be required to carry state licenses and permits.

Remove - 8. On the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve: i.-xii The Bellrose waterfowl Reserve will no longer be open to a special goose hunt; hunting is prohibited within the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve in order to provide a disturbance free sanctuary.

#### Section B. Upland Game Hunting

Add: We allow the use of .22 and .17 caliber rimfire lead ammunition for the taking of small game and furbearers during open season.

#### Section C. Big Game Hunting

Add: We prohibit the use of “deer drives” for the taking or attempting to take deer. We define a “deer drive” as a hunter(s) moving through an area with the intent of displacing one or more deer in the direction of another hunter(s).

Add: Hunters may only use or possess approved non-toxic shot shells while in the field, including shot shells used for hunting wild turkey.

### **C. Consultation and Coordination with the State**

Since 1992, the Refuge and Illinois DNR have work together to provide a public hunting program on the Refuge and adjacent state property. Following the adoption of this revised plan, the Refuge will consult and coordinate with Illinois DNR to address annual implementation of hunting activities. With the revisions to the existing Refuge specific regulations, the Refuge proposes to follows state guidelines and seasons with exception to a special goose hunt at the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve.

### **D. Methods of Control and Enforcement**

Law enforcement (LE) of Refuge and State hunting regulations, trespass and other

public use violations associated with management of the Refuge is the responsibility of a commissioned Refuge Law Enforcement Officer. In absence of a full-time Refuge Officer, LE assistance is provided by Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge officers and Illinois DNR conservation officers. On-going coordination and communication is conducted throughout the year.

### **E. Funding and Staffing Requirements**

The hunting program is designed to be administered with minimal refuge resources. The annual costs of enforcing a hunting program on the Refuge comes out of the Refuge's annual budget. Expenses include boundary posting, signage, brochures, parking lot construction, facility maintenance, gate installation, and other hunting specific activities.

## **VI. MEASURES TAKEN TO AVOID CONFLICTS WITH OTHER MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

Hunting has shown no measureable environmental impact to the Refuge, its habitats, or wildlife species. With restrictions limiting access to specific locations ( Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve) and only allowing vehicles at designed parking areas and access points along the perimeter of the Refuge, disturbance is minimized. The Refuge hunting program follows all applicable laws, regulations and policies; including Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 50 CFR, National Wildlife Refuge System Manual, and the National Wildlife Refuge System goals and objectives. The hunting program supports primary objectives of the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge and does not interfere with the Refuge's ability to meet habitat goals. It has been determined compatible with the purpose of the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System Mission

Hunting is a priority public use listed in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. By facilitating this use on the Refuge, visitors' knowledge and appreciation of wildlife is increased which can result in increased public support for wildlife and their habitats. Increased public stewardship complements the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's actions to accomplish Refuge's purposes and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

### **A. Biological Conflicts**

The Refuge avoids potential conflicts related to biological resources by adopting the "wildlife first" principle explicitly stated in the Improvement Act. Staff along with Illinois DNR and other wildlife professionals monitor wildlife population trends to ensure that target species can be hunted at the refuge without adversely affecting the species. These monitoring activities include direct observation of populations, consultation with state and federal resource specialists, and review of current species survey information and research. Although not proposed in this plan, the Refuge, in the future, could limit or exclude hunting activities on portions of Refuge to avoid conflicts related to biological resources.

## **B. Public Use Conflicts**

Public uses are developed to complement each other and reduce conflict. Wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, interpretation, hunting and fishing are current activities at the Refuge. No conflicts are expected but if conflicts arise, Refuge management may limit hunting or restrict other public uses during the hunting season to ensure public safety. Currently the majority of the Refuge boundary is posted with boundary signs. Areas administratively closed to hunting are clearly marked with the “Area Beyond This Sign is Closed” signs.

## **C. Administrative Conflicts**

At this time, no administrative conflicts are anticipated. As the Refuge acquires additional areas for hunting, the Refuge Manager will set station priorities to assure that administrative staff time required to administer the hunting program is adequate. As the hunt program evolves over the years, Refuge-specific regulations may change at Refuge Manager’s discretion.

# **VII. CONDUCT OF THE HUNT**

## **A. Hunting Regulations**

Regulations pertaining to hunting on all National Wildlife Refuges are found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 50 CFR 32.2. Copies of the CFR can be found online and in area libraries; in addition Refuge specific regulations are available on the Refuge’s website. National Wildlife Refuge regulations are included below:

§ 32.2 What are the requirements for hunting on areas of the National Wildlife Refuge System?

The following provisions shall apply to each person while engaged in public hunting on areas of the National Wildlife Refuge System:

- (a) Each person shall secure and possess the required State license.
- (b) Each person 16 years of age and older shall secure and possess a Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp while hunting migratory waterfowl.
- (c) Each person shall comply with the applicable provisions of Federal law and regulations including this subchapter and the current Federal Migratory Bird Regulations.
- (d) Each person shall comply with the applicable provisions of the laws and regulations of the State wherein any area is located unless further restricted by Federal law or regulation.

(e) Each person shall comply with the terms and conditions authorizing access or use of wildlife refuges, including the terms and conditions under which hunting permits are issued.

(f) Each person must comply with the provisions of any refuge-specific regulations governing hunting on the wildlife refuge area. Regulations, special conditions, and maps of the hunting areas for a particular wildlife refuge are available at that area's headquarters. In addition, refuge-specific hunting regulations for migratory game bird, upland game, and big game hunting appear in §§32.20 through 32.72.

(g) The use of any drug on any arrow for bow hunting on national wildlife refuges is prohibited. Archers may not have arrows employing such drugs in their possession on any national wildlife refuge.

(h) The unauthorized distribution of bait and the hunting over bait is prohibited on wildlife refuge areas. (Baiting is authorized in accordance with State regulations on national wildlife refuges in Alaska).

(i) The use of nails, wire, screws or bolts to attach a stand to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to support a hunter is prohibited on wildlife refuge areas.

(j) The use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

(k) You may possess only approved nontoxic shot while in the field, which we identify in 50 CFR 20.21(j), while on Waterfowl Production Areas, or on certain other areas of the National Wildlife Refuge System as delineated on maps, leaflets and/or signs, available at each refuge headquarters or posted at each refuge, or as stated in refuge-specific regulations. Where we allow turkey and deer hunting, you may use slugs and shot containing lead to hunt these species unless prohibited by refuge-specific regulations and/or State law.

## **B. Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunt**

Since Refuge establishment, hunting has been an accepted and popular activity. User conflicts between hunting and non-hunting visitors have been minimal; however, adjacent private landowners have had issues with trespassing. These concerns have been dealt with by law enforcement and management on a case-by-case basis. Overall, public hunting on the Refuge is viewed as a positive and accepted use of Refuge property.

## **C. Hunter Application and Registration**

For general hunting activities, no special application or registration process is required. Special Use Permits allowing utility and all-terrain vehicle (UTV/ATV) use on the Refuge may be acquired for hunters with a disability. In order to qualify for this program, each individual is

required to show proof of a disability with a Standing Vehicle Permit (SVP) issued by the Illinois DNR. Nonresident hunters who want to participate in hunting under this program are required to show equivalent documentation from their state of residence or obtain an SVP from the Illinois DNR. Once proper documentation is provided, the Refuge will issue a special use permit (SUP) for one year. Specific details, regulations and restrictions are outlined in the “Policy for Hunters with Disabilities” (see Appendix E).

#### **D. Hunter Selection**

For general hunting activities, there is no special hunter selection process. Hunters who are eligible to hunt under Illinois law are allowed to hunt on the Refuge.

#### **E. Announcing and Publicizing Hunts**

A public notice will be sent to all local newspapers in Alexander, Pulaski, Union, Massac, Johnson and surrounding counties. Information will also be posted at the Cache River Wetlands Center, local businesses and on the Cypress Creek Refuge and Friends of the Cache River Watershed websites. Upon completion, this plan will be available for public review for 30 days.

#### **F. Hunting Orientation and Safety**

Hunter orientation to Refuge lands and property within the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture is provided through an annual news release to area papers and through Refuge signs, brochures, and maps. The Refuge does not require specific orientation or safety training for individuals participating in general hunting activities; however, the state of Illinois has requirements for hunter education and safety training and offers an annual course schedule.

#### **G. Entry and Access Procedures**

There are no special entry or access procedures for hunters using the Refuge with the exception of the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve. Goose hunting is permitted within this closed area after the duck season has closed; during this period, Refuge staff open and close the area at designated times and require all hunters to report their kill daily.

#### **H. Hunter Requirements**

There are no special requirements to hunt on the Refuge. The refuge does not require hunters to report on hunting activities or harvest separately from the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) requirement. Should an additional reporting program be implemented, the Refuge will use appropriate forms approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

Non-toxic shot is required for all hunting on the Refuge with the following exceptions: lead ammunition is permitted for taking deer; small game and furbearers may be hunted with .22 and .17 caliber rimfire lead ammunition during open seasons. Possession of toxic shot while hunting other species is prohibited. Hunting dogs may be used for hunting small game and migratory

birds; the Refuge may not be used for dog training not associated with an actual hunt. Target shooting, camping and camp fires are prohibited on the Refuge. No motorized vehicles are allowed within the Refuge unless authorized through a special use permit issued by Refuge management.

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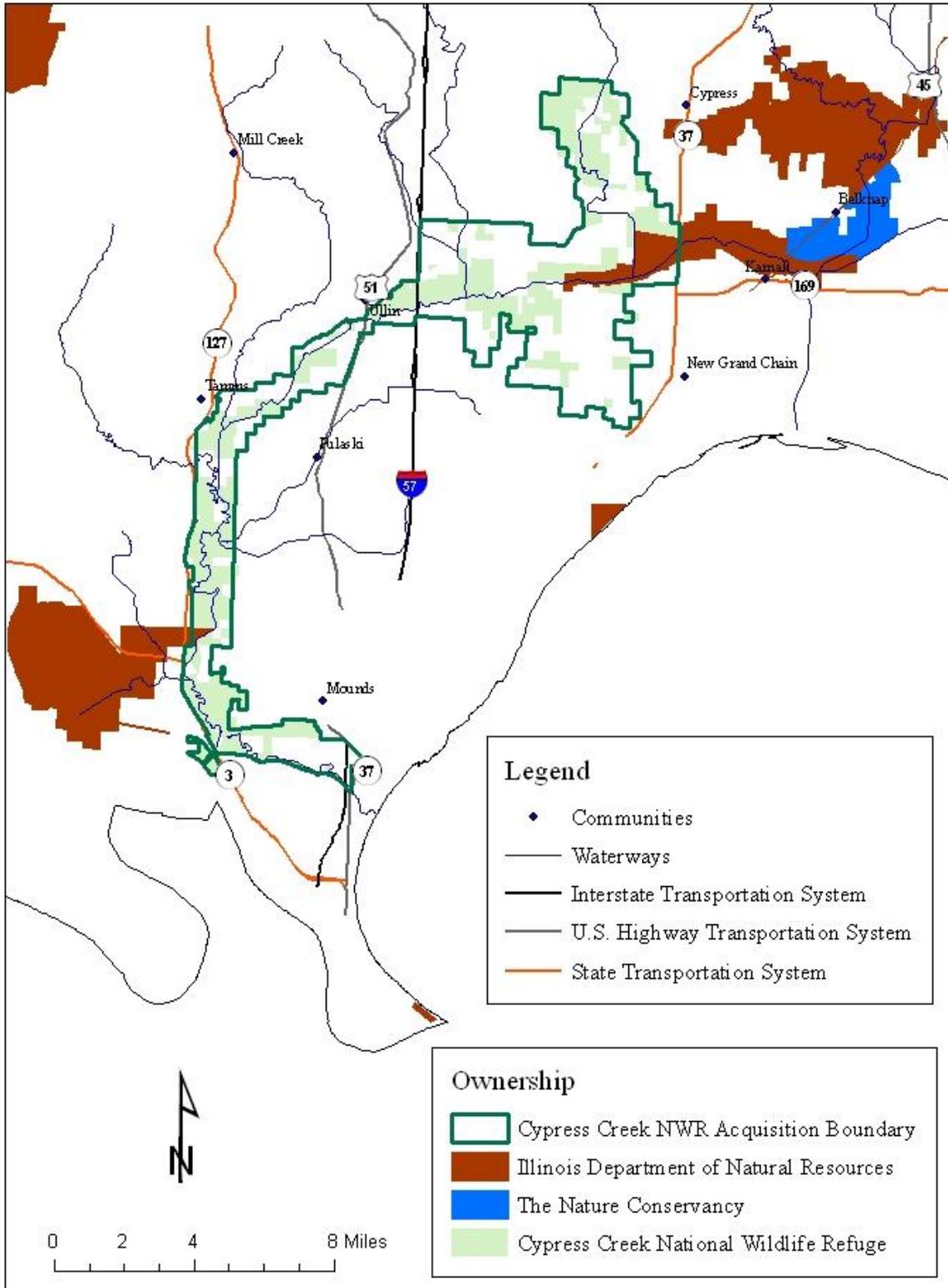
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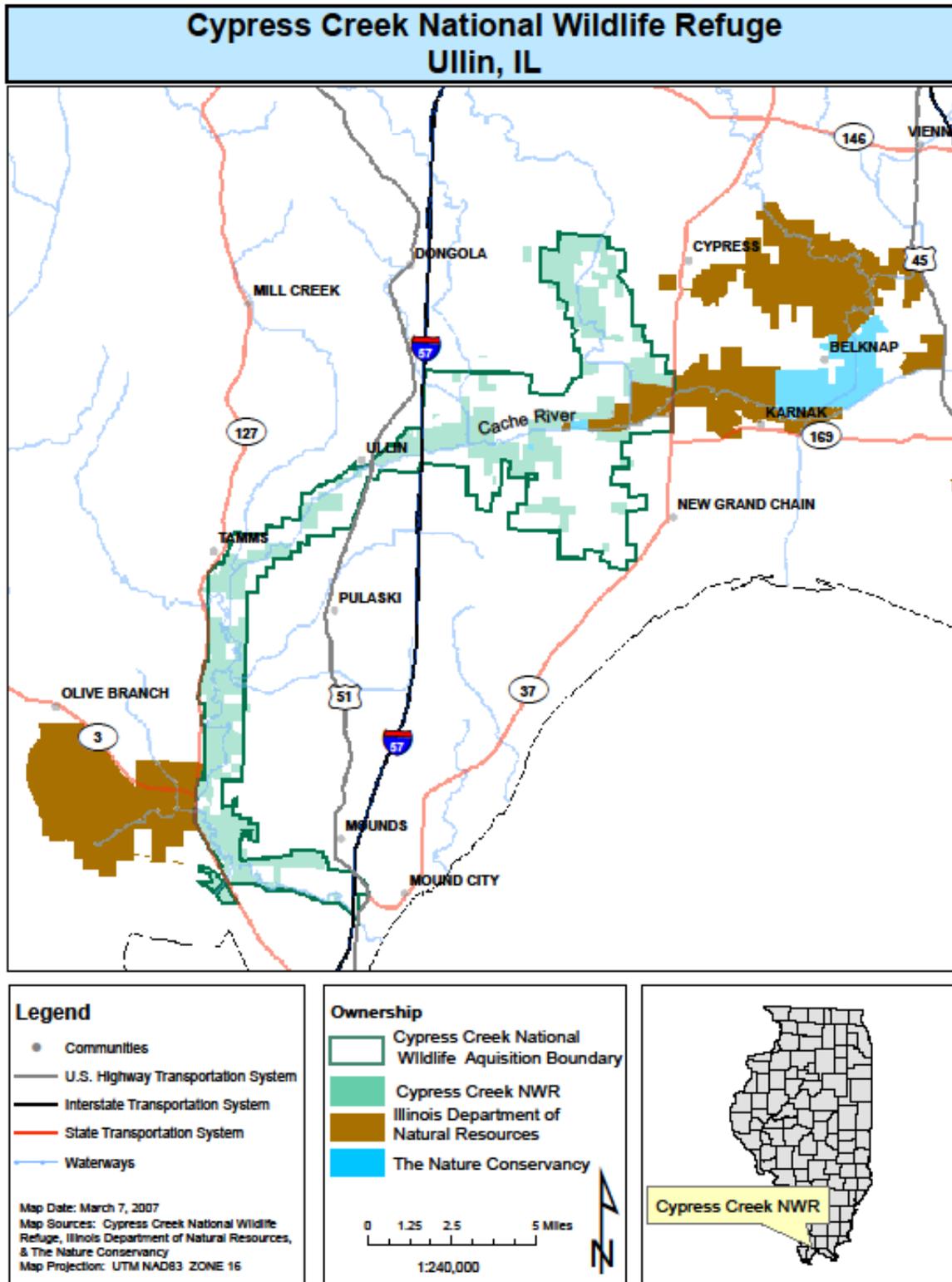
APPENDIX A.

Figure 4. Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Ownership and Acquisition



Map Date: November 17, 2010

APPENDIX B. Boundaries of Joint Venture Partners



## APPENDIX C. Description of Refuge Management Units

Acres include land within the Refuge purchase boundary some of which is currently within private ownership.

**Cypress Creek Unit:** This unit forms the northernmost boundary of the Refuge and includes some of the higher elevations (500 feet msl) on-site. The area is drained by Cypress Creek which flows into the Cache River south of the Perks Road. The unit contains approximately 6,000 acres of land with over 3500 acres in agriculture (includes private land); in addition to 1,100 acres of low, poorly drained bottomland. To date the Refuge owns 3,400 acres of which 1,611 acres have been restored to forest and wetlands.

**Limekiln Slough Unit:** This unit includes approximately 6,600 acres with only 22% in Refuge ownership (1,500 acres). The area includes 4,500 acres of agriculture and is bounded on the east, south, and west by low hills. The area is drained by Limekiln Slough which empties into the Cache River. The central portion of the unit historically was a large floodplain forest dominated by oaks and hickories until it was cleared in the 1970's. To date the Refuge owns 1,500 acres of which 850 acres have been restored to forest and wetlands.

**Cache River Unit:** This unit includes 5,276 acres. The primary feature within this unit is Buttonland Swamp – a National Natural Landmark owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources; however the Refuge acquisition boundary forms a buffer around this section of river which widens with a gradual fall of .2-.3 feet per mile. Currently, CCNWR owns 1,136 acres of which 750 acres have been restored to restore the riparian corridor to forest and wetlands. Historically, this section of the river featured wide expanse of open water with depths of more than 10 feet. Within the last century land clearing and channelization to increase drainage has resulted in excessive silt and sediment deposition eliminating this deep water. In 2002, approximately one mile of river within this unit was dredged to remove sediment and initiate deep water habitat restoration. Today, this section of river contains old growth stands of bald cypress and tupelo and areas dominated by buttonbush.

**Butter Ridge Unit:** This area contains 5,936 acres of which 60% are in agricultural production. Currently the Refuge owns 2,281 which includes the 1,000 acre Frank Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve; there are 270 acres of moist soil wetlands within the Reserve. This area is intensively managed for waterfowl and shorebirds and provides a sanctuary to migrating ducks. Both Big Creek and Little Creek enters the Cache through the Butter Ridge Unit. Big Creek has a relatively steep hydrologic gradient and drains a basin covering 52 square miles; the channelized lower reach of this tributary bisects the Bellrose Reserve and enters the Cache River. During flood events Big Creek's stream volume and velocity threatens Bellrose moist soil units by backing silt-laden water into the moist soil units and or breaching the levees; Big Creek stream flow can also exceeds the Cache River's ability to maintain a west and south flow thus reversing the flow of the Cache River and increasing sedimentation into Buttonland Swamp (within the Middle Cache Valley).

**Indian Camp Creek:** This unit which is low, flat and primarily river floodplain includes approximately 3,000 acres with 1,208 acres in agriculture (primarily private land). Extensive channelization between the towns of Ullin and Tamm's cut-off many of the historic oxbows and river meanders from the main river channel. To date CCNWR owns approximately 1,000 acres which includes floodplain forest and wetlands.

**Sandy Creek and Lake Creek Units:** These units include 7,432 acres and form a relatively narrow corridor along the Cache River from the town of Tamms to the Mississippi Diversion. Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge owns approximately 5,700 acres with 300 acres in agriculture. The remaining acreage has been restored to floodplain forest and wetlands. Extensive channelization between the towns of Sandusky and Ullin, has cut-off many of the historic oxbows and river meanders from the main river channel.

**Old Cache Channel Unit:** This unit includes 2,537 acres with approximately 1,038 acres in Refuge ownership. Approximately 90% of the unit is low, poorly drained bottomland (~320 feet msl) and is characterized by hydric soils. The Old Cache River Channel forms the south boundary of this unit. In 1950 a ditch was cut on the west end of the channel diverting water from Cache River directly into the Mississippi thus abandoning approximately 6 miles of river channel that empties into the Ohio River. Prior to Refuge ownership, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has maintained a floodgate into the Ohio River (on the east end of the old channel). The USACE with the cooperation of the Cairo Drainage District, are currently responsible for manipulating water levels in the channel to maintain drainage and flood control. When the gates are open and the Ohio River is down, water levels can drop to 2' or less; however, existing drainage district staff assist with maintaining a minimal water level in the channel.

APPENDIX D. Illinois 2012-2013 Hunting Season Dates and Limits

**2012-2013 Season Dates and Limits Information**

Small Game	SPECIES	DATES (INCLUSIVE) AND ZONES	HOURS	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
	Rabbit (Cumberland & Swamp)	Nov. 3, 2012-Jan. 8, 2013 (North); Nov. 3, 2012-Jan. 22, 2013 (South)	Sunrise to sunset	4	10
	Cock Pheasant	Nov. 3, 2012-Jan. 8, 2013 (North); Nov. 3, 2012-Jan. 15, 2013 (South)		2	6
	Hungarian (Gray) Partridge			2	6
	Quail (Bobwhite)			8	20
	Squirrel (Fox and Gray)	Aug. 1, 2012-Feb. 15, 2013 (Statewide) Closed Nov. 16-18 and Nov. 29-Dec. 2 in counties open for firearm deer hunting	1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset	6	10
Woodchuck (Groundhog)	June 1, 2012-March 31, 2013 Closed Nov. 15-18; Nov. 29-Dec. 2 in counties open for firearm deer hunting	Sunrise to sunset	No Limit		

Deer & Turkey	SPECIES	DATES (INCLUSIVE) AND ZONES	HOURS	LIMIT
	Firearm Deer (Handgun, Muzzleloader & Shotgun)	Nov. 16-18; Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 2012	1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset	One deer per firearm permit
	Deer (Muzzleloading rifle only)	Dec. 7-9, 2012 (also applies Nov. 29-Dec. 2)		One deer per muzzleloading rifle permit
	Special CWD Deer Season	Dec. 27-30, 2012 and Jan. 16-20, 2013		One deer per wild deer permit
	Late-Winter Antlerless Deer (Handgun, Muzzleloader & Shotgun)			One antlerless deer per permit
	Deer (Archery in counties with a firearm season and west of Rl. 47 in Kane County)	Oct. 1-Nov. 15, Nov. 19-28 and Dec. 3, 2012-Jan. 20, 2013		One deer per archery permit
	Deer (Archery in Cook, DuPage, Kane (east of Route 47) and Lake counties)	Oct. 1, 2012-Jan. 20, 2013	1/2 hour before sunrise to 1 a.m.	One gobble or banded hen, counts towards maximum of 3 spring permits
	Yearling Turkey Season	March 30-31, 2013 (South); April 6-7, 2013 (North)		One gobble or banded hen per permit, maximum of 2
	Turkey (Spring; Shotgun or Archery)	April 8-May 9, 2013 (South); April 12-May 16, 2013 (North)		1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset
	Turkey (Fall Shotgun Season)	Oct. 20-Oct. 26, 2012	1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset	
Turkey (Fall Archery)	Oct. 1, 2012-Jan. 20, 2013 except closed during firearm deer season in counties open to firearm deer hunting			

Migratory Game Birds	SPECIES	DATES (INCLUSIVE) AND ZONES	HOURS	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
	Dove	Sept. 1-Oct. 25; Nov. 3-14, 2012	Sunrise to sunset	12	30
	Teal	Sept. 8-23, 2012		4	8
	Emu Canada Goose	Sept. 1-15, 2012	North and Central	5	10
	South Central & South		2	4	
	Pheasant (Iowa & Virginia only)	Sept. 8-Nov. 16, 2012	Sunrise to sunset	25	25
	Common Snipe	Sept. 8-Oct. 23, 2012		8	16
	Woodcock	Oct. 20-Nov. 5, 2012		3	6
	Crow	Oct. 28, 2012-Feb. 28, 2013		1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	No Limit
	The season dates for Migratory Waterfowl seasons that occur after Oct. 1 will be available in September. See 2012-2013 Digest of Waterfowl Hunting Regulations.				

## **APPENDIX E. Policy for Hunters with Disabilities**

# **POLICY FOR HUNTERS WITH DISABILITIES**

## **Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge**

### **Special Use Permits**

Special Use Permits allowing All-terrain vehicle (ATV/UTV) use for people with a disability will be granted to those individuals who are able to show proof of a disability with a Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) "Standing Vehicle Permit" (available from the Cypress Creek refuge office or the IDNR website at <http://dnr.state.il.us>). Non-resident hunters who want to participate in fishing and hunting under this program will be required to show equivalent documentation from their state of residence or obtain an IDNR Standing Vehicle Permit.

In order to qualify for a disability ATV/UTV access permit, hunters must meet one of the following criteria to obtain a Standing Vehicle Permit from IDNR with appropriate disability certification by a licensed physician:

1. Have a permanent or irreversible physical disability, are unable to ambulate and require: a wheelchair, walker, one leg brace or external prosthesis above the knee, two leg braces or external prosthesis below the knee, two crutches or two canes for mobility.
2. Suffers significantly from lung disease, to the extent that forces expiratory volume for one second when measured by spirometry is less than one liter or arterial oxygen tension is less than 60 millimeters of mercury on room air test.
3. Suffers significantly from cardiovascular disease, to the extent that functional limitations are classified as severity as class 3 or 4, according to standards accepted by the American Heart Association on May 3, 1988, and where physical activity causes discomfort, fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea or angina pain.
4. Have a temporary disability and have restricted ambulation due to: a) a leg, hip or back, or any part thereof casted by a licensed physician. b) post-surgical effects of leg, hip or back surgery. c) illness or injury.
- 5.

#### **Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility**

All-terrain vehicles (ATV/UTV's) will be limited to existing non-vehicular roads and trails including dirt, grass, and gravel surfaces within the Refuge. Hunters may park their ATV/UTV and use it as a hunting platform up to 100 feet off existing roads and trails. ATV/UTV's may not be taken more than 100 feet off existing roads and trails except to retrieve game. Use of an ATV/UTV is limited to disabled hunters with a Refuge Special Use Permit. Accompanying non-disabled hunters may not ride on the ATV/UTV. ATV/UTV's must have a spark arrester, and the permittee must ride according to the ATV/UTV manufacturer's instructions. It is suggested that a helmet be worn as protective gear.

