

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Mushroom and berry picking

Refuge Name: Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority (ies): 16 U.S.C. 460k-1 16 U.S.C. 715d 16 U.S.C. 644

Refuge Established: May 31, 2000

Refuge Authorities: 16 U.S.C. § 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act); 16 U.S.C. § 664 (Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act); 16 U.S.C. § 460K-1 (Refuge Recreation Act); 16 U.S.C. § 460K-2 (Refuge Recreation Act (16 U.S.C. § 460K-4), as amended); 16 U.S.C. § 3901b, 100 Stat. 3583 (Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, 1986); 16 U.S.C. § 668dd(a)(2) (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration 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).

"...shall be administered by him (Secretary of the Interior) directly or in accordance with cooperative agreements . . . and in accordance with such rules and regulations for the conservation, maintenance, and management of wildlife, resources thereof, and its habitat thereon, ..." 16 U.S.C. 664 (Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act) .

"...suitable for - (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species. .." 16 U.S.C. 460k-1 " ...the Secretary...may accept and use ...property. Such acceptance may be accomplished under the terms and conditions of restrictive covenants imposed by donors ..." 16 U.S.C. 460k-2 (Refuge Recreation Act (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4), as amended).

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: Middle Mississippi River NWR will provide opportunities for gathering mushrooms and wild berries on designated lands each year during periods that do not interfere with other uses or detract from wildlife values. Collection of mushrooms and berries is not a wildlife-dependent recreational use. However, for some people these activities are traditional family oriented outings which provide an opportunity for the Refuge to offer wildlife observation and interpretive services to those who enjoy the hunt in undeveloped areas. Mushroom and berry picking is permitted for personal consumption ONLY, not for resale or other commercial use.

Availability of Resources: There are no staff or budget constraints to mushroom and berry picking opportunities on designated Complex lands. Use has been low due to seasonal flooding and will be monitored for change in that level.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: No threatened or endangered species will be impacted by this use. Mushroom hunting is usually directed to open understory areas that cause very little disturbance, while late season berry hunting is generally after bird nesting activity. The awareness gained by the visiting public of the national wildlife refuge and its programs should help develop an informed user group that will support our programs and long-range goals.

Habitat damage, wildlife disturbance, litter and incidental vandalism resulting from these picking uses is expected to be minimal and will be handled by refuge staff and volunteers. Picking activities have not resulted in any problems such as these in the past.

Public Review and Comment:

Determination:

Use is Not Compatible

Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: The following stipulations are required to ensure compatibility:

1. Controlled access points with appropriate signs and notices will limit environmental disturbance.
2. Mushrooms and berries must be collected for personal consumption only and are for personal use and cannot be sold or traded.
3. Digging of plants or their roots is prohibited.
4. Damage to trees, shrubs or any other vegetation is prohibited.

