

News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Draft Compatibility Determinations Available for Public Comment and Review

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announce the availability of four Draft Compatibility Determinations for Pond Creek NWR for public review and comment. These determinations encompass fishing, horseback riding, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, interpretation and commercial forest management on the refuge. The public comment period will extend from October 8 through October 22, 2014. Interested parties are encouraged to review the draft determinations and provide written comments to the Refuge Manager.

A compatibility determination is the end result of a process whereby the Refuge Manager reviews a proposed use on a refuge and determines whether the use is compatible with the purpose for which the refuge was established. If determined to be compatible, then the use may be permitted. If the use is determined incompatible, then it is not permitted to occur on the Refuge. Policy issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in October 2000 requires that compatibility determinations be provided to the public for review and comment. When completing compatibility determinations, the Refuge Manager uses sound professional judgment to determine if a proposed use will materially interfere or detract from the fulfillment of the Service's mission or the purpose of the Refuge.

The Draft Compatibility Determinations are available on-line at: <http://www.fws.gov/PondCreek/>. Copies may also be obtained by visiting the Pond Creek NWR Headquarters/Visitor Center at 1958 Central Road in Lockesburg between the hours of 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The interested public has until October 22, 2014 to provide comments in writing to Refuge Headquarters/ Visitor Center. Comments may be sent by fax to (870) 364-3757 or by e-mail to Michael_Stroeh@fws.gov. Comments received will be reviewed and, if appropriate, incorporated into the Final Compatibility Determination, which is expected by the end of 2014.

USFWS is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American public. In addition to maintaining the 94-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, it operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid Program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.