

News Release

Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge

11978 Turtle Pond Road

Milton, DE 19968

Fax: 302-684-8504

Email: fw5rw_PHNWR@fws.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: William J. Jones, Visitor Services Manager

Date: June 1, 2015

Phone: 302-684-8419

Prime Hook NWR Hosts Public Meeting to Announce Changes to 2015-2016 Hunting Program

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge (PHNWR) will host a public meeting on Thursday, June 18 at 7:00PM at the Milton Fire Hall to provide the public with information about changes to the hunting program at PHNWR for the upcoming 2015-2016 hunting season, including a demonstration of the online, web-based lottery permitting program operated by the vendor Kinsail.

Major changes include phasing out permanent hunting structures and allowing hunters to free-roam in designated areas, allowing hunters to obtain permits for lottery hunt areas through an online, web-based lottery permitting program, reducing fees, and enhancing disabled hunting opportunities.

The most notable change will be the closure of waterfowl hunting in the Lottery Waterfowl Hunt Area for the 2015-2016 hunting season due to anticipated channel dredging operations in this area as part of the refuge's tidal marsh restoration project. Dredging operations are expected to begin this summer and continue through this winter. This area will be a work zone containing working dredges, boat traffic, dredge pipe, newly created unmarked channels, and other unforeseen obstacles, which prevent the refuge from providing both a safe and quality hunting environment and experience.

In consultation with the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), the state-owned Prime Hook Wildlife Area (blinds # 1-8) will be open for waterfowl hunting for the 2015-2016 hunting season and the issuance of blinds will be managed by the DFW rather than the federal PHNWR. Hunters should refer to the hunting regulations on the Prime Hook Wildlife Area Map for more information.

These changes were approved in the refuge's step-down hunting management plan, Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Other agencies, conservation organizations, local landowners, and stakeholders provided considerable input into the plans' development. The Final CCP/EIS, Record of Decision (ROD), and hunting management plan for Prime Hook NWR, along with a summary of all substantive comments received and their responses, is available for review on the Refuge website at www.fws.gov/refuge/prime_hook/ or at the refuge office at 11978 Turtle Pond Road, Milton, Delaware.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

-END-