

RECREATION FEE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
for the
Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Addition of a New Fee Activity and Modification of Existing Fee Activities

June 6, 2013; Revised July 8, 2013

Refuge Name: Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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Project Title: The Addition of a New Fee Activity and Modification of Existing Fee Activities.

The addition of a new fee activity for a lottery for wildflower tours on the Hanford Reach National Monument.

- Establish a \$3.00 per lottery entry. (The entry fee covers costs associated with the lottery and tour costs.)

The modification of existing fee activities for hunting programs on McKay Creek, McNary and Umatilla NWRs.

- Increase the lottery application fee for the opening weekend of upland gamebird hunting on McKay Creek NWR from \$10.00 per lottery entry to \$12.00 per entry. (Maximum of 1 lottery entry per person.)
- Increase the lottery application fee for the opening 2 weekends of upland gamebird hunting on Umatilla NWR from \$10.00 per lottery entry to \$12.00 per entry. (Maximum of 1 lottery entry per person.)
- Increase the lottery application fee for the waterfowl hunting lottery for the Headquarters Unit on McNary NWR from \$10.00 per 10 reservation picks to \$12.00 per 10 picks. (Maximum of 10 picks per application period, total of 1 application per person per waterfowl hunting season.)
- Increase the lottery application fee for the waterfowl hunting lottery for the McCormack Unit on Umatilla NWR from \$10.00 per 10 reservation picks to \$12.00 per 10 picks. (Maximum of 10 picks per application period, total of 1 application per person per waterfowl hunting season.)
- Increase the daily waterfowl hunting recreation fee for the Headquarters Unit on McNary NWR from \$10.00 to \$14.00 per hunter.

- Increase the daily waterfowl hunting recreation fee for the McCormack Unit on Umatilla NWR from \$10.00 to \$14.00 per hunter.
- Increase the waterfowl hunting season pass from \$80.00 to \$96.00 per hunter. (One pass covers both the Headquarters Unit on McNary NWR and the McCormack Unit on Umatilla NWR.)

Current Recreation Fees

Under the auspices of the Federal Lands Recreation Act, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies can implement and test new recreation fees. An important attribute of the Federal Lands Recreation Act allows the participating agency to retain all of the revenues collected under jurisdiction of the program with no less than 80% of the revenue retained at the site of collection. In the 2012-2013 hunting season, the Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Complex) collected \$47,100 in recreation fees from hunting programs at McKay Creek, McNary and Umatilla National Wildlife Refuges. Of this, \$33,050 was from daily use fees (McNary and Umatilla) and \$14,050 from hunting lottery applications (McKay Creek, McNary and Umatilla). Waterfowl hunting and lottery application fee schedules for the current recreation programs are described in Table 1.

There are a couple of exceptions to the general fee schedule. Discounts of 50% are given to those hunters possessing an America the Beautiful (ATB) Senior or Access Pass on expanded amenity recreation fees (daily use fees). Therefore, hunters possessing the ATB Senior and Access Pass currently pay \$5.00 per hunter. Seasonal waterfowl hunting passes for ATB Senior and Access Passholders also reflect a 50% discount to \$40.00. To promote youth hunting, and consistent with the Federal Lands Recreational Enhancement Act, waterfowl hunting recreation fees are not collected from hunters under 16 years-old and lottery application fees are waived for the special Youth Hunt Days. However, hunters under 16 years-old must be supervised and accompanied by an adult (18 years or older). A recreation fee is collected from the supervising adult, as described in Table 1, except for the Youth Hunt Days when no fees are collected, although adults may not hunt on those days.

Season passes currently cost \$80.00 (\$40.00 for ATB Senior/Access Passholders) and waive the daily hunting recreation fee for the person named on the pass, not the fee of the hunting party. Therefore, hunters accompanying a season pass holders are responsible for their individual portions of the recreation fee.

Table 1: Current Recreation Fee Program

Hunter Recreation Fee/ Expanded Amenity Recreation Fees	Current Fee
McKay Creek, Opening Weekend Upland Gamebird Online Lottery (Credit Card Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00
McKay Creek, Opening Weekend Upland Gamebird Paper Lottery Per Applicant (Includes Check Processing)	\$15.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Online Lottery Per Applicant	\$10.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Paper Lottery Per Applicant (Includes Check Processing)	\$15.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Daily Use Fee Per Hunter	\$10.00
McNary (Headquarters), ATB Senior/Access Waterfowl Hunter Daily Use Fee	\$5.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Youth Hunter Daily Use Fee [must be accompanied by an adult (<18-yrs. old) with applicable Daily Use Fee].	\$0.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Lottery Per Applicant	\$0.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Daily Use Fee [must be supervised by a <i>non-hunting (fee waived for youth hunt day)</i> adult (<18-yrs. old)].	\$0.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Bird Online Lottery Per Applicant	\$10.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Bird Paper Lottery Per Applicant (Includes Check Processing)	\$15.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Bird Hunter Fee	\$10.00
Umatilla (McCormack), ATB Senior/Access First 2 Weekends Upland Bird Hunter Fee	\$5.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Bird Youth Hunter Fee [must be accompanied by an adult (<18-yrs. old) with applicable Daily Use Fee].	\$0.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Online Lottery Per Applicant	\$10.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Paper Lottery Per Applicant (Includes Check Processing)	\$15.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Daily Use Fee Per Hunter	\$10.00
Umatilla (McCormack), ATB Senior/Access Waterfowl Hunter Daily Use Fee	\$5.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Youth Hunter Daily Use Fee Waterfowl Youth Hunter Daily Use Fee [must be accompanied by an adult (<18-yrs. old) with applicable Daily Use Fee].	\$0.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Lottery Per Applicant	\$0.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Daily Use Fee [must be supervised by a <i>non-hunting (fee waived for youth hunt day)</i> adult (<18-yrs. old)].	\$0.00
McNary & Umatilla, Waterfowl Hunting Season Pass (Good At Both Refuges)	\$80.00
McNary & Umatilla, ATB Senior/Access Waterfowl Hunting Season Pass	\$40.00

Table 2: Proposed Modifications to Recreation Fee Program

Expanded Amenity Recreation Fees	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Net Change
<i>Hunting Lottery & Day Use Fee</i>			
McKay Creek, Opening Weekend Upland Gamebird Online Lottery (Credit Card Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$2.00
McKay Creek, Opening Weekend Upland Gamebird Online Lottery (Check Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$5.00
McKay Creek, Opening Weekend Upland Gamebird Paper Lottery (Check Payment) Per Applicant	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$5.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Online Lottery (Credit Card Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$2.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Online Lottery (Check Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$5.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Paper Lottery (Check Payment) Per Applicant	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$5.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Day Use Fee Per Hunter	\$10.00	\$14.00	\$4.00
McNary (Headquarters), America the Beautiful Senior/Access Waterfowl Day Use Fee Per Hunter	\$5.00	\$7.00	\$2.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Lottery Per Applicant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Use Fee (With an Adult \geq 18-years Old)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
McNary (Headquarters), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Use Fee for <i>Non-hunting</i> Adult (\geq 18-years Old)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Gamebird Online Lottery (Credit Card Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$2.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Gamebird Online Lottery (Check Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$5.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Gamebird Paper Lottery (Check Payment) Per Applicant	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$5.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Gamebird Day Use Fee Per Hunter	\$10.00	\$14.00	\$4.00
Umatilla (McCormack), America the Beautiful First 2 Weekends Upland Gamebird Day Use Fee Per Hunter	\$5.00	\$7.00	\$2.00
Umatilla (McCormack), First 2 Weekends Upland Gamebird Youth Hunter Day Use Fee (with a Paying Adult \geq 18-years Old)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Online Lottery (Credit Card Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$2.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Online Lottery (Check Payment) Per Applicant	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$5.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Paper Lottery (Check Payment) Per Applicant	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$5.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Day Use Fee Per Hunter	\$10.00	\$14.00	\$4.00

Expanded Amenity Recreation Fees	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Net Change
Umatilla (McCormack), America the Beautiful Senior/Access Waterfowl Day Use Fee Per Hunter	\$5.00	\$7.00	\$2.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Lottery Per Applicant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Use Fee (With an Adult \geq 18-years Old)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Umatilla (McCormack), Waterfowl Youth Hunt Day Use Fee for <i>Non-hunting</i> Adult (\geq 18-years Old)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
McNary & Umatilla, Waterfowl Hunting Season Pass (Good At Both Refuges)	\$80.00	\$96.00	\$16.00
McNary & Umatilla, America the Beautiful Senior/Access Waterfowl Hunting Season Pass	\$40.00	\$48.00	\$8.00
<i>Wildflower Lottery & Tour</i>			
Hanford Reach National Monument, Tour Lottery Per Applicant	New Fee Activity	\$3.00	\$3.00

Analysis Proposed Recreation Fee Rates

Waterfowl Hunting Use Fees and Lottery Application Fees

The refuges within the Complex provide excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation, wildlife observation and photography. McNary and Umatilla, in particular, are known for their waterfowl hunting. The McCormack Unit on Umatilla is especially well-known and attracts lottery applications from all over the country. Within the last two seasons, applications came from Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah and Wisconsin, as well as the expected Oregon and Washington. Many successful applicants, both within the Pacific Northwest and from elsewhere, hunt both refuges on a hunting trip, although McNary has more of a "local" following. Regardless of the point of origin of the hunters, both refuges—and especially the fee hunting areas—are well-known for their prime waterfowl hunting programs.

The proposed modifications to waterfowl hunting fees are based upon the need to partially recover costs to provide this quality service. Because staff time and procurements are not charged to individual recreational accounts, an exact cost of operating the hunting program is difficult to derive. However, staff involved annually include administrative staff (e.g., answering questions and handling money), maintenance staff (e.g., blind repair, mowing, weed control, habitat restoration), biology staff (e.g., habitat restoration), managers, visitor services staff (e.g., lottery web site, publications, hunting statistics, fee collection, hunter interactions), GIS staff (e.g., map production) and others; in fact, few, if any, disciplines are not involved in the hunting program each and every year. Each refuge has a full-time Hunting Station Attendant during the full hunting season. Law enforcement does little else during the hunting season. Resource costs run the gamete from fuel for maintenance vehicles to educational/information production (e.g., hunter information sheets, signs) to web site programming to building materials for blinds. The two hunt check station attendants at McNary and Umatilla NWR cost approximately \$48,000

annually (aggregate). Table 3 below is our best estimate of the costs associated with running the two premier fee hunting programs. While many of the staff could be considered sunk costs (salaries), those staff are unavailable to do other things and so are included here.

The proposed lottery fee modifications would bring in an additional \$2,800, assuming everyone pays with a credit card (the fees for payment by check are higher to discourage this form of payment) and assuming the same number of applicants as 2012 (approximately 1,400). However, \$1 of that would go to the credit card processing company, so the proposed lottery modifications would only net an additional \$1,400 plus whatever 'extra' fees are realized through payment by check (unknowable), for a net intake of \$15,450. However, payment by credit card will significantly decrease the amount of staff time spent in check processing, so there will be a reduction in overall cost (again, unknowable). A new analysis will need to be conducted after the upcoming hunting season to determine the net change in costs of the hunting program.

The net benefit of the additional day use fees is unknowable as the current number of users is not tracked, at least not by the use of season passes versus pay-as-you-go hunting. The best estimate would be to take the percent increase (40%) and apply that to the current income (\$33,050) for a net intake of \$46,270. However, this is likely to be less as more hunters will likely take advantage of the season pass, which is only increasing by 25%. Any hunter planning on hunting more than 7 days on either refuge will realize a cost savings in buying the season pass (down from 9 days currently to 'break even'). (We encourage the purchase and use of season passes as they significantly decrease the time spent getting hunters into the field each morning.) So, the real benefit will again need to be calculated after the season.

As witnessed above, currently the income from fees is well short of the costs of running the hunting program—\$47,100 - ~\$96,900 = (\$49,800). Even under the best case scenario, using the higher numbers above, the hunting program will not break even (\$15,450 + \$46,270 - \$96,900 = (\$35,180)). The proposed fee increases are mainly to keep up with rising costs, such as fuel and materials, and are not expected to decrease the deficit by any significant amount. (The \$35,000 figure assumes no cost changes, an unrealistic assumption as there will certainly be salary changes, at a minimum.)

What will decrease the deficit, by lowering costs, is the use of credit cards. We spend considerable time processing checks under FWS policies, and decreasing this time will allow staff to work on other things. Overlooking the fact that staff are sunk costs, the 'cost' of running the hunting program will go down, although by how much remains to be seen.

It should be noted that the numbers above assume that there will be no changes in participation. We believe this will be the case because, while the percentage of increase is substantial, the actual increase is insignificant to the cost of waterfowl hunting. Adding \$2 to the lottery and \$4 to the daily use is a small actual increase, especially as compared to other costs (e.g., fuel, shells, decoys, boats).

Table 3. 2012-2013 Costs of Hunting Programs on the McCormack & McNary Headquarters Units

Name	Role	2011-2012 Hours	Salary Costs	Other Expense Description	Other Expense	Total Cost
Richard Bare	Law Enforcement	157	\$7,142			\$7,142
Laci Bristow	Management	32	\$977			\$977
Sherrie Burns	Fee Collection/Deposit	46	\$1,836			\$1,836
Ed Dunn	Umatilla Hunt Station Attendant	880	\$22,255			\$22,255
Lamont Glass	Management	32	\$1,516			\$1,516
Javier Gutierrez	Blind/Trail/Road/Sign Maintenance	64	\$2,341			\$2,341
Dan Haas	Web, Lottery, Q & A, Fee Collection	148	\$8,643			\$8,643
Jayne Levy	Tear Sheet Production	20	\$932			\$932
Sue McDonald	Fee Collection; Personnel Supervision	108	\$5,560			\$5,560
Rebecca Merritt	Law Enforcement	246	\$10,445			\$10,445
Corey Thompson	McNary Hunt Station Attendant	880	\$21,481			\$21,481
Gary Rodriguez	Blind/Trail/Road Maintenance	64	\$2,559			\$2,559
Front Office	Q & A, Mailing, Fee Processing	90	\$2,538			\$2,538
Other	Bio, Senior Mgt., Etc. (GS-12)	18	\$927			\$927
				Web Site Maintenance	\$600	\$600
				McCormack Check Station Electricity/Heating	\$1,250	\$1,250
				McCormack Check Station Telephone	\$540	\$540
				McNary Check Station Heating/Lighting	\$200	\$200
				Umatilla Blind Materials, Fuel, Weed/Pest Spray, etc.	\$1,200	\$1,200
				McNary Blind Materials, Fuel, Weed/Pest Spray, etc.	\$1,200	\$1,200
				McCormack Attendant Fuel Use	\$250	\$250
				Law Enforcement Fuel/Materials	\$1,530	\$1,530

Name	Role	2011-2012 Hours	Salary Costs	Other Expense Description	Other Expense	Total Cost
				Mailing	\$100	\$100
				Print Tear Sheets	\$233	\$233
				Print Hunter Take Cards/Passes	\$350	\$350
				Hunting/Refuge Brochures	\$75	\$75
				McNary & Umatilla Office Supplies	\$200	\$200
<i>TOTALS</i>						<i>\$96,879</i>

Wildflower Tour Lottery Application Fee

The Hanford Reach National Monument, likewise, attracts attention from visitors around the country and even internationally—Japanese visitors are especially interested in the Monument. These out-of-state visitors are interested in a variety of activities, ranging from the land's history to its wildlife. Local users, however, are especially interested in access to the Rattlesnake Mountain Unit and its many biological attractions.

The fee proposed (\$3) would make the program self-sufficient, at least when considering direct costs. It would not cover staff salaries.

There is a certain logic in deciding to charge for a lottery. The Complex has experience in running a lottery that is free to enter (i.e., the hunting lotteries were free a decade or so ago). When a lottery is free, the public tends to enter regardless of a true commitment to the activity. Since there is no penalty for not filling a lottery selection, there is no reason not to enter the lottery, thereby 'keeping your options open.' When a 'penalty' is imposed (i.e., the \$3 entry fee) there is less of a tendency to enter without at least some level of commitment, thereby helping to ensure that all wildflower tour openings are filled. The local demand for these tours is so high that the FWS is committed to trying to fill every seat on the bus. (The last set of tours filled in 41 seconds using an on-line application process.)

The \$3 entry fee would cover the fee imposed by the credit card company (Kinsail) for processing payment (\$1/application). It would also cover the cost of the buses, which this year ran to \$840 for the Saturday tours and \$550 for weekday tours. Due to the high level of demand, it is anticipated that there will be funds available for restrooms for the tours (Porta-Potties) and the development of educational materials—props—for the tours (e.g., maps of the Missoula Floods). Entry fees will also be used to offset the programming for the lottery web site, which will, in turn, be used to provide education about the natural and cultural resources to be seen on the tours.

There is no way to even guess at the number of applicants, so an analysis of income is impossible at this time. However, it is anticipated that it will cover the expenses associated with the tour. If the fees collected is disproportionate to the money needed for the tours—either higher or lower—the application fee may need to be modified in the future.

There was some consideration of having the lottery winners pay for the buses. This was rejected for a couple of reasons. First, the FWS does not have a good mechanism to collect the fees, except by asking for checks to be sent in advance of the trip, which then generates a significant workload in processing the checks per FWS and other policies and procedures. Likewise, there is no way to ensure payment, thereby again leaving empty seats should someone decide they do not want to fill their lottery pick. Having an application fee handled by Kinsail to enter the lottery solves that issue. Second, due to the cost of the bus and other expenses, the cost per person would likely be in the \$25-\$30 range. This makes the tour prohibitively expensive to low-income families (each entrant is allowed to also enter a 'guest', thereby making the cost to a couple of approximately \$50-\$60). The FWS is committed to making the Monument available to everyone, and recouping costs through an application fee does this.

Comparison of Fees to Other Programs

There are few comparable hunting opportunities within the region, so a comparison of costs is not really possible. The only truly comparable public lands would be to that of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. In 2006, Ridgefield raised its day use fees to \$10 for one hunter, \$16 for two hunters per blind and \$24 for three hunters per blind (see Table 4 below). The refuge's season pass is \$100 per hunter. So, on a strict comparison, the Complex's proposed daily rates are substantially higher (\$14 for one hunter, \$28 for two hunters and \$42 for three hunters, irrespective of the blinds), while the proposed pricing for the season pass is slightly lower (\$96 as compared to \$100). It must be emphasized that Ridgefield's fees are seven-years-old.

The state of Oregon has a fee-hunting program at the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area. The lottery application fee is \$8 per hunting period (three hunting periods per waterfowl season), and a hunter can apply for all three periods, for a total lottery registration fee of \$24 for the season. But a hunter only gets five picks per hunting period. The only way to compare our lottery fees, since they are for an entire season, would be to break it down on a per day basis. Sauvie Island would be \$1.60 per day (\$24 divided by 15 picks). Our proposed lottery fee would be \$1.20 per day (\$12 divided by 10 picks). Of course, this analysis disregards the additional charges for applying by paper application and paying by check, but those additional charges are to cover additional administrative costs and to act as an incentive to apply and pay on-line, so it is reasonable to only focus on the base fee.

Sauvie Island has a much lower day use fee (\$2 versus \$14), but it is arguably not as quality of a hunt. It certainly doesn't offer the variation of hunting opportunities and duck numbers that McNary and Umatilla NWRs provide. No information was available for a comparison of administrative costs, so it is unknown how Sauvie Island's dollar of revenue generated per hunter versus dollar of cost per hunter compares to our refuges to determine if the day use fee comparison is on an equal footing.

There are comparable hunting opportunities in private lands (i.e., "duck clubs") in the area around the Complex's refuges. The FWS could not obtain the exact cost of becoming a member, but it is known that the fees run into the thousands of dollars, making the refuges a bargain. One nearby hunting club, Eagle Lakes Ranch in Othello, Washington, charges \$300/day plus tax (approximately \$324) for waterfowl hunting. A hunting club immediately adjacent to McNary, Paul's Ponds, charges \$275 per hunter per day for goose hunting and \$300 for duck hunting, although there is a \$50 discount for a group of five hunters for geese. A duck/goose combination hunt is \$530 per hunter. Presumably other hunting clubs in the area charge comparable fees.

One comparison that can be made is within that of the recreational opportunity spectrum. Each refuge that charges fees (McNary and Umatilla) also offers quality hunting areas that are free to use. While the hunting quality is not as good as within the fee hunt areas, it is still considered to be of high quality, and these areas receive high levels of use. In fact, the same lottery hunters use these areas on days when they do not have lottery picks in the fee hunt areas. The Complex takes great care in providing a range of opportunities to all of the public, regardless of income.

Table 4. Comparison with Other Waterfowl Hunting Areas

Name/Location	Land	Last Updated	Fee Type	Their Fee	Our Proposed Fee
Ridgefield NWR / Lower Columbia River	Public / National Wildlife Refuge	2006	Lottery Entry	\$1/Day; 10 Entries Max ¹	\$12/Season; 10 Entries Max
Ridgefield NWR / Lower Columbia River	Public / National Wildlife Refuge	2006	Day Use Fee	\$10/1 Hunter/Blind/Day, \$16/2 Hunters/Blind/Day, \$24/3 Hunters/Blind/Day	\$14/Hunter/Day
Ridgefield NWR / Lower Columbia River	Public / National Wildlife Refuge	2006	Season Pass	\$100/Hunter/Season	\$96/Hunter/Season ²
Sauvie Island / Lower Columbia River	Public / Oregon Wildlife Area	2009	Lottery Entry	\$8/Period; 5 Entries Max ³	\$12/Season; 10 Entries Max
Sauvie Island / Lower Columbia River	Public / Oregon Wildlife Area	2009	Day Use Fee	\$2/Permit/Day ⁴	\$14/Hunter/Day
Eagle Lakes Ranch	Private/ Othello, Washington	2013	Day Use Fee	\$324/Hunter/Day ⁵	\$14/Hunter/Day
Paul's Ponds	Private / Burbank, Washington	2013	Day Use Fee, Goose	\$275/Hunter/Day ⁶	\$14/Hunter/Day
Paul's Ponds	Private	2013	Day Use Fee, Duck	\$300/Hunter/Day	\$14/Hunter/Day
Paul's Ponds	Private	2013	Day Use Fee, Duck/Goose	\$530/Hunter/Day	\$14/Hunter/Day
Paul's Ponds	Private	2013	10 Day Pass, Goose	\$2,600/Hunter/10 Days	\$96/Hunter/Season ²

¹ Ridgefield NWR has three hunting periods per waterfowl season. Hunters can apply in each period for a total of 30 entries per season, which in turn would cost \$30. Our lotteries are for the entire season.

² Our Season Pass covers both McNary and Umatilla NWRs.

³ Sauvie Island has three hunting periods per waterfowl season. Hunters can apply in each period for a total of 15 entries per season, which in turn would cost \$24.

⁴ Sauvie Island has two types of hunting areas—blinds and free roam. In the blind hunting areas, the \$2 permit fee covers the applicant and up to three guests. No guests are allowed in the free roam areas, so it's essentially \$2/person/day in those areas.

⁵ This is just the hunting fee and does not include guides or any amenities.

⁶ There is a \$50 group discount for a group of five hunters.

There are no comparable programs to the wildflower tour lottery for the Hanford Reach National Monument. This is a unique program. The fees are designed to cover costs and transfer the costs to the lottery application fee from direct costs of winning participants, thereby keeping the tours affordable to all of the public. Without the recovery of costs, these tours would not be affordable within the current budgets.

Proposed Dates to Collect New and Modified Fees

Modified Hunting Lottery Fees will start with lottery applications on July 15, 2013.

Modified Hunting Daily Use Fees will start with the beginning of the waterfowl hunting season in Oregon and Washington, likely on October 12, 2013.

Discounts and Other Applicable Season Passes

All applicable local, regional, multi-entity and national passes will be accepted, including the:

- Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex Waterfowl Hunting Season Pass to cover the waterfowl hunting fee of the person identified on the pass.
- America the Beautiful Senior and Access Pass to reduce the fee of the person identified on the pass by 50%.
- Youth hunters (<16 years-old) to hunt free when supervised by an adult (18 years-old or older).

Detailed Explanation of How These Fees Will Be Collected and Deposited

The vast majority of lottery fees will be collected by credit card payment through Kinsail using the FWS national agreement on administration of recreation lotteries. Kinsail will provide automated email notification of all credit card transactions as they occur and will provide a detailed accounting of transactions at the completion of each lottery period, as per the national agreement. Kinsail will issue a check to the Complex at the completion of each lottery period, which will, in turn, be handled as per FWS, Pay.Gov and FBMS policies and procedures to deposit the funds to the Complex recreation fee account.

In the event that a lottery applicant does not want to pay via credit card, they will be allowed to submit a check with a \$3 surcharge to cover handling.

Each hunting fee area has an on-site attendant on each hunt day. This attendant, an FWS employee who has had the proper collections training and clearance, will collect the daily use fees, sell ATB passes and sell duck stamps. Payments are in the form of checks and cash, and receipts are given for each transaction. Money received will be handled according to FWS,

Pay.Gov and FBMS policies and procedures to deposit the funds to the Complex recreation fee account.

The wildflower tour lottery application fee will be collected by credit card payment through Kinsail using the FWS national agreement on administration of recreation lotteries. Kinsail will provide automated email notification of all credit card transactions as they occur and will provide a detailed accounting of transactions at the completion of each lottery period, as per the national agreement. Kinsail will issue a check to the Complex at the completion of each lottery period, which will, in turn, be handled as per FWS, Pay.Gov and FBMS policies and procedures to deposit the funds to the Complex recreation fee account.

Administrator of Program

Dan Haas, (509) 546-8333

Refuge Outreach Strategies

If the proposed changes to existing waterfowl hunting lottery and daily use fees are approved, the Complex will inform the public through the lottery application web site in advance of the hunting season and before lottery applications are submitted. Each hunting lottery applicant has to visit the web site, so there will be 100% notification to applicants of the fees and before the lottery application is submitted.

The wildflower tour lottery information will be communicated to the public through the issuance of press releases and through the lottery web site. Local media interest is high in access to the Monument, so it is extremely unlikely that there would not be press coverage of the lottery and any associated fees. Likewise, each applicant has to visit the web site to apply, so again, there would be 100% notification of the fees and what they cover to the potential applicant.

All communications (e.g., press releases, web sites, publications, media interviews) will strive to relay the message that fees collected will directly benefit refuge programs and the people who partake in them.

Anticipated Public Response to Proposed Fee Changes

There are no substantial reactions, either positive or negative, anticipated by changes to the hunting fees. Based on past experience, there will likely be a few hunters that complain, but most hunters that use McNary and Umatilla recognize the costs of running the hunting program and the quality of the experience they receive. FWS staff have had several conversations with hunters that use these areas, and while no one wants to pay more for anything, most acknowledge that occasional fee increases are necessary. Within the cost of waterfowl hunting (shotgun shells, dogs, boats, fuel, lodging, etc.) these minor fee increases do not significantly increase the overall costs of this activity.

Likewise, throughout numerous discussions with those interested in the wildflower tours on the Monument, there was no one who advocated keeping the current first-come, first-served registration process over a lottery process. The demand is so high that the server cannot keep up with the number of people trying to apply, leading to pages not loading and frustration among the public. Likewise, the elderly and others who may not be able to fill out the forms quickly are at a significant disadvantage in the current system. Among those contacted, there was universal support for a lottery with a small application fee. While this was not a scientific survey, it is anticipated that there will not be any substantial negative reaction from the entire public over this fee, given that it is small and covers all costs for those selected.

Approval Mechanism

Background

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), 16 U.S.C. 6803(c), Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-447) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to collect entrance fees, expanded amenity recreation fees (formerly called “use fees”) and special recreation permit fees through December 7, 2014. Under REA guidance, only sites approved for the Recreation Fee Program may charge fees. Sites not approved for the Recreation Fee Program may elect to be added to the program through a formal approval process of planning and public outreach. The Complex is a participating site within the Recreation Fee Program due to its long-term operation of a user fee for waterfowl and upland game hunting at McKay Creek, McNary and Umatilla National Wildlife Refuges.

Agency guidance for the Recreation Fee Program was last modified in September 2008 in the Fish and Wildlife Service Guidance for the Recreation Fee Program. The guidance delegates approval authority for adding new fee activities and modifications to existing fee activities for existing Recreation Fee Program to the Regional Directors. Regional Directors may approve smaller modifications (fee changes of \$10 or less or changes up to 20% of the current fee) *and* additional fee activities, if they are not controversial. The Proposed Modifications to Recreation Fee Program (Table 2) of the Recreational Fee Implementation Plan for the Complex identifies a set of proposed fee modifications and one new fee activity. All the proposed fee modifications to day-user fees or hunting applications fees represent nominal increases (\$2-5). Annual hunting passes which represent larger fee activities have been increased by 20%. All proposed fee increases are intended to partially recover the expenses of managing and maintaining the quality of the public use programs.

Procedure and Timeline

The steps for adding new activities and minor modifications to existing Recreation Fee Programs are described in the Table 5.

Table 5: Procedure and Timeline

Step	Action Item	Lead	Date	Status
1	Station Contacts Regional Fee Coordinator (RFC) to Discuss Proposal	Anderson	May 2013	Complete
2	RFC Confirms with National Fee Coordinator (NFC) that the Complex is in the Recreation Fee Program and not just the individual Refuges (Mckay Creek, McNary, and Umatilla NWRs). Critical to the addition of a new fee activity for Hanford National Monument	Anderson	May 6, 2013	Complete
3	RFC contacts Refuge Supervisor to discuss proposal	Anderson	May 6, 2013	Complete
4	Develop Implementation Plan	Anderson	June 7. 2013	Complete
5	Station to publish the proposal in a local newspaper or papers	Haas/McDonald	Early June	Complete
6	Station to share plans with the public (meetings, open house, newsletter, and/or website). Plan to include..... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site description - Estimated costs - Projected income - Evidence of non-competition with local business 	Haas/McDonald	Early June	Complete
7	Gather and review comment, make adjustments to plan; as warranted.	Haas/McDonald	30-day after Steps 4 & 5.	Pending
8	Project Leader submits Final Rec. Fee Implementation Plan to RFC.	Stenvall	NLT – July 15	Pending
9	RFC Routes Final Rec. Fee Implementation Plan to Regional Director	Anderson	Upon Arrival	Pending
10	RFC Notifies NFC and Station of Approval/Disapproval of Plan	Anderson	Upon RD Signature	Pending

Summary of Public Comment

The Complex opened a 30-day plus comment period on the proposed changes to its hunting fee structure. The comment period opened on June 7, 2013, and closed at 11:00 p.m. on July 7, 2013. The proposed fee changes, complete with the internal fee analysis, were posted on all nine refuge web sites (Cold Springs, Columbia, Conboy Lake, McKay Creek, McNary, Toppenish and Umatilla NWRs; the Hanford Reach National Monument; and the Complex's web site). Press releases were sent to all newspapers in the area of the refuges with changes (Hermiston; Othello; Pendleton; Tri-Cities of Kennewick, Pasco and Richland). It is known that the *Hermiston Herald* and *Tri-City Herald* ran articles on the proposed changes; it is not known what the other newspapers did. Notices also went to local television and radio stations, although none are known of to have carried the story.

During the comment period, only one comment was received, and it was in support of the proposed changes.

"Comments: The Addition of a New Fee Activity and Modification of Existing Fee Activities. Gentlemen: I believe your new fee structure is reasonable and I support it. I did not see any mention of Senior Pass fees. I presume they will remain the same? Thank you."

The writer also called, and we discussed the ATB fee structure (which was, indeed, in the proposal and discussed at length). The writer was happy that the ATB discount would remain and was still supportive of the fee changes.

It should also be noted that the writer lives on Whidby Island and was able to find the proposal without the benefit of newspaper articles or any other advertising.

