a manner creating a safety hazard, or endangering any person, property, or environmental feature, is prohibited. Any vehicle left parked in violation may be impounded at the owner’s expense.

Littering

All refuge lands must be kept clean during the period of use or occupancy. You must keep all refuse, trash, and litter contained in bags or other suitable containers, and not left scattered on the ground or in the water at any time. You must remove all personal property, refuse, trash, and litter immediately upon vacating a site. Animal carcasses and spent shells are considered litter.

This is a listing of the most commonly referenced regulations. Additional regulations are published in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 50, Subchapter C, The National Wildlife Refuge System, and available at refuge offices or the refuge website.

Special Regulation Areas

Areas throughout the refuge are designated as closed or restricted use areas, usually autumn to spring, to protect migrating waterfowl or for public safety. These areas are marked with orange topped “special regulation” signs (see next page) and list the restrictions and effective dates or seasons. Please read and heed these signs. Maps of these areas are available at refuge offices or the refuge website.

The Bertom-McCartney Closed Area in Pool 11 has no avoidance provision. The “no motor use” designation means the use of motors on watercraft is prohibited from October 15 through the end of the state duck hunting season, although possession of motors is allowed.

Electric Motor Areas

These signs identify an area which is closed year-round to all motorized vehicles and watercraft except watercraft powered by electric motors or non-motorized means. The possession of other watercraft motors is not prohibited, only their use.

In addition to being closed to all migratory bird hunting, these areas are closed to all public entry as specified.

The area marked by these signs is closed to all migratory bird hunting. Other hunting and trapping is allowed beginning the day after the close of the state duck hunting season, and season closure on March 15, whichever occurs first, except spring turkey hunting is allowed during state seasons. Please avoid entering the area from October 15 to end of regular state duck hunting season to allow waterfowl to rest and feed. On Lake Onalaska, this avoidance provision is marked by buoys and ends in mid-November.
Hunting and trapping have a deep history and tradition on the refuge. Most hunting opportunities are in wetlands, on islands, and in floodplain forest accessible mainly by boat.

Portions of the refuge are open to hunting and trapping in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. Most of the refuge is open to hunting. Local ordinances may restrict hunting near populated areas. Contact one of the refuge offices for information regarding special regulations that apply to hunting or fishing of interest. Please be aware that individuals involved in other recreation on the refuge may not be aware of on-going hunting seasons.

General Hunting Regulations

Hunting is not allowed on the refuge during the Illinois waterfowl season. Hunting is not allowed on the refuge June 1 through August 31, except for wild turkey during the spring season and fox squirrel on the Illinois portion of the refuge. Hunting is not allowed on the refuge except at Potter's Marsh and Closed Area, No Hunting Zone, Non Entry Sanctuary; on any sites not clearly visible from the main commercial navigation channel. Claimed campsites must be removed each night. Camping is defined as erecting a tent or shelter of natural or synthetic material, preparing a sleeping bag or other bedding material for use, parking of a motor vehicle or mooring or anchoring of a vessel, for the apparent purpose of occupation, or occupying or leaving personal property; including boats or other craft, at a site anytime between the hours of 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. on any given day.

Camping

Campfires are allowed only in conjunction with camping, day use activities on beaches, or in field trials or commercial/professional use. Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited. Campfires must be removed upon departure due to threat of invasive insects. See Public Use Regulations for further regulations.

Field trials or commercial/professional dog training are prohibited.

Camping is prohibited during waterfowl hunting seasons within areas posted Waterfowl Hunting Seasons and Closed Area, No Hunting Zone, No Entry Sanctuary; on any sites not clearly visible from the main commercial navigation channel.

License/Permits

Permits may be required for hunting on the refuge or hunting near the refuge. All such blinds are considered public property and open to use by any person on a first-come basis.

Mammals

Mammal hunting is allowed during annual hunts. Except when otherwise limited, hunting is allowed on all lands. For verification of the state boundary line, contact one of the respective State agencies.

Furbearer Harvest

Hunting and trapping have a deep history and tradition on the refuge. Most hunting opportunities are in wetlands, on islands, and in floodplain forest accessible mainly by boat.

Invasive plants should not be brought onto the refuge or used for blind-building. 

The building or use of warming fires while hunting is prohibited. Cutting, removing or damaging any tree or other vegetation except as allowed for blinds or by written permit is prohibited. For example, clearing sites for hunting blinds or limbs for trees stands is prohibited.

All vehicles are prohibited on or across refuge lands at anytime, except on designated routes of travel, or on the ice over navigable waterways from boat landings. Parking beyond vehicle control barriers or liming trees for trees stands is prohibited.

Invasive plants should not be brought onto the refuge or used for blind-building. 

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