

REGION 4
INTRA-SERVICE SECTION 7 BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION FORM

Originating Person: Carolyn Johnson
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Date: 2/16/2021

PROJECT NAME (Grant Title/Number): 2021-2022 Bond Swamp NWR Hunt Area Expansion
CatEx

- I. Service Program:**
 - Ecological Services
 - Federal Aid
 - Clean Vessel Act
 - Coastal Wetlands
 - Endangered Species
 - Section 6 Partners for
 - Fish and Wildlife
 - Sport Fish Restoration
 - Wildlife Restoration
 - Fisheries
 - Refuges/Wildlife
- II. State/Agency:** Georgia, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- III. Station Name:** Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
- IV. Description of Proposed Action:**

Bond Swamp NWR is proposing to expand hunting opportunities on an additional 698 acres. The new lands will be open for species already open to hunting in accordance with the refuge's 2011 Hunt Program Plan, the 2019 Environmental Action Statement and existing state and refuge specific regulations (50CFR 32.29). The acreage available for hunting will increase from the current 7896 acres to 8594 acres with this proposal. The refuge will maintain the 176 acres of closed area. The Cook tract is a 25-acre inholding donated to the Service in October 2019. The Service acquired three tracts from Peyton Anderson Foundation in May 2020 totaling 673 acres along the existing north boundary of the refuge. All of the tracts are located in Bibb County east of the Ocmulgee River.

Bond Swamp NWR opened to limited white-tailed deer and feral hog hunting in 1999. In 2011, the Service completed the Bond Swamp NWR Hunt Program Plan and Environmental Assessment, which expanded hunting opportunities on additional acres and new species. Current refuge hunting opportunities follow the 2012 Final Hunt Program Plan. The Refuge offers hunting opportunities for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, waterfowl, squirrel, rabbit, and

quail. Hunters may also take feral hogs incidental to the hunting of the listed game species.

All hunting opportunities fall within the framework of The Office of Migratory Bird Management and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR). All hunting opportunities fall within state seasons established by the GADNR and all state regulations will apply. Refuge-specific regulations may supplement and further restrict State hunting regulations and seasons. These refuge specific regulations may be applied to any hunting opportunities to reduce negative impacts to any species, habitat, or to reduce interference with any other public use opportunity.

CONDUCT OF HUNT

- Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of state and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations 50 CFR Part 32)
- Only non-toxic shot is permitted with the use of a shotgun.
- Hunters are required to report all harvested game at the check station before leaving the refuge.
- The refuge is open for public use during daylight hours only
- Some areas of the refuge may be zoned or restricted to season of use while others areas may be closed to all public use.
- Gasoline boat motors are permitted.
- Harvest data will be collected and used to ensure that the hunts are biologically sound and annual hunt evaluation reports discussing compatibility will be prepared by refuge staff.
- An active refuge law enforcement program will ensure regulation compliance and protect refuge resources.

General Prohibited Activities

- Taking, collecting, or disturbing any artifact, property, plant, wildlife, or part thereof, other than that specifically permitted by refuge regulation.
- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages
- Driving metal objects into trees or hunting from a tree in which metal objects have been driven
- Marking trails with flagging, blazing, painting, paper, trash, or other devices
- Walking, hunting, fishing, or trespassing on the railroad right-of-way
- Entering the refuge during firearm deer hunts without a refuge hunting permit
- Possess or hunt with buck shot
- Target shooting
- Off road vehicle travel
- Use of ATVs or other off road vehicles
- Leaving vehicles or trailers on refuge overnight
- Blocking refuge road, boat ramp, or gate with vehicles
- Vehicle travel around a closed gate
- Disturbing, annoying, or interfering with other persons
- Open fires
- Unleashed pets
- Removing live hogs from refuge

Table 1. Current and new species open for hunting and fishing on the Bond Swamp NWR.

Species	Currently open for hunting	New species
white-tailed deer	Yes	No
wild turkey	Yes	No
squirrel	Yes	No
rabbit	Yes	No
quail	Yes	No
ducks	Yes	No
Light geese	Yes	No
Dark geese	Yes	No
coots	Yes	No
Feral hogs	Yes	No
Freshwater fishing	Yes	No

V. Pertinent Species and Habitat:

Bond Swamp NWR uses IPAC to identify threatened and endangered species, including for purposes of this Biological Evaluation. This is done because the IPAC database is the better of the Service's databases for Bond Swamp NWR and may contain the best available information on species presence. Nevertheless, in order to ensure a thorough review, this Biological Evaluation considers all threatened and endangered species identified by both the IPAC and ECOS databases. Note, however, that these databases are updated regularly, approximately every 90 days, and, thus, it is possible that the specific threatened and endangered species identified as present on or near the refuge may change between the finalization of this Biological Evaluation and its publication and/or between finalization and your reading this document. Staff present on the refuge and conducting this evaluation may have the best available information about the presence of fish and wildlife species. Thus, where species are identified by either database, but the refuge has information that the species is not actually present within the "action area," we have explained that as the basis for our determination that any hunting and fishing activities will have no effect on the species.

A. Include species/habitat occurrence maps:

SPECIES/CRITICAL HABITAT	STATUS ¹
Relict Trillium (<i>Trillium reliquum</i>)	E
Fringed Campion (<i>Silene polypetala</i>)	E
Monarch Butterfly (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)	C
Gopher Tortoise (<i>Gopherus Polyphemus</i>)	C

¹ STATUS: E=endangered, T=threatened, PE=proposed endangered, PT=proposed threatened, CH=critical habitat, PCH=proposed critical habitat, C=candidate species

² REFUGE: Delete column if only one refuge

VI. Location (attach map):

- A. Ecoregion Number and Name:** Altamaha Ecosystem #31
- B. County and State:** Bibb and Twiggs counties, Georgia
- C. Section, township, and range (or latitude and longitude):** 3631000N, 254000E by 3614000N, 263000E
- D. Distance (miles) and direction to nearest town:** six miles south of Macon, Georgia along both sides of the Ocmulgee River
- E. Species/habitat occurrence:**

Relict Trillium: The presence of relict trillium is unknown on the refuge.

Fringed Campion: The presence of fringed campion is unknown on the refuge.

Gopher Tortoise: The presence of gopher tortoise is unknown on the refuge.

Monarch butterfly: This species occurs across North America during spring and summer but migrates to Central America beginning in early fall. The primary habitat is open field and grasslands with the main food source being milkweed. Most of the refuge is forested. Open areas are found along some roads and utility right-of-ways. Individual monarch butterflies are observed occasionally on the refuge, but the refuge does not provide suitable habitat for this species. Over the last five years of annual butterfly surveys, zero to three individual monarchs were observed per count for an average of one per year.

VII. Determination of Effects:

- A. Explanation of effects of the action on species and critical habitats in item (attach additional pages as needed):**

SPECIES/ CRITICAL HABITAT	IMPACTS TO SPECIES/CRITICAL HABITAT
Relict Trillium <i>Trillium reliquum</i>	<p>Species is not present within the action area. It occurs in hardwood forest in coastal plain and fall line. There are no documented locations of this species on the refuge although there may be potential habitat. If the species is found access restrictions may be implemented in the areas of occurrence. Minimal impacts are expected due to low concentration of this species and the nature of the proposed use. No critical habitat has been designated.</p> <p>Lead shotgun ammunition is not permitted on the refuge; however, lead rifle ammunition is. The amount of lead introduced to the environment as a result of hunting, however, is negligible given the average annual harvest with rifle is 22 deer and 7 feral hogs. Moreover, because the Relict Trillium is a</p>

	<p>plant, bioaccumulation of lead would not affect this species due to their position in the food chain.</p>
<p>Fringed Campion <i>Silene polypetala</i></p>	<p>Species is not present within the action area. It occurs in the coastal plain and fall line in mature hardwood or hardwood-pine forest on river bluffs, moist slopes, and small stream terraces and over biotite/amphibolite geology in fall line.</p> <p>There are no documented locations of this species on the refuge although there may be potential habitat. If the species is found, access restrictions may be implemented in the areas of occurrence. Minimal impacts are expected due to low concentration of this species and the nature of the proposed use. No critical habitat has been designated.</p> <p>Lead shotgun ammunition is not permitted on the refuge; however, lead rifle ammunition is. The amount of lead introduced to the environment as a result of hunting, however, is negligible given the average annual harvest with rifle is 22 deer and 7 feral hogs. Moreover, because the Fringed Campion is a plant, bioaccumulation of lead would not affect this species due to their position in the food chain.</p>
<p>Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i></p>	<p>Monarch butterflies spend spring and summer in areas of North America, preferring open field and grassland habitats. This species migrates to Central America beginning in early fall. Their primary food source is milkweed. No critical habitat has been designated.</p> <p>Suitable open grassland habitat is limited on Bond Swamp NWR and can be found along some roads and utility right-of-ways. Their host plant, milkweed is not readily found on the refuge. During the last five years of annual butterfly surveys only an average of one Monarch per year has been recorded with a minimum of zero and maximum of three individuals. With the low number of individuals found on the refuge, the time of year they are most likely to occur, and the nature of the activities associated with hunting and sport fishing, including expanding existing opportunities to new lands, butterflies are unlikely to be affected. Also, habitat quality for this species will likely not be altered. Only foot travel is allowed in any areas of grassland habitat suitable for Monarch butterflies, so it is unlikely that individual milkweed plants that may be damaged or destroyed would affect habitat quality.</p> <p>Lead shotgun ammunition is not permitted on the refuge; however, lead rifle ammunition is. The amount of lead introduced to the environment as a result of hunting, however, is negligible given the average annual harvest with rifle is 22 deer and 7 feral hogs. However, because the Monarch butterfly forages <i>exclusively</i> on nectar from milkweed, bioaccumulation of lead would not affect this species due to their position in the food chain.</p>

<p>Gopher Tortoise <i>Gopherus Polyphemus</i></p>	<p>Species is not present within the action area. They can occur in a wide range of upland habitat types in the coastal plain and along the fall line. Traditional habitats are xeric fire-dependent longleaf-pine-scrub oak type. Characteristics of suitable habitat include presence of well-drained sandy soils, abundance of herbaceous ground cover, and open canopy forest with sparse shrub cover. There are no documented locations of this species on the refuge, although there may be potential habitat on some limited upland sites. If the species is found access restrictions may be implemented in the areas of occurrence. Minimal impacts are expected due to low concentration of this species and the nature of the proposed use. No critical habitat has been designated.</p> <p>Lead shotgun ammunition is not permitted on the refuge; however, lead rifle ammunition is. The amount of lead introduced to the environment as a result of hunting, however, is negligible given the average annual harvest with rifle is 22 deer and 7 feral hogs. However, because the Gopher Tortoise forages <i>exclusively</i> on plants, bioaccumulation of lead would not affect this species due to their position in the food chain.</p>
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B. Explanation of actions to be implemented to reduce adverse effects:

1. The refuge will modify hunting/fishing activities if unusual concentrations of threatened and endangered species are known to be present and would be threatened by hunting/fishing activities.
2. The presence of Federal wildlife law enforcement officers will provide a deterrent to the take of non-target species.
3. Hunter numbers are minimized during the popular white-tailed deer, waterfowl and turkey hunts by a quota draw system. This will also minimize any potential disturbance to listed species.
4. Hunting on this refuge requires non-toxic shotgun ammunition during all open hunting seasons on the refuge. As a result, there are no anticipated adverse impacts from lead to any of the above listed species. Lead rifle shot is permitted. The amount of lead introduced to the environment as a result of this activity, however, is negligible. Over the last seven years, the average annual harvest with rifle is 22 deer and 7 feral hogs. Many of the above listed species are plants or herbivores, are transient species, or are not present in habitats where lead shot is allowed. We encourage the use of non-toxic ammunition when allowed and educate hunters about lead. As a result, there are no anticipated adverse impacts to any of the above listed species.

VIII. Effect Determination and Response Requested:

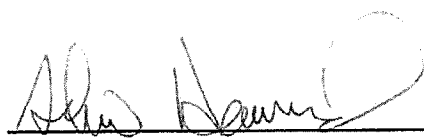
<u>SPECIES/CRITICAL HABITAT</u>	<u>DETERMINATION¹</u>			<u>RESPONSE¹ REQUESTED</u>
	<u>NE</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>AA</u>	
Relict trillium <i>Trillium reliquum</i>	X			Concurrence
Fringed campion <i>Silene polypetala</i>	X			Concurrence
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i>		X		Concurrence
Gopher Tortoise <i>Gopherus Polyphemus</i>	X			Concurrence

¹DETERMINATION/RESPONSE REQUESTED:

NE = no effect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action will not directly, indirectly, or cumulatively impact, either positively or negatively, any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat. Response Requested is optional but a "Concurrence" is recommended for a complete Administrative Record.

NA = not likely to adversely affect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action is not likely to adversely impact any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat or there may be beneficial effects to these resources. Response Requested is a "Concurrence".

AA = likely to adversely affect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action is likely to adversely impact any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat. Response Requested for listed species is "Formal Consultation". Response Requested for proposed or candidate species is "Conference".



Signature

7-29-21
Date

Refuge Manager
Title

IX. Reviewing Ecological Services Office Evaluation:

A. Concurrence ✓ Non-concurrence _____

B. Formal consultation required _____

C. Conference required _____

D. Informal conference required _____

E. Remarks (attach additional pages as needed):

JOHN
DORESKY

Digitally signed by JOHN
DORESKY
Date: 2021.07.29 15:02:42
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Signature

Date

Title/Office

**U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT FOR
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

NOTE TO FILE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is expanding hunting opportunities on an additional 698 acres of the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The new lands will be open for species already open to hunting on the refuge in accordance with the refuge's 2011 Hunt Program Plan and Environmental Assessment, 2019 Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement, and existing state and refuge-specific regulations.

Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and determined that the following proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA documentation requirements consistent with 40 CFR §1508.4, 43 CFR §46.205, 43 CFR §46.210, 43 CFR §46.215, and 516 DM 8.

The acreage available for hunting will increase from the current 7,896 acres to 8,594 acres with this proposal. Hunting will be allowed on four tracts of land acquired since 2019. The Cook Tract is a 25-acre inholding donated to the Service in October 2019. The Service acquired three tracts, totaling 673 acres along the existing north boundary of the refuge, from Peyton Anderson Foundation in May 2020. All of the tracts are located in Bibb County, east of the Ocmulgee River. The refuge will maintain its current 176 acres of closed area.

Species, bag limits, and type of hunt remains the same from the 2020-2021 hunt season. Currently the refuge allows hunting of 10 species: white-tailed deer, squirrel, rabbit, quail, turkey, waterfowl (ducks, light geese, dark geese, coots), and feral hogs. A combination of quota and open hunts provide quality-hunting opportunities.

The Service has fully satisfied the other requirements for expanding these opportunities on the refuge, including:

- x determining that the opportunities are compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (see attached);

- x ensuring the opportunities are consistent with existing state, local, and refuge-specific regulations (50 CFR 32.29);

- *Use of signs and brochures may supplement the refuge-specific regulations

- x complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (see attached);

- x complying with the Endangered Species Act section 7 evaluation (see attached);

- OR ☐ N/A because there are no candidate, threatened or endangered species present;

- ☐ complying with the National Historic Preservation Act section 106 consultation (see

attached);
OR x N/A because there are no cultural or historic resources present;

The Service is, therefore, waiving the requirement to prepare an opening package in compliance with Service policy (605 FW 2.9A).

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION CHECKLIST FOR NEPA COMPLIANCE FOR PROPOSED HUNT AREA EXPANSION AT BOND SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Proposed Action:

The Service is expanding hunting opportunities on an additional 698 acres of the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The new lands will be open for species already open to hunting in accordance with the refuge's 2011 Hunt Program Plan, 2019 Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement, and existing state and refuge-specific regulations (50CFR 32.29). The acreage available for hunting will increase from the current 7,896 acres to 8,594 acres with this proposal. Hunting will be allowed on four tracts of land acquired since 2019. The Cook Tract is a 25-acre inholding donated to the Service in October 2019. The Service acquired three tracts, totaling 673 acres along the existing north boundary of the refuge, from Peyton Anderson Foundation in May 2020. All of the tracts are located in Bibb County, east of the Ocmulgee River. The refuge will maintain its current 176 acres of closed area.

Bond Swamp NWR opened to limited white-tailed deer and feral hog hunting in 1999 under the conceptual management plan and interim compatibility determination completed for the proposed expansion of the refuge (USFWS Final EA/LPP/FONSI 1999). From 1999 to 2012, the Service continued to offer limited white-tailed deer and feral hog hunting opportunities as supported by the 2007 interim hunt plan and Environmental Assessment (EA), the 2009 draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and EA, and the 2010 final CCP and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In 2011, the Service completed the Bond Swamp NWR Hunt Program Plan and EA which expanded hunting opportunities on additional acres and new species. Current refuge hunting opportunities follow the 2011 Hunt Program Plan and EA and the 2012 Final Hunt Program Plan and FONSI.

This action supports the Visitor Services' goal: Provide and enhance opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and interpretation, and other compatible public uses. (USFWS Draft CCP and EA 2009, Final CCP and FONSI 2010). This action supports the objectives and implementation of the 2012 Hunt Program Plan through protecting a threatened ecosystem from damage, protecting the habitat of native wildlife and migratory birds, protecting unique and important plant species, and by providing the public with recreational opportunities associated with wildlife.

Summary of Anticipated Impacts:

Hunting is currently an appropriate, compatible, and permitted use at Bond Swamp NWR. This action will only result in a minor change of the amount of hunting on the refuge. The acreage available for hunting will increase 9% from the current 7,896 acres to 8,594 acres. Species, bag limits, and type of hunt remain the same from the 2020-2021 hunt season. Currently the refuge allows hunting of 10 species: white-tailed deer, squirrel, rabbit, quail, turkey, waterfowl (ducks, light geese, dark geese, coots), and feral hogs. A combination of quota

and open hunts provide quality-hunting opportunities. Increasing the area open to hunting will improve the quality of the existing hunting program but is not expected to substantially increase the number of hunters or harvest rates. It will allow the existing hunters improved access from a county road and additional space to spread out while participating in refuge hunts. The Bond Swamp NWR CCP (2009) and the Bond Swamp NWR Hunt Program Plan (2011) outlined current and future hunting opportunities. Minor impacts to the human environment by increasing acreage open to hunting would be similar to those analyzed in the EA for hunting in 2011 and the Bond Swamp NWR CCP and Compatibility Determination (2009).

Public Involvement/Interagency Coordination:

- Initial scoping letter to State of Georgia October 1, 2020 and follow up on April 29, 2021
- Initial scoping letters to Native American Tribes October 1, 2020
Comments sought from the following groups: Alabama-Coushatta, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Kialegee Tribal Town, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Poarch Band of Creeks, Seminole Nation, Seminole Tribe, and Thlopthlocco Tribal Town.
- Second scoping to Native American Tribes with EAs emailed June 4, 2021.
- Federal Register Notice appeared May 4 through July 6, 2021.

This Environmental Action Statement for Bond Swamp NWR was available for review and comment in the spring of 2021 nationally through the Federal Register, national website (<https://www.fws.gov/refuges/>), and on FWS social media. It was available locally from April 14, 2021 through July 6, 2021 at the Refuge Complex office. National public notice was provided through the Federal Register ([Volume 86, Number 84; 86 FR 23794; Docket No. FWS-HQ-NWRS-2021-0027, FXRS12610900000-212-FF09R20000; pages 23794-23842](#)) which was published on May 4, 2021.

This proposed action is covered by the following categorical exclusion: 516 DM 8.5(A)(1), 516 DM 8.5(B)(7) and 516 DM 8.5(B)(9).

516 DM 8.5(A)(1) Changes or amendments to an approved action when such changes have no or minor potential environmental impact.

This Categorical Exclusion applies since the refuge will expand hunting under the current hunt program plan (2012) to additional acres recently acquired. The action does not trigger an Exception to the Categorical Exclusions at 43 CFR §46.215.

516 DM 8.5 B (7) An action by the Service that only results in “minor changes in the amounts or types of public use on Service or state-managed lands, in accordance with existing regulations, management plans, and procedures” is categorically excluded from further NEPA analyses because it has been determined to be a class of action which does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.

This Categorical Exclusion applies since increasing the acres open to hunting will improve access and the quality of the existing hunting program but is not expected to substantially increase the number of hunters.

516 DM 8.5(B)(9) Minor changes in existing master plans, comprehensive conservation plans, or operations, when no or minor effects are anticipated. Examples could include minor changes in the type and location of compatible public use activities and land management practices

This Categorical Exclusion applies since the Bond Swamp NWR CCP (2010) and the Hunt Program Plan (2012) outlined current and future hunting opportunities, including additional lands.

The proposed action would implement the Bond Swamp NWR CCP (USFWS 2010) and Hunt Program Plan (USFWS 2012). It would extend current hunting opportunities to the Cook Tract (25 acres) and the Peyton Anderson Tracts (673 acres) as outlined in the Hunt Plan (2012), the Land Protection Plan/EA/FONSI (USFWS 1999), and the Environmental Action Statement for Categorical Exclusion to expand hunting opportunities (USFWS 2019).

Public hunting and the habitat types found on the newly acquired properties were previously analyzed in the EAs for the CCP and Hunt Program Plan, with no significant impacts found (USFWS FONSI 2010 and 2012). This proposal would represent a minor change to the approved CCP and Hunt Plan and would represent minor changes to existing hunting in accordance with existing regulations, managements, and procedures. No or minor impacts would be anticipated for the populations of target and non-target species and associated habitats. The proposed action would represent changes to approved actions and plans (in the CCP, Land Protection Plan, and Hunt Plan) where the proposed action would be anticipated to have no or minor beneficial or adverse impacts. The proposed action would result in minor changes in the amounts and types of public use activities in accordance with existing regulations, management plans, and procedures. Further, the proposed action would not trigger any of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exclusion outlined under 43 CFR §46.215. Therefore, the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA analyses because it has been determined to be a class of action which does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.

Extraordinary Circumstances (43 CFR 46.215):

Could This Proposed Action (*check (✓) yes or no for each item below*):

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ✓ | a. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ✓ | b. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO |

11990); floodplains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas?

- ☐ ✓ c. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2)(E)]?
- ☐ ✓ d. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?
- ☐ ✓ e. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?
- ☐ ✓ f. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?
- ☐ ✓ g. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau?
- ☐ ✓ h. Have adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species?
- ☐ ✓ i. Violate a Federal law, or a state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?
- ☐ ✓ j. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?
- ☐ ✓ k. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007)?
- ☐ ✓ l. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and EO 13112)?
- ☐ ✓ m. Have material adverse effects on resources requiring compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?

(If any of the above exceptions receive a “Yes” check (✓), an EA/EIS must be prepared.)

Supporting Documents: Supporting documents for this determination include relevant office file material and the following key references:

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1989. Final Environmental Assessment for the proposed Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Atlanta, GA.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1999. Final Environmental Assessment and Land Protection Plan Proposed Expansion of the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Atlanta, GA.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2007. Draft Sport Hunting Plan and Environmental Assessment for Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Atlanta, GA.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2009. Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Atlanta, GA.

Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact for Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge 2010

Draft Hunt Program Plan and Environmental Assessment for Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge 2011

Final Hunt Program Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact for Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge 2012

Federal Register Notice Final Rule Vol 77, No 176, Tuesday, September 11, 2012

Environmental Action Statement for Categorical Exclusion to expand hunting opportunities at Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, February 2019

Within the spirit and intent of the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and have determined:

- ✓ **The proposed action is covered by a categorical exclusion as provided by 43 CFR §46.210 or 516 DM 8.5. No further NEPA documentation will therefore be made.**
- **An Extraordinary Circumstance (43 CFR §46.215) could exist for the proposed action and, so an EA/EIS must be prepared.**

Service signature approval:

Signature 

Date: 7-30-21

Title Refuge Manager Bond Swamp NWR

