HUNTING PLAN

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge
Trempealeau, Wisconsin

Submitted by: Robert J. Suekien
(Reguge Manager) Date: Sept 29, 1983

Concurrence: Robert E. Taylor
(Refuge Supervisor) Date: 10/3/83

Acting
Assistant Regional Director
Date: 10/3/83

Approval: James C. Whitman
(Regional Director) Date: 10/5/83
I. Introduction

The "Affected Environment" chapter in the Trempealeau NWR Master Plan contain a detailed description of Refuge resources including geology and soils, hydrology, vegetation and wildlife.

II. Statement of Objectives

Refuge objectives for Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge were developed in 1982 as part of the Master Planning process. Deer hunting, small game hunting, and waterfowl hunting were ranked along with other wildlife and public use outputs in a priority list. During the conflict resolution phase of objective setting, trade-offs were made in hunting activity hours in favor of other, higher priority outputs. Thus, the proposals described in this chapter are in line with Refuge goals and fully consider the relationships with other outputs.

An important objective for all forms of hunting will be to provide wildlife related recreational opportunity through public utilization of renewable Refuge resources namely, deer, small game and waterfowl.

In the case of white-tailed deer, gun hunting will provide a means of population control, thereby maintaining deer numbers at desired levels. A post-hunting season target population of 125 deer has been established for the Trempealeau NWR.

The managed waterfowl hunt will provide an opportunity for the Service to demonstrate the type of quality, recreational program achievable where distribution and numbers of hunters are controlled. The Service has a rare opportunity at Trempealeau to gain greater public support and acceptance for Refuge hunting programs. It is recommended that a portion of the waterfowl
hunting area by utilized as a field training site in conjunction with Wisconsin DNR sponsored youth hunter safety programs.

Quantitative objective levels for the various types of hunting as developed in the Master Plan are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Activity Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deer Hunting - Gun</td>
<td>900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deer Hunting - Bow</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterfowl Hunting</td>
<td>5,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Game Hunting</td>
<td>16,000</td>
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<td>Total All Hunting</td>
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III. Assessment

The questions raised in the Refuge Hunting Plan format in 8 RM 5, Exhibit 2, para. III, are addressed in the following descriptions of the four major hunting programs.
IV. Description of Hunting Program

A. Deer Hunting - Gun; White-tailed deer utilize a variety of habitat types on the Refuge depending on the time of year. Map 1 illustrates the distribution of deer habitat within the existing Refuge and on areas proposed for future land protection to the west and north. Vegetation types included as deer habitat include grassland, upland shrub, upland forest, bottomland forest, wetland shrub and wet meadow. Deer habitat acreages are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habitat Type</th>
<th>Acres</th>
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<tr>
<td>Existing Refuge Lands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dairyland parcel</td>
<td>390</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private parcels north of Trempealeau River</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,570</td>
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</table>

1) Deer Populations - Based on monthly vehicle surveys conducted in 1981 and 1982, it was estimated that there are about 150 to 175 deer on the Refuge during the fall months. During severe winters with heavy snow cover, many deer move off the Refuge to bed in woodlots and pine plantations near cornfields on private land to the north and east.

  During November of 1982 a special gun-deer hunt was held on the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge had been closed to deer hunting since 1976 and the deer population had built up to a point where over-browsing was occurring with a potential for severe winter mortality. Consequently, a hunt was conducted under authority of special regulations for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Prior to 1979, deer hunting programs on Trempealeau were administered under the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR. In the future, Trempealeau will be administered as a separate Refuge and the deer hunting proposal included here parallels the procedure for opening a newly acquired Refuge.
During the special gun-deer hunt in November of 1982, 46 hunters harvested 39 deer in the two days of hunting. Map 2 shows the approximate kill location for each deer harvested during that hunt. It is apparent that the grassland, forest and shrub habitats in the central upland portion of the Refuge support the highest deer densities. However, the deer kill distribution illustrated on Map 2 partly reflects ease of access for hunters. For example, wooded islands and shrub areas west of the Green Bay and Western Railroad dike support deer but are isolated by old river channels and marshes, and therefore received little hunting pressure.

In summary, the deer kill distribution shown on Map 2 roughly approximates what can be expected in future hunts given the distribution of deer and the accessibility of the Refuge to walk-in hunters.

2) Assessment and Need for the Hunt - Observations during 1981 and 1982 indicated several habitat conditions which are known to reflect an over-abundance of deer. The most obvious of these were a distinct browse line on conifers and heavy browsing on hardwood seedlings. In some areas, a near total lack of oak reproduction in Refuge woodlots is believed to be the result of deer feeding activities. Although no systematic searches were made, five dead deer were found during the winter of 1981-82. All were believed to have died from starvation although this was not considered to be a particularly severe winter. Based on historical data available on winter losses, with a population of 175 deer, significant winter mortality could be expected to occur periodically.

Non-consumptive use, primarily deer watching from the auto tour route, accounted for the bulk of Refuge visitation by the public in 1980, 1981, and 1982. Deer management programs in the future must consider the impacts of hunting on these wildlife observation activities.
The objective of gun deer hunting will be to provide recreational hunting opportunity while annually harvesting a number of animals to achieve a post-hunting season population of 125 deer. Based on information available to date, this population level will:

a. Provide ample opportunities for deer viewing by the non-hunting public;

b. provide limited recreational use of the resource by deer hunters;

c. reduce the impact of deer feeding activities on vegetation;

d. reduce the potential magnitude of mortality during future winters.

3) Areas to be opened to the public - The entire Refuge will be opened for gun deer hunting except for Black Oak Island and a "Closed Area" within 300 feet of the headquarters buildings; a total area of about 50 acres. The closed area around headquarters was established for safety reasons and corresponds to State regulations which prohibit hunting within 300 feet of occupied buildings. The Black Oak Island complex is accessible only by boat or across the ice in winter. It was determined that these islands would remain closed to hunting due to the hazardous ice conditions which often prevail at this time of year. Thus, the area of deer habitat open to hunting on the existing Refuge will comprise about 1,850 acres. If the Dairyland and private parcels are included within the Refuge under future land protection, they would also be opened to gun-deer hunting. The total proposed open hunting area would then include approximately 2,500 acres.

4) Species to be taken - White-tailed deer.

5) Hunting dates - The Refuge gun-deer hunt will be held on the first two days of the State season which opens in the Refuge area in late November. The usual State season in southern Trempealeau and Buffalo counties open on a Saturday and runs consecutively for
nine days. Justification for restricting the Refuge season to the opening weekend only will be discussed in 7) below.

6) **Permits** - No special use or other Refuge permit will be required. However, only hunters who receive an appropriate Hunter's Choice permit from the Wisconsin DNR will be entitled to hunt on the Refuge.

7) **Consultation and co-ordination with the Wisconsin DNR** - A two-day, gun-deer hunt was held on Trempealeau NWR on November 20 and 21, 1982. As described in Section VI of this plan, hunter selection was handled by the Wisconsin DNR. They established a separate Quota Area for the Refuge and assigned the number of permits we requested as is done on several State Parks and deer management units. The same procedure is proposed in this plan for future Refuge deer hunts with only annual changes in the number of Hunter's Choice permits to be issued, depending on the desired number of deer to be harvested. The only regulations for the Trempealeau Refuge hunt representing a departure from State regulations will be the restrictions from the nine-day season in southern Trempealeau and Buffalo counties to a two-day Refuge hunt on the opening weekend only. The justification for this restriction in season length follows.

   a. Under the State season framework, either sex deer may be taken during the first two days, followed by seven days of bucks only hunting. During the 1982 Refuge hunt, it was demonstrated that a desired harvest could easily be achieved during a two-day hunt without exceeding a reasonable level on hunter density. Continuing the season for an additional seven days under a bucks only framework may potentially create friction between deer hunters and the traditional deer viewing public.

   b. Under the State framework in the Refuge area, firearms for deer hunting are restricted to shotguns and muzzle-loaders during the first two days, after which rifles may
be used. Due to the limited hunting area on the Refuge, it was felt inappropriate to permit use of rifles for safety reasons. This potential problem is eliminated with the two-day hunt restriction.

c. Since the 4.5-mile auto tour route traverses the area of highest deer density, this facility was closed to the public during the two-day gun-deer hunt in 1982 for safety reasons. This situation was not appreciated by many non-hunting Refuge constituents but was tolerated due to the limited time period involved. Lengthening the hunting season and tour route closure may serve to aggravate this situation. An alternative of opening the tour route while the deer hunt is in progress and running the risk of accidents or confrontations is unacceptable.

Refuge staff worked closely with the Wisconsin DNR personnel in the Black River Falls Area Office and the State Headquarters in Madison in setting up the details of the 1982 hunt. There was no opposition to the restricted season length provision at that time.

8) Methods of control and enforcement - Following receipt of a list of names and addresses of those selected for the Refuge hunt from the Wisconsin DNR, all successful applicants will be sent a packet of materials similar to the one used for the 1982 hunt (Figure 1). The packet will include a list of special regulations and a Refuge map showing access points, parking areas and the check station location.

A Refuge staff member will be on hand at the three access points on mornings during the hunt to provide orientation and ensure that only hunters with the valid Quota Area permit are allowed to enter. A 4 x 6' information sign will be erected at each access point to inform the public that the gun-deer hunt is in progress. For the remainder of both days of the hunt, Refuge personnel will alternate between staffing the check station and field checking the progress of the hunt. State Conservation
Dear Successful Applicant:

You were one of 50 applicants selected for the 1982 gun deer hunt on the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge.

Except for the Special Conditions as listed on the attached sheet, all State hunting regulations will apply.

Please note that during the two-day hunting period, the Refuge will be closed to the general public. Only hunters with a valid Hunter's Choice Permit for Quota Area 61B may enter (See note under Special Conditions).

If you have questions or need further information, give us a call at area code 608, 539-2311, or write:

Refuge Manager
Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge
Route 1, Box 326
Trempealeau, Wisconsin 54661

Sincerely,

Robert L. Drieslein
Refuge Manager

Encl
TREMPEALEAU NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

1982 Gun Deer Hunt

SPECIAL CONDITIONS


2. Open Areas: Entire Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge except the Closed Area around the Refuge Headquarters as shown on the map.

3. Limit: One deer of either sex.

4. Weapons: Shotgun with rifled slug or muzzle-loader.

5. Who May Hunt: Only persons with a valid Hunter's Choice Permit for Quota Area 61B. Note: Youths under 16 years of age who received a 61B Quota Area Permit may be accompanied by a parent or guardian, providing the adult does not have a firearm in his/her possession.

6. Check Station: All successful hunters must check their deer at headquarters before leaving the refuge.

7. Vehicle Access and Parking: At designated sites as shown on the map.

8. Tree Stands: Portable-type stands only; these must be removed from the Refuge at the end of each hunting day.

Refuge Personnel will be on hand at access points to provide orientation and answer questions.
Officers may be on hand to assist with law enforcement duties.

9) Funding and man-power requirements - A minimum of three Refuge employees would be required to administer the gun-deer hunt. Two must be permanent staff members with law enforcement authority. Several people have volunteered their time to assist with future hunts and this help will reduce the cost considerably. Utilizing volunteer help it is estimated that the total administrative cost of the hunt would be under $1,000.

V. Measures Taken to Avoid Conflicts with other Management Objectives
   A. Biological Conflicts - The principal potential conflicts involving deer hunters would include shooting of non-target species and damage to vegetation or soils caused by operating vehicles off the roads. Mitigation for both these contingencies will include law enforcement patrolling during the hunt. Foot trails and sensitive areas will be posted with signs restricting vehicle travel and hunters will be cautioned when they enter the Refuge to restrict vehicle travel to designated roads and parking areas.

   B. Public Use Conflicts - This has been discussed under IV. above.

   C. Administrative Conflicts - None

IV. Conduct of the Gun-Deer Hunt
   A. Federal Register documentation - It is recommended that a copy of this plan when approved along with the Master Plan Environmental Assessment, letter of concurrence from the State, and copy of the proposed rulemaking for opening Trempealeau NWR to gun-deer hunting be submitted to the Federal Register in time for consideration on the October, 1983, agenda. Tentative plans would be for a gun-deer hunt opening in November, 1984.

   B. Anticipated public reaction to the hunt - General public acceptance is anticipated. A few people expressed opposition to the 1982 hunt on the basis that it would be a slaughter and ruin the deer viewing opportunities. This did not prove to be the case.
C. Hunter application and selection procedures - Persons will apply for the Refuge hunt through the Wisconsin DNR Hunter's Choice Permit applications which accompany the gun-deer license. The completed applications are mailed to the DNR Bureau of Wildlife Management in Madison. Each year the DNR publishes a Quota Area Map with a list showing the number of Hunter's Choice Permits to be issued in each Management Unit (Map 3 and Figure 2). Through a random selection process, the desired number of permits will be selected from those indicating a preference for Quota Area 61B. Persons who applied for a Hunter's Choice Permit the previous year but did not receive one have preference in the selection process. Thus, it is extremely unlikely that a hunter would receive a permit for the Refuge two years in a row.

D. Publication of the Hunt - At least two months prior to the gun-deer hunt, a news release will be sent to local and regional newspapers, radio and television stations describing the hunt and procedures for applications. One follow-up release will be re-issued as a reminder about two weeks before the season opening. Format for the release will be similar to the one used prior to the 1982 hunt (Figure 3). In addition, details of the Refuge deer hunt will be references in the Wisconsin DNR's annual hunter synopsis.

E. Hunter Orientation - Hunter orientation in advance of the season will be handled through a letter and packet of materials mailed to all persons receiving a Hunter's Choice Permit for the Refuge hunt (Figure 1). In addition, Refuge staff will be stationed at all access points on the opening morning of the hunt to check hunters in, answer questions, and issue reminders regarding special hunt conditions not covered under State regulations.

F. Hunter Requirements - All State regulations with respect to age of hunters, firearms permitted and licensing and tagging requirements will apply.

An official deer registration station will be established at the Refuge headquarters. This station will be included in the list
Quota Areas and Deer Management Units

- Quota Area
- Non-Quota Area

Map 3: Quota Areas and Deer Management Units

See reverse side for numbers of hunter's choice permits available

State of Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources
Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707
In addition to the general seasons, there will be an open season for holders of validated hunter's choice deer hunting permits in quota areas. The hunter's choice permit does not represent a "bonus" deer as does the party permit. It simply allows the permit holder to tag a deer of either sex in the specified Deer Management Unit. The hunter can hunt in other units if desired, but then he/she would be restricted to a legal deer specified for that zone. The quota areas as shown on the map are management units or parts of units as indicated below:

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<tr>
<th>Management Unit</th>
<th>Available Permits</th>
<th>Management Unit</th>
<th>Available Permits</th>
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*Note—These state park units are for hunting with muzzle-loaders only.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Refuge Announces Rules for 1982 Deer Hunt

Trempealeau, WI--The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge will be open to gun deer hunting during the fall, 1982, season, according to refuge manager Bob Drieslein. A total of 50 hunters will be randomly selected from applications received by the state in Madison, Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has designated the Trempealeau Refuge as Deer Quota Area 61B. Hunters who wish to be considered for the refuge hunt should be sure to indicate a preference for Deer Quota Area 61B on the Hunters' Choice permit application, which they will receive when they purchase a Wisconsin deer hunting license. No other application forms are required. Selected applicants will receive a packet of materials from the Refuge, which will include a refuge map and details on any special conditions for the hunt.

The season for the 1982 hunt on Trempealeau Refuge will be restricted to the first two days of the state 2+7 season only (Saturday, November 20, and Sunday, November 21). Only shotguns with rifled slugs or muzzle-loaders may be used to take one deer of either sex during this special hunt.
Drieslein points out that, for safety reasons, the four-mile auto tour route and all hiking trails on the refuge will be closed to the general public during the two-day deer hunting season.

Further information on the special deer hunt is available from refuge headquarters located four miles southwest of Centerville, Wisconsin, or by calling (608) 539-2311.
published and circulated by the Wisconsin DNR prior to the season. All deer taken on the Refuge must be registered at the Trempealeau headquarters.

Special conditions for the Refuge hunt not covered under State regulations are as follows:

1. Vehicles will be restricted to designated roads and parking areas;
2. Open fires will not be permitted;
3. Portable tree stands may be used for hunting but must be removed at the conclusion of the hunt each day;
4. Only persons with a valid Hunter's Choice Permit for Quota Area 61B may enter the Refuge while the hunt is in progress.

Under State law, 12 and 13-year-olds and persons aged 14 and 15 who do not have a Hunter Safety Certificate, must be accompanied by a parent or guardian while hunting. Therefore, youth between the ages of 12 and 16 who received a Refuge permit must have a parent or guardian with them during the hunt, however the adult may not possess a firearm.
B. Deer Hunting - Bow

1) Background - Deer habitat, numbers and distribution are discussed under the description of the gun-deer hunting program in the previous section. The original 706-acre Refuge has never been open to bow hunting although a few individuals with special permission hunted on lands of the former Delta Fish and Fur Farm in the past.

Bow-hunting for deer is a popular form of recreation in the Refuge area. During the Master Plan public involvement process there was considerable interest in, and general support for, opening a portion of the Refuge to this activity.

2) Areas to be opened to the public - The area to be opened to bow-hunting is shown on Map 4. Excluding open water and marsh, the amount of huntable habitat within the open area in the existing Refuge is about 1,200 acres. If the Dairyland and private parcels are included under future land protection, they may also be open to bow-hunting. The total proposed bow-hunting area would then include about 1,900 acres.

3) Species to be taken - White-tailed deer.

4) Hunting dates - Under this management plan, bow-hunting on the Refuge will be permitted during the late season only. This season in Wisconsin usually opens on the first Saturday in December and continues through the end of the month. Following a three year evaluation of the late-season bow-hunting program, a decision will be made whether or not to open the Refuge during the two-month early bow season which opens in mid-September.

5) Permit justification - Hunter numbers will be limited by a permit system to prevent over-crowding and maintain an acceptable level of quality in the hunt. Due to the high demand for bow-hunting in the area and the numbers of deer on the Refuge, it is likely
that without some type of limited permit system, excessive numbers of hunters could be expected.

In 1968, nearby Perrot State Park was opened to bow-hunting during the late season with no limit on hunter numbers. This hunt resulted in a greater harvest of deer than was anticipated. There were several instances of poor hunter behavior which generated considerable adverse publicity and local opposition to future bow-hunts in the Park. Perrot State Park has been closed to bow-hunting since 1968.

In view of this experience on a public area nearby, the limited Refuge hunt proposal is strongly recommended. Issuance of a total of 60 permits would result in a maximum hunter density of about one hunter per 20 acres of deer habitat on the existing Refuge.

6) Consultation and co-ordination with the State - Following in-house review and approval of this plan, Wisconsin DNR personnel will be asked to comment on the bow-hunting program. Due to their involvement in the development of the Master Plan, the Wisconsin DNR is already generally familiar with the bow-hunting provisions and their support is anticipated. They are expected to support the limitation of hunter numbers due to the experience with the Perrot State Park hunt.

7) Methods of Control and Enforcement - Refuge personnel will conduct daily patrols during the bow-hunting season to insure that all hunters have the required permit. Parking will be permitted only in designated parking areas at the lower farm and upper farm. Use of the upper farm road will be at the discretion of Dairyland Power Cooperative until such time as the FWS acquires an interest in the road to allow public access. When the private parcel to the north of the Trempealeau River is included under future land protection, hunter access to those lands will be from the parking area just north of the iron bridge.
All deer taken on the Refuge during the late bow season must be registered at Refuge headquarters. Instructions for contacting the Refuge Manager will be posted at headquarters during times when the office is not open.

State Conservation Officers will assist Refuge staff in law enforcement activities on the Refuge at their discretion.

8) Funding and staffing - No additional funds or staff will be required to administer this hunt. Administrative costs will include news releases, hunter selection and orientation, mailing of permits, checking deer, law enforcement patrolling and record-keeping.

V. Measures Taken to Avoid Conflicts with other Management Objectives
   A. Biological Conflicts - None foreseen.
   B. Public Use Conflicts - During the conflict resolution phase of the Master Planning process, the relationship of bow-hunting to other outputs was evaluated both in terms of time and space. Based partly on that evaluation, certain restrictions will be placed on the hunt, largely to alleviate potential conflicts with non-consumptive users. These are as follows:
      1. No bow-hunting will be permitted in the central upland portion of the Refuge traversed by the auto tour route.
      2. Bow-hunting in the remainder of the Refuge will be permitted during the late season only for a three year evaluation period. With the exception of self-guided auto tour route use, other non-consumptive public activities drop off substantially after the fall migration period.
      3. Limitation of hunter numbers in the area open to bow-hunting will minimize conflicts with other visitors in that area.
   C. Administrative conflicts - The administrative workload of this hunt will be absorbed by the existing Refuge staff and will not cause any major conflicts with other programs.
VI. Conduct of the Hunt

A. Federal Register documentation - It is recommended that a copy of this plan, when approved, along with the Master Plan EA, letter of State concurrence, and copy of proposed rule-making for opening Trempealeau NWR to bow-deer hunting be submitted to the Federal Register in time for consideration on the October, 1983 agenda. Tentative plans would be for a bow-deer hunt opening in December, 1984.

B. Anticipated public reaction to the hunt - General public support is expected. The subject of bow-hunting generated little or no controversy during the Master Plan public involvement process.

C. Hunter application procedures - Following announcement of the bow-hunt through the local and regional news media, persons will apply directly to the Refuge by submitting a postcard with their name, address and zip code prior to an October 1st deadline.

D. Hunter selection - All applications received before the October 1st deadline will be numbered, and entered into a computer with names randomly selected.

E. Publicity for the hunt - On or about July 15th, a news release describing the Refuge bow-hunting season with directions on how to apply will be circulated to local and regional newspapers and radio stations. A follow-up reminder will be issued in early September. The Refuge bow-hunt will be referenced in the annual State Hunting synopsis.

F. Hunter orientation - All persons selected to participate in the Refuge bow-hunt will be sent a letter of notification along with a map of the hunting area and a list of special conditions not covered under State regulations. The letter will serve as their Refuge hunting permit.

A bow-hunter orientation workshop will be held in the local area during the month of November. The workshop will include information on equipment, regulations, hunting methods and hunter
ethics. Workshop staff may include selected experienced bow-hunters, State conservation Officers and wildlife managers, equipment dealers, and Refuge employees. Attendance at the workshop will be mandatory for all youths under 16 selected for the Refuge hunt. Attendance by all other selected applicants will be strongly encouraged. The workshop will also be open to the general public.

G. Hunter requirements - All State regulations with respect to age of hunters, hunting hours, equipment permitted and licensing and tagging requirements will apply.

Special conditions for the Refuge hunt not covered under State regulations are as follows:

1. All deer taken on the Refuge must be registered at Refuge headquarters or by the Refuge manager during non-working hours as per posted instructions;

2. Vehicles will be restricted to roads and parking areas designated in the permit;

3. Open fires will not be permitted;

4. Only portable tree stands may be used for hunting and must be removed at the conclusion of the hunt each day;

5. Only persons with a letter of selection for the Refuge hunt signed by the Refuge Manager are eligible. In addition, youths under 16 years of age must attend the bow-hunting orientation workshop to be held in advance of the hunt.

6. Youth hunters 12 and 13 years of age, and 14 and 15-year-olds who do not have a Hunter Safety Certificate must be accompanied by a parent or guardian while hunting on the Refuge. The adult companion may not possess a bow and arrows unless he/she also received a selection letter from the Refuge.
C. **Small Game Hunting**

1) **Background** - Species listed under the small game hunting regulations in Wisconsin which occur on the Trempealeau NWR include the following:

- Gray and fox squirrel
- Ruffed grouse
- Cottontail rabbit
- Raccoon
- Bobwhite quail
- Ring-necked pheasant
- Red and gray fox

Many other species such as weasels, skunks, opossums and red squirrels are unprotected and may be taken at any time outside the Refuge with a Wisconsin small game hunting license.

2) **Small game habitat** - The area described as deer habitat on Map 1 roughly includes most habitats which support species of small game listed above. Within that general area, different species may frequent specific vegetation types. For example, squirrels are found in or adjacent to upland forest, bottomland hardwoods, forested dikes, and building sites where deciduous trees predominate. Pheasants are observed along roadsides and in and near grassland areas.

With the exception of squirrels and raccoon, populations of small game species are relatively low. Ruffed grouse and ring-necked pheasants are seen regularly but in small numbers. Cottontails are seen occasionally, and there have been no sightings of bobwhite quail since the spring of 1981. There are no recent records of gray fox on the Refuge. Red fox are rarely seen, however winter sign indicates that several individuals occur on the Refuge.

Trempealeau Refuge supports a moderate population of both gray and fox squirrels, the latter being the most common. It is expected that these species will provide the greatest share of the small game harvest.
Raccoons are common throughout the Refuge and very few are taken by trappers during the season opening in late November.

3) **Areas to be opened to the public** - Small game hunting areas on the existing Refuge and adjacent lands proposed for future land protection are shown on Map 5. Excluding open water and marsh, the amount of huntable habitat within the open area in the existing Refuge is about 400 acres. Future land protection which would include adjacent lands to the west and north may bring the total to about 1,000 acres.

4) **Species to be taken and hunting dates** - It is recommended that the Refuge be open for hunting of the following listed species during the dates shown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Open Season Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gray and fox squirrel</td>
<td>State season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mid-Sept. to Jan. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffed grouse</td>
<td>State season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>early Oct. to Jan. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottontail rabbit</td>
<td>State season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>late Oct. to Feb. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring-necked Pheasant</td>
<td>State season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>late Oct. to early/mid Dec.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) **Refuge permits** - None required.

6) **Consultation with the State** - Following in-house review and approval of this plan, appropriate Wisconsin DNR personnel will be asked to review and comment on the small game hunting proposal.

There are a number of provisions in the Refuge small game hunting regulations which are more restrictive than State law. These are summarized and discussed in the following section.

a. Due to conflicts with deer and potential law enforcement problems, it was judged to be inappropriate to permit raccoon hunting on the Refuge using the traditional techniques involving dogs and artificial lights. Since
these restrictions eliminate most opportunity for harvesting raccoons through hunting, it is recommended that the raccoon not be included in the list of huntable species on the Refuge.

b. In view of the rarity of bobwhite quail on the Refuge, this species should be excluded from species which can be taken. Hunting of quail can certainly not be justified on a "harvestable surplus" basis. If the bobwhite quail population should increase to harvestable proportions in the future, this species could be added to the list of legal game later.

c. There are no recent sightings of gray fox on the Refuge although they occur on nearby Perrot State Park and undoubtedly are present here. It is doubtful that a harvestable surplus of this species exists. Red fox are occasionally seen on the Refuge. However, this species travels extensively and it is believed that the Refuge population is already subject to harvest from fox trappers on adjacent lands. In view of this and the high value of these animals for wildlife observation, it is recommended that both red and gray foxes be excluded from the list of permitted species on the Refuge.

d. Several mammals classified as "unprotected" under State regulations occur on the Refuge. These include the opossum, striped skunk, two species of weasel, red squirrels and a variety of small mammals. Since these species have little or no food or economic value and little is known about their populations and status, there is little justification for including them as permitted species under small game regulations on the Refuge.

7) **Control and enforcement** - Small game hunters will not be required to check their game at Refuge headquarters. Hunter success will be determined on the basis of random bag checks by Refuge
personnel. Appropriate law enforcement patrolling will be conducted by Refuge and State officers to assure compliance with hunting regulations. Hunters will be required to restrict their vehicles to designated roads and parking areas. Prior to inclusion of the areas identified for future land protection, use of the upper farm road for public vehicles will be at the discretion of Dairyland Power Cooperative.

The area open to small game hunting will be posted with the standard, Fish and Wildlife Service hunting areas signs.

8) **Funding and staffing requirements** - Administration of the small game hunting program will be handled with existing Refuge staff. An initial investment of about $1,500 will be required for purchase of public hunting area signs.

V. Measures Taken to Avoid Conflicts with other Management Objectives

A. Biological conflicts - There is a potential for shooting of non-target species. Several species of raptors, including bald eagles, will be present during the small game hunting season. Law enforcement patrolling by Refuge and State officers with aggressive prosecution of violators will mitigate this potential.

B. Public use conflicts - Potential conflicts between small game hunters and non-hunting visitors was considered when the hunting areas were established in the Master Planning process. The areas of high non-consumptive use such as the auto tour route and interpretive trails will not be open to small game hunting.

C. Administrative conflicts - None.

VI. Conduct of the Hunt

A. **Federal Register documentation** - It is recommended that a copy of this plan, when approved, along with the Master Plan EA, letter of State concurrence, and copy of proposed rule-making for Trempealeau NWR to small game hunting be submitted to the Federal Register in time for consideration on the October, 1983 agenda. Tentative opening for the hunt would be during the fall of 1984.
B. Anticipated public reaction to the hunt - No major controversy regarding small game hunting surfaced during the Master Plan public involvement process. There may be some feeling by sportsmen that a larger area of the Refuge should be open to hunting. Correspondingly, there are some environmental groups that would oppose increasing the hunting area. It is believed that the hunt provisions as proposed with the restrictions noted will be acceptable to the general public.

C. Hunter application and registration - No special applications will be required.

D. Hunter selection process - Not applicable.

E. Publicity - A news release with a map of the area open to small game hunting will be sent to local newspapers, and radio stations in July or August with a follow-up release in early September. Small game hunting on the Refuge will be referenced in the annual State Small Game Hunting synopsis.

F. Hunter orientation - In addition to the hunting announcement news release, a hunting map will be printed with copies available in leaflet dispensers at access points. The leaflet will show hunting areas and list special regulations not covered under State law.

G. Hunter requirements - The hunting seasons, bag limit, firearms permitted, and age limitations on hunters will be the same as State regulations. The following special regulations for the Refuge small game hunt will apply:

1. Vehicles will be restricted to designated roads and parking areas;

2. Open fires will not be permitted;

3. Only squirrels, rabbits, ruffed grouse, and pheasants may be taken in season. All other species are protected,
D. Waterfowl Hunting

1) Background - The 4,900 acre, former Delta Fish and Fur Farm was open to waterfowl hunting by a limited number of individuals under private ownership. The former owner leased the duck hunting rights to a private club which in turn sold membership to local individuals. In 1975 there were about 40 members in the club, however, many people hunted infrequently. Former Refuge Manager Stanley Cornelius recalls many days during the waterfowl season when there were no hunters on the "Delta". The club had established closed areas on the marsh and restricted hunting to mornings only during portions of the season. Although Refuge staff have been unable to locate any historical records on waterfowl harvest on the "Delta", Cornelius feels that the kill, during the last years the area was in private ownership, was relatively light.

During the master Plan public involvement process, the proposal to open the Refuge to waterfowl hunting generated considerable controversy. Two environmental groups and several private citizens expressed opposition. The Wisconsin DNR and local sportsmen supported a limited, waterfowl hunting program on a portion of the area.

2) Objectives of the Waterfowl Hunt - The quantified Refuge objective for this activity as developed in the Master Plan is to provide up to 5,500 activity hours of wildlife oriented recreation without detriment to the waterfowl resource. The success of the program will not be measured by the number of birds in the bag alone, but by the extent to which a quality hunting program can occur without significant negative impacts on Refuge waterfowl use levels.

3) Waterfowl populations and distribution - The "Affected Environment" chapter of the Master Plan includes a detailed description of waterfowl habitat within the Trempealeau NWR.
Map 6 illustrates the general distribution of marsh vegetation within the main pool. The areas outlined in red on Map 6 depict waterfowl concentration areas. The large area circled in red supports a major share of duck use during the fall migration. During the period 1980-82, flocks of up to 10,000 ring-necked ducks along with several thousand wigeon and mallards used this area for staging during the month of October. The small irregular area outlined in red on Map 6 around Black Oak Island identifies an important woodduck staging area. Woodducks concentrate here from mid-September to mid-October to feed on acorns along the wooded shorelines. During years of heavy acorn production, Cornelius counted over 5,000 woodducks in this limited area.

4) Hunting Areas - During the Master Planning process, it was determined that waterfowl hunting in the red areas identified on Map 6 could have a major impact on existing duck use patterns on the Refuge. In addition, there were serious difficulties with waterfowl hunting in the eastern two-thirds of the Refuge in terms of conflicts with the auto tour route and other recreationists. Therefore, the areas identified for waterfowl hunting were limited to existing Refuge and proposed protection lands west of the Green Bay and Western Railroad right-of-way, and the strip of private land north of the Trempealeau River proposed for future protection (Map 7).

Within the existing Refuge, about 1,000 acres of waterfowl habitat would be open to hunting. An additional 880 acres is included within the Dairyland and private parcels bringing the total proposed hunting area to about 1,900 acres.

Obviously, the lands in private ownership can not be opened to public hunting until the Service has control of those properties through some form of land protection. In view of the fact that inclusion of these parcels within the Refuge may not occur within the next year or two, phase one of the waterfowl hunting plan will consider public hunting on the 1,000 acres of existing Refuge habitat. This phase will require some measure of land protection or cooperative agreement with Dairyland Power Cooperative to permit
public use of the Upper Farm road for hunting access. It is expected that Dairyland would be agreeable to some arrangement along these lines.

5) **Species to be taken** - All waterfowl which can legally be taken under State and Federal laws in the season zone in which Trempealeau Refuge is located could be included in the bag.

6) **Hunting dates** - The Refuge hunting season would open concurrently with the State season in early October and run through the close of the State season in late November. Some additional restrictions will be imposed on shooting hours and the number of days per week that hunting is permitted to provide some sanctuary and insure continued duck use of the hunting area on through the season. Details of these restrictions will be described in the annual hunting program.

7) **Permits required** - A special Refuge permit will be required of all hunters participating in the waterfowl hunt. A limited number of permits will be issued for the following reasons:
   a. To insure that the total number of birds harvested does not significantly exceed traditional levels which occurred under former private ownership;
   b. To insure that hunter density is such that participants may enjoy a high quality hunting experience.

The number of permits to be issued each year will be announced in the annual hunting program. The procedure for selection of hunters has not been determined at this point, however details will be included in the annual hunting program. Waterfowl hunting on the Refuge will be referenced in the annual Waterfowl Hunting Regulations issued by the State of Wisconsin.

8) **Consultation and Coordination with the State** - During the Master Planning process, the Wisconsin DNR expressed strong support for opening a portion of the Refuge to a managed waterfowl
hunt. Following in-house review of this plan, they will be asked to review and comment on it.

Prior to development of the details on the actual conduct of the hunt, State waterfowl biologists and other appropriate DNR personnel will be consulted in a meeting format and asked for their ideas.

9) Methods of control and enforcement - During phase one of the waterfowl hunting program, hunters will park at the old farm site at Site A or along the shoulder of Hwy 35-54 at the north end of the upper farm road (Map 7). Boats may be launched and gear unloaded at Site C. However, the driver will have to walk back from the vehicle parking area, a distance of about 1/4-mile. All hunter access will be administered through this point to simplify control and reduce the likelihood of trespassing from the highway right-of-way.

Law enforcement patrolling will be handled with existing Refuge staff, however, one additional temporary employee will be hired to assist in preparations, control of hunters, bag checking and administration. No separate check station will be established. Bag checks will be conducted in the field. State law enforcement officers will assist Refuge staff at their discretion.

Phase two of the waterfowl hunting proposal will occur following inclusion of the two private parcels in the Refuge under a land protection program. A larger parking area will be developed at the north end of the upper farm road (Site B on Map 7) and the boat launching area at Site C expanded to include access to areas west of the road.

Access to the hunting area north of the Trempealeau River will be from the parking area and boat launch just north of the iron bridge. (Site D on Map 7).

10. Funding and staff to support the hunt - During phase one of the waterfowl hunting program, funds will be needed for rock and gravel to repair the upper farm road and construct a boat
launched site. Salary costs to support one temporary employee for 90 days are also required. Total cost is estimated at about $6,000. This is assuming that administrative assistance for handling applications, the drawing, news releases, etc. can be counted on from within the Complex.

Following inclusion of the Dairyland and private parcels within the Refuge, a larger, more labor intensive managed hunt will be implemented. No estimates of required funds and staffing are possible until details on the conduct of the hunt are developed. These will be determined and itemized in the annual hunting program.

V. Measures Taken to Avoid Conflicts with other Management Objectives

A. Biological Conflicts - The greatest potential biological conflict is the shooting of non-targe species by waterfowl hunters. The bald eagle, a federally threatened species, will be present in relatively small numbers during the hunt. Cautioning of hunters and warnings of severe penalties during the hunter orientation along with aggressive law enforcement patrolling during the hunt will mitigate this potential problem.

There is a possibility that the total harvest of waterfowl could significantly exceed expectations due to factors which are difficult to predict. This problem could be mitigated by closing the season earlier or reducing the number of permits the following year, or both. In the event of an emergency closure, the procedures outlined in 50 CFR, para. 32.1 will be followed.

B. Steel Shot - At the present time, the Trempealeau NWR is included within a steel shot zone designated by the State of Wisconsin. As per existing FWS policy, steel shot will be required for waterfowl hunting.

C. Public Use Conflicts - No major conflicts between waterfowl hunters and other visitors are anticipated. Hunting will be concentrated in marsh and water areas away from dikes and trails
used by non-consumptive users. The decision to restrict the hunting area to the western portion of the Refuge away from the auto tour route and other high use areas reduces the likelihood of visitor conflicts.

D. Administrative conflicts - There is no question that a full-scale managed waterfowl hunting program on the areas delineated in Map 7 will require increased staff time to set up and administer. However, during the Master Planning public involvement process, it was apparent that neither alternative of either wide open hunting or no waterfowl hunting will be acceptable to the public.

IV. Conduct of the Hunt

A. Federal Register documentation - It is recommended that a copy of this plan when approved along with the Master Plan EA, letter of concurrence from the State, and copy of the proposed rule-making for opening Trempealeau NWR to waterfowl hunting be submitted to the Federal Register in time for consideration on the October, 1983 agenda.

Opening date for waterfowl hunting is dependent upon the outcome of negotiations with Dairyland Power Cooperative on an agreement to permit public use of the upper farm road. Sufficient lead time will be required to develop boat launch facilities, repair the upper farm road and other advance preparations for the hunt.

B. Anticipated public reaction to the hunt - During the Master Plan public involvement process the proposed waterfowl hunt generated some controversy. Several environmental groups including the Hiawatha Bird Club of Winona, LaCrosse chapter of the Sierra Club, and Friends of Perrot State Park were opposed to opening Trempealeau NWR to waterfowl hunting. In general, these groups have agreed to go along with the proposal on our assurances that the hunting area and the numbers of hunters would be limited.

It is suggested that a public meeting be held prior to the hunt opening to inform the public what is proposed and gather additional information before final details are prepared.
C. Description of how the hunt will be implemented - As described earlier, hunt details such as the procedures for hunter application and selection, hunter orientation and requirements will be documented in the annual hunting program issued in advance of the hunt opening.

Before decisions on the conduct of the hunt are made, it is recommended that other Refuges and State Wildlife Agencies administering managed waterfowl hunts be contacted for details on their respective programs. Evaluation of advantages and disadvantages of these various programs should provide insight into selecting the best approach for Trempealeau NWR. Several in-house brainstorming sessions between Refuge, Complex and Regional Office staff are anticipated before a final approach is selected.
The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1934 when 706 acres were set aside by Executive Order. An additional 4,911 acres were acquired through fee title and a land exchange in 1979 when the former Delta Fish and Fur Farm was acquired using Land and Water Conservation Funds. The refuge was established to preserve and enhance important wildlife habitat along the Mississippi River while expanding opportunities for public educational and recreational benefits.

Both the original 706-acre refuge and the former private lands acquired in 1979 have a long history of hunting programs. Following a thorough evaluation with public involvement during development of the refuge master plan in 1983, it was determined that hunting would create only minor disturbances and have no effect on long-term wildlife population levels. A current evaluation has demonstrated that big game and upland game hunting programs are compatible with refuge goals and objectives.
ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSULTATION REQUEST

Project Trempealeau NWR Location Route 1, Trempealeau, WI
Date Initiated 6-19-85 Project Leader Robert L. Drieslein
Species Involved Bald Eagle, Peregrine falcon

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Big game hunting to include a two-day shotgun deer season in late November and a 30-day late archery deer season in December. Hunter numbers will be limited by public drawing for both hunts. (See hunting areas delineated on attached map).

BACKGROUND WITH RELATIONSHIP OF SPECIES TO PROJECT ACTIVITY:
(Submit maps and supporting data with this form.)

Bald eagles utilize Trempealeau NWR as a feeding and roosting area with peak numbers of birds (up to 100) in late March. Fall peaks of 15-20 birds have been observed - most eagles depart the refuge after the main pool freezes up in mid-November.

The peregrine falcon is a rare migrant in the area. There have been no sightings since 1981.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS (positive and negative) ON SPECIES AND/OR HABITATS:

It is unlikely that either bald eagles or peregrines will be present on the refuge after freeze-up. Consequently, big-game hunting will have neither positive or negative effects.

(continue on reverse if necessary)
Conclusion: May effect

Will not effect

Recommendations (including action modification)

No incidents of illegal shooting of bald eagles or peregrines are known to have occurred during previous big-game hunts since 1981. However, it is recommended that continued surveillance be maintained during law enforcement patrols to document possible future incidents.
Shotgun Deer Hunting Area
2-day season - late November
ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSULTATION REQUEST

Project Trempealeau NWR Location Route 1, Trempealeau, WI
Date Initiated 6-19-85 Project Leader Robert L. Drieslein
Species Involved Blad eagle, Peregrine falcon

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Small game hunting will be conducted during the period from late September to late February in the area delineated on the attached map. Species which can be hunted include ruffed grouse, pheasant, cottontail and squirrels.

BACKGROUND WITH RELATIONSHIP OF SPECIES TO PROJECT ACTIVITY:
(Submit maps and supporting data with this form.)

Refuge was first opened to small game hunting in 1984. Due to the difficulty of access into the hunting area and the low populations of most huntable species in that area, it is estimated that fewer than 25 people participated in the 84 hunt. Some future increase in use is expected but over-all, hunter numbers will be low.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS (positive and negative) ON SPECIES AND/OR HABITATS:

Negative impacts are possible due to indiscriminate shooting of bald eagles and peregrine falcons. However, due to the small number of hunters and publicity on heavy fines levied on eagle shooters in the upper mid-west, potential impacts are judged to be insignificant.

(continue on reverse if necessary)
File Number: Date Initiated: 6-19-85

Conclusion: May effect

Will not effect

Recommendations (including action modification)

No incidents of illegal shooting of bald eagles or peregrines are known to have occurred during the 1984 small game hunting season. However, it is recommended that continued surveillance be maintained during law enforcement patrols to document possible future incidents.
Environmental Assessment for  
Project: Trempealeau NWR's Master Plan  
Location: Trempealeau County, Wisconsin  

Species Involved: Bald eagle and Peregrine falcon

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Increase public use of refuge lands, habitat management favoring native vegetational communities, wildlife management designed to increase waterfowl production and fisheries resource, and some land acquisition.

BACKGROUND WITH RELATIONSHIP OF SPECIES TO PROJECT ACTIVITY:

(Submit maps and supporting data with this form.)

Presently both species occur in the project area only as transients during spring and fall migration. Proposed improvements and management of the area should have no impact on these species. For background information supportive of the above statement, please refer to the Environmental Assessment for the Master Plan for Trempealeau NWR.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS (positive and negative) ON SPECIES AND/OR HABITATS:

Acquisition and management of these lands may benefit listed species by increasing the prey base, providing a suitable resting area during migration and by protecting lands that may be utilized by one or both species for future nesting attempts.

(continue on reverse if necessary)
If in the future bald eagles establish a nesting territories on the refuge, this office should be contacted and management recommendations will be provided at that time. This Spring (1982), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the University of Minnesota and Nature Conservancy will be attempting to reintroduce peregrine falcons at a site just south of Kellogg, Minnesota. I reference this project only to inform refuge personnel that in the near future, peregrines may once again become a summer resident and breeding species in the Mississippi River Valley.
Regional Director, FWS, Twin Cities, MN (AK/RFI)
Trempealeau NWR Hunting and Fishing Plans

Director, FWS, Washington, D.C. (RF)

Attached are copies of the Trempealeau NWR Hunting and Fishing Plans with supporting information to add Trempealeau NWR to the list of open areas for migratory game bird hunting (§32.12), upland game (§32.21), big game (§32.31) and sport fishing (§33.4).

In addition, proposed regulations for upland game, big game and sport fishing are attached. There is no intention of holding migratory bird hunts in the immediate future; regulations will be submitted well in advance of any proposed hunt.

Questions should be addressed to Cal Gale at FTS 725-4689.

/s/ Ronald W. Stannum

Attachment

cc: Trempealeau NWR (copies of plans forwarded previously under separate cover)

bc: Cal Gale, PSW-TS