

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Wildlife Observation and Wildlife Photography (including the means of access such as hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and canoeing)

Station Name: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:

Executive Order 8065, March 14, 1939 and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Refuge Purpose(s):

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge was established under the Executive Order listed above "... as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ...". Lands the Refuge has acquired under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act are "... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission:

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to *administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.*

Description of Use:

Allow general public access from Dec.15 - March 31 and from July 1 - Aug. 15 refuge wide for the observation and photographing of flora and fauna. Trails at the Rynearson Observation tower, Pair Ponds and Lupine Loop are open Dec. 15 - Oct. 31. Observation sites at Sprague Pool, DU wetland, and Canfields are open year round to the parking areas along the public roads. Allowable forms of access to open Refuge lands include hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Limited access by bicycle, horses, and motorized vehicles will be allowed on public township roads only. Wildlife observation and photography are priority public uses on National Wildlife Refuge System Lands as identified in the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997. Entry to Refuge use areas beyond public roads is limited to daylight use only. Entry on all or portions of individual areas may be temporarily suspended by posting upon occasions of unusual or critical conditions affecting land, water, vegetation, wildlife populations, or public safety.

Access for wildlife observation and wildlife photography will be allowed year-round along township public roads for the enjoyment of scenic views and an array of wildlife including waterfowl, other migratory birds, flora, and resident wildlife.

Availability of Resources:

Wildlife observation and wildlife photography require minimal resources. Access trails, parking lots, signs, and other facilities as well as staff to enforce regulations and maintain these facilities have been provided by the Service. Some public use facilities are sub-standard. The Necedah NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan recognizes these problems and recommends solutions to improve public access opportunities. Some enhanced wildlife observation and wildlife photography opportunities will only be provided upon implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

Anticipated Impacts on Refuge Purpose(s):

Wildlife observation and wildlife photography pose minimal impacts on the purposes for which National Wildlife Refuges were established and is considered a priority use. Access is typically by individuals or small groups on foot or using snowshoes or skis. Damage to habitat by walking is minimal and temporary. There is some temporary disturbance to wildlife due to human activity on the land. The seasonal controls in place limit disturbance during peak migratory periods and nesting seasons. Winter activities pose no impacts to nesting waterfowl and little impact to vegetation. The winter disturbance to resident wildlife is temporary and minor. Large groups typically use established foot trail with little impacts on vegetation. Disturbance to wildlife, such as flushing a nesting bird, is inherent to these activities; however, the disturbance is temporary and generally not malicious. Any unreasonable harassment would be grounds for the manager to close the area to these uses or restrict the uses to minimize harm.

Access by motorized vehicles, bicycles, and horses is limited to established public roads and parking lots. Parking lots and access trail have minimal impacts because they are relatively small in size, generally have established cover on them, and typically are mowed after the nesting season is complete. They also allow for safe use of these public lands. In recent years, use days for wildlife observation and photography have averages over 10,000 per year.

Public Review and Comment:

Wildlife observation and photography are uses covered during drafting of the Comprehensive Conservation Plans. As part of that process open houses were held at the Refuge, news releases were issued and published, public meetings and outreach efforts were attended, and written comments were solicited from the public about Refuge operations including public use programs such as wildlife observation and wildlife photography (information on the CCPs public involvement process can be found within the CCP and associated environmental assessment).

This determination is being developed as part of the Necedah NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan and will be subject to further public review during the review phase of the overall plan.

Determination:

_____ Use is Not Compatible

 X Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

1. Certain modes of access such as motorized vehicle, bicycles, and horses will be limited to designated trails, public roads, and parking lots.
2. Camping, overnight use, and fires are prohibited.
3. No photo or viewing blinds may be left over night.
4. Harassment of wildlife or excessive damage to vegetation is prohibited.

Justification:

This use has been determined compatible because wildlife viewing and photography will not materially interfere with or detract from unit purposes, including waterfowl migration and production. The level of use for wildlife observation and photography is moderate on most areas. The associated disturbance to wildlife is temporary and minor. Wildlife observation and photography are priority public uses. These uses also help fulfill the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Signature:

Refuge Manager: Larry A. Wargowich 6-5-02
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence:

Regional Chief: Nita M. Zuber 7-9-2002
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date: _____

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Interpretation and Environmental Education

Station Name: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:

Executive Order 8065, March 14, 1939 and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Refuge Purpose(s):

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge was established under the Executive Order listed above "... as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ...". Lands the Refuge has acquired under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act are "... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."

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Description of Use:

To allow wildlife interpretation and environmental education programs to be conducted on Necedah NWR. Formal programs include activities prepared, scheduled, and organized for school-aged children and organized groups by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff. Programs conducted by volunteers and the Necedah Friends organization would be included in this category. In most cases, curriculums and program schedules are prepared in advance. These curriculums address a number of wildlife conservation issues including wetland and grassland conservation, migratory bird management, and the conservation of endangered species. Informal programs include self-guided wildlife observation tour routes and nature trails, impromptu presentations and discussions of wildlife conservation issues with interested citizens, casual visitors, and unscheduled groups, and media. The visitation and use of Necedah NWR by local educators and their classes on their own for the purposes of furthering their understanding of natural resource management issues would also be classified as an informal program.

In addition, this use includes the development of indoor interpretive areas within the Necedah NWR and Outdoor Classroom. The purposes of these exhibits are many, but include telling the story of waterfowl and endangered species conservation and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Availability of Resources:

Some staff and funding are available for a limited amount of interpretation and environmental education programming on Necedah NWR.. One staff position is currently dedicated to public use and interpretation with other staff contributing to the effort on a limited basis. Currently, however, staffing levels and funding are not adequate to fully capitalize on all the opportunities to interpret wildlife conservation issues within these rural communities. The individual station Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) detail the needed funding and staff to bring these programs up to Service standards.

Anticipated Impacts on Refuge Purpose(s):

The overall impacts to Necedah NWR and its associated wildlife populations from this use will be minimal. There will be some disturbance to waterfowl and other wildlife, but at levels that will not likely interfere with waterfowl or endangered species production. School buses and personal vehicles will utilize parking areas and access trails already constructed for use by the public or Service employees conducting habitat management activities. The limited number of additional nature trails that will be developed, will be done so as to minimize disturbance to vegetation and wildlife use of these areas. Open areas of the Refuge are seasonally restricted to minimize disturbance to waterfowl and other migratory birds during the spring breeding/nest season.

Public Review and Comment:

Interpretation and environmental education are uses covered during drafting of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge. As part of that process open houses were held at the Refuge, news releases were issued and published, public meetings and outreach efforts were attended, and written comments were solicited from the public about Refuge operations including public use programs such as environmental education and interpretation (information on the CCPs public involvement process can be found within the CCP and associated environmental assessment). No negative comments were received on interpretation and environmental education at the Refuge.

This determination is being developed as part of the Necedah NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan and will be subject to further public review during any additional review phase of the overall plan.

Determination:

☐ Use is Not Compatible

☒ Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

- Use of motorized vehicles and water craft is prohibited except by permit or in designated parking areas and public roads/tour routes.
- Managers will monitor use patterns and densities and make adjustments in timing, location and duration as needed to limit disturbance.

Justification:

This use has been determined compatible because environmental education and interpretation will not materially interfere with or detract from unit purposes, including waterfowl migration and production. The level of use for environmental education and interpretation is moderate on most areas. The associated disturbance to wildlife is temporary and minor. Environmental education and interpretation are priority public uses. These uses also help fulfill the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Signature:**Refuge Manager:** Larry A. Wagner 6-5-02
(Signature and Date)**Concurrence:****Regional Chief:** Mike M. Zuber 7-9-2002
(Signature and Date)**Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date:** _____

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Hunting

Refuge Name: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies): Executive Order 8065, March 14, 1939 and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Refuge Purpose(s):

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge was established under the Executive Order listed above "... as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ..." Lands the Refuge has acquired under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act are "... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."

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Description of Use:

To provide hunting opportunities in accordance with the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP).

The Refuge is divided into seven "hunt units." The permitted species which may be taken varies by unit. The large interior area of the refuge, which comprises Unit 3, is closed to any public entry by hunters until the deer season opening in late November. This unit serves as a sanctuary and resting and feeding area for waterfowl during the fall migration period.

A hunting brochure is available to acquaint the public with the refuge layout, the allowed hunting activities and restrictions. For safety reasons, no public activity other than hunting is permitted during the 9-day state gun deer season.

Availability of Resources:

There are no staffing or budget constraints to the implementation of the Refuge hunting program.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use:

The species targeted are at population levels where an allowable taken for recreational sporting purposes is acceptable.

When the fall state hunting seasons open, the majority of the refuge (over 60%) is reserved as a sanctuary for migratory birds and waterfowl. This closed area includes all of the major pools except the Suk-Cerney Pool. The Suk-Cerney Pool remains an open area because of agreements that were made in acquiring management of this area through a land exchange with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Waterfowl hunters using the refuge are primarily after Canada geese. Take of ducks has been estimated at no more than 150 birds a season in recent years.

The deer population, in particular, is at a level where habitat damage would be forthcoming without control efforts. When the deer season opens in late November, waterfowl populations are very low to near zero, as pools are close to winter freeze up, so the influx of hunters afield has no impact on waterfowl use of the area.

Other than the gun deer hunt, the numbers of hunters using the Refuge have minimal impact on the refuge habitats and landscape. During the gun deer season, vehicle access is tightly restricted to township roads and parking area. There is only a rare exception through a Special Use Permit to allow handicapped accessibility.

Some boating activity occurs relating to the hunting program. Only the Suk-Cerney Pool is open to motorized boating.

Public Review and Comment:

This compatibility determination was included in a draft CCP for public review and comment. No negative comments were received.

Determination (check one below):

☐ Use is Not Compatible

☒ Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

Adherence to the Refuge-specific hunting regulations is required to ensure compatibility.

Justification:

Adherence to the Refuge-specific hunting regulations is required to ensure compatibility.

Signature: Refuge Manager: Larry A. Wargowsky 12-12-00
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence: Regional Chief: Nita M. Fuler 7-9-2002
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date: _____

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Fishing

Refuge Name: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies): Executive Order 8065, March 14, 1939 and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Refuge Purpose(s):

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge was established under the Executive Order listed above "... as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ..." Lands the Refuge has acquired under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act are "... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."

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Description of Use:

To provide sport fishing opportunities in accordance with the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP).

The Refuge is divided into seven management units for the purpose of fishing. In Areas 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7, fishing is allowed in accordance with state seasons. Excepted is Suk-Cerney, which is open only from December 15 through September 15.

Area 3 is open only south of the Turkey Track Road and north of Sprague-Mather Road from December 15 through March 15 and from June 1 through September 15.

Availability of Resources:

There are no staffing or budget constraints to the implementation of the Refuge fishing program.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use:

The populations of the target fish species are levels where an allowable take for recreational sporting purposes is acceptable.

Since most refuge pools are drawn down for waterfowl food production and to control rough fish on a regular basis, the sport fishing opportunity is fairly limited.

Those pools that are open for fishing that are used by waterfowl to any major degree are closed during migration periods to eliminate disturbance.

There is some boating related to fishing activities, but motors are allowed only on the Suk-Cerney Pool.

Public Review and Comment:

This compatibility determination was included in a draft CCP for public review and comment. No negative comments were received.

Determination (check one below):

☐ Use is Not Compatible

☒ Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

Adherence to the Refuge-specific fishing regulations is required to ensure compatibility.

Justification:

The use is in compliance with the Refuge Administration Act and the Refuge Recreation Act.

Signature: Refuge Manager: Larry A. Waples 12-12-00
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence: Regional Chief: Nita M. Fuler 7-9-2002
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date: _____

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Forest management

Refuge Name: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies): Executive Order 8065, March 14, 1939 and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Refuge Purpose(s):

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Description of Use:

To conduct timber harvesting activities on Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in accordance with the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Forest Management Step-down Plan.

Forest management planning is centered around three principles:

1. Restoration of degraded oak barrens habitat,
2. Fuel reduction, and
3. Treatment of plantations to restore natural diversity.

Timber to be harvested will be sold to the highest bidder subject to specific refuge regulations (see attached sample bid sheet).

Timber sale tracts will either be subjected to an archeological survey prior to harvesting or be harvested in the winter to avoid soil disturbance. Archeological surveys will either be paid for by the refuge or included in the bid package to be paid by the contractor.

Firewood cutting will be allowed in sale areas after harvesting ceases or on select tracts to aid in meeting the above principles. (See attached firewood harvesting criteria). Permits are valid for six months. The cost of a permit is \$5.00.

Availability of Resources:

There are no staffing or budget constraints to the implementation of the Refuge forest management program.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use:

The increase in oak barrens habitat will provide additional nesting habitat for neo-tropical migratory birds and waterfowl.

As a result of large block cuttings and an elimination of small "checkerboard" cutting, edge species will decline.

Karner blue butterfly populations (endangered species) will increase due to the additional habitat. Federal Candidate Species including the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, Blandings turtle, and loggerhead shrike will benefit from habitat restoration.

Resident wildlife species such as the sharp-tailed grouse will benefit from increased barrens habitat.

Deer, turkey and ruffed grouse will likely decline due to the harvesting of forest lands.

Public Review and Comment:

This compatibility determination was included in a draft CCP for public review and comment. No negative comments were received.

Determination (check one below):

☐ Use is Not Compatible

☒ Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

Adherence to the Refuge's Forest Management Plan is required to insure compatibility.

Justification:

The use is compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established because management activities will benefit endangered species, migratory birds and their habitat, and will not damage any significant cultural resources.

The project will restore degraded oak barrens habitat, increase biological diversity, and provide for fuel reduction to lessen the threat of wildfire to surrounding lands.

Signature: Refuge Manager: Larry A. Wengorsky 12-12-00
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence: Regional Chief: Nita M. Zuer 7-9-2002
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date: _____

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Trapping

Refuge Name: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies): Executive Order 8065, March 14, 1939 and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Refuge Purpose(s):

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Description of Use:

To provide trapping opportunities in accordance with the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP).

The refuge is divided into six trapping zones. Prospective trappers apply to trap in a specific zone and also select an alternate zone. A drawing determines which trapper is allowed to trap in a particular zone. A fee of \$35.00 is charged to the successful applicants to defray the costs of the permit process. Species permitted to be taken include beaver, muskrat, mink, weasel, skunk, raccoon, and opossum. All trappers complete a questionnaire to determine their knowledge of trapping methods and techniques. Those applicants failing to complete this portion, or those who demonstrate a lack of knowledge are ineligible to trap on the Refuge. To protect non-target species, blind sets are prohibited on upland sites. During the waterfowl hunting season, areas of high waterfowl concentration are closed to trapping activities to provide a "refuge" for waterfowl. A copy of the annual trapping package is included.

Availability of Resources:

There are no staffing or budget constraints to the implementation of the Refuge trapping program.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use:

The species targeted are either predators of migratory birds or pose threats to the Refuge's water facilities. Beaver are constantly plugging Refuge ditches and water control structure causing water to back up and overtop dikes and town roads. Muskrat burrow into dikes causing premature failure of these facilities which result in loss of waterfowl habitat and expensive repairs.

Coyotes maintain the fox population on the Refuge at very low levels. Data has shown that fox are greater predators of migratory birds than coyote. Also, the timber wolf, a federally endangered species that occurs on the Refuge, is easily confused with the coyote. For these reasons, coyote trapping is prohibited.

Trapping season does not begin until mid-October. By this time the majority of neo-tropical migratory birds have left the Refuge. Any waterfowl remaining on the Refuge are protected from disturbance by a prohibition of trapping activities in high concentration areas until the season ends.

Public Review and Comment:

This compatibility determination was included in a draft CCP for public review and comment. No negative comments were received.

Determination (check one below):

☐ Use is Not Compatible

☒ Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

Adherence to the refuge specific trapping regulations is required to ensure compatibility.

Justification:

The use is in compliance with the Refuge Administration Act and the Refuge Recreation Act.

Signature: Refuge Manager: Larry A. Wargowich 12-12-00
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence: Regional Chief: Nita M. Zuer 7-9-2002
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date: _____

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Wild edible berry picking

Refuge Name: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies): Executive Order 8065, March 14, 1939 and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Refuge Purpose(s):

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Description of Use:

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge will provide opportunities for gathering edible wild berries on all Refuge lands, other than permanently closed areas, within a July 1 - August 15 summer season that does not conflict with migratory bird use of Refuge habitats. Berry picking is a long-standing historic use of the Refuge that also draws many new users. Berry picking opportunities draw users to the Refuge for wildlife observation and environmental education and interpretation that may not have otherwise come. Berries may only be gathered by hand. No rakes or other mechanical means are permitted. Berries must be used for personal consumption and may not be sold commercially.

Brochures on this activity are updated and distributed annually. This includes regulations pertaining to berry picking, and a map showing areas which have been burned in recent years, as these areas usually show the best production for blueberries.

Availability of Resources:

There are no staffing or budget constraints to the implementation of Refuge berry picking opportunities.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use:

The entire Refuge is open to berry picking. This is a popular activity when weather conditions

have produced a good crop. However, few members of the public walk more than ½ mile from township roads in their searching. This assures that there are plenty of berries left for wildlife.

Since this activity is confined to upland areas, there is little disturbance of waterfowl. Also, because of the seasonal nature of this activity, it falls outside of both the waterfowl migration periods and nesting season.

There may be a limited amount of disturbance to migratory birds other than waterfowl and to resident wildlife. However, there is no conflict with nesting activity or deer fawning which occur prior to any berry picking.

Public Review and Comment:

This compatibility determination was included in a draft CCP for public review and comment. No negative comments were received.

Determination (check one below):

☐ Use is Not Compatible

☒ Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

Berry picking will be conducted in accordance with regulations of the National Wildlife Administration Act and 50 CFR. Refuge specific regulations are distributed in a brochure which is updated annually. The following stipulations are required to ensure compatibility:

1. Adherence to the July 1 - August 15 berry picking season and other specific berry picking regulations
2. Adherence to other refuge public use regulations.

Justification:

The use is in compliance with the Refuge Administration Act and the Refuge Recreation Act.

Signature: Refuge Manager: Larry A. Margowich 12-12-00
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence: Regional Chief: Nita M. Fuler 7-9-2002
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date: _____

INTERIM COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

I. STATION NAME: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

II. DATE ESTABLISHED: March 14, 1939

III. ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY (title and date of authorizing document): Executive Order 8065, March 14, 1939 and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

IV. PURPOSE FOR WHICH ESTABLISHED (see "Purposes of National Wildlife Refuge System Lands, Region 3 updated June 15, 1994"): Necedah National Wildlife Refuge was established under the Executive Order listed above "... as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ..." Lands the Refuge has acquired under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act are "... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."

V. DESCRIPTION OF USE: ((1) document the type, level, and location of owner authorized wildlife-dependent recreational activities (wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, environmental education and interpretation) presently occurring on lands proposed for Service acquisition and (2) describe uses being considered. The description should include the following: what is the use; where will it be conducted (include map if helpful), when will it be conducted, and for how long; how will it be conducted; and why will it be conducted on refuge system lands?)

1) The Yellow River watershed between Dexterville and Necedah Dams experience recreational, residential, agricultural and industrial uses. A large percentage of the land is forested wetland, followed by open wetland and upland forest. The land is mostly residential or owned by non-residents that use the land for hunting or relaxation, which often includes wildlife observation as a conjunctive use. Agricultural lands, savannas, and shrublands make up a smaller percentage of the Yellow River area. Much of the recreational use is wildlife-dependent or enriched by the presence of wildlife. Currently, all of the above-listed forms of wildlife-dependent recreation occur on Yellow River lands with owner authorization. Wildlife observation and hunting are the two most common uses.

(2) The target use area is the Yellow River watershed between the Dexterville and Necedah Dams. This is approximately 22,000 acres, as displayed by Figure 1. Necedah National Wildlife Refuge will focus outreach, technical assistance, and land acquisition efforts in the Yellow River area for the conservation of migratory birds, endangered species, and a natural diversity of flora and fauna, along with compatible public use. The project will be a perpetual addition to the management framework of the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System. Outreach and technical assistance will occur throughout the proposed use area. Other proposed uses will be addressed separately for two categories of land, those purchased by fee title acquisition and those where some of the land use rights have been purchased through conservation easements.

Fee Title Acquisition: Uses that are being considered are those a) that the Refuge currently employs in Refuge management and have already undergone a compatibility determination and b) those permitted under current Refuge regulations. Those uses that are not expressly permitted are prohibited. All wildlife-dependent recreational activities, subject to Wisconsin and federal law, will be permitted on Service lands. Certain areas may be seasonally closed to protect wildlife species during sensitive times in their life cycles. Uses that are already permitted at the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge have a long history of established compatibility with the sustainable management of wildlife populations and habitat. Allowing wildlife-dependent recreational activities in the proposed area creates public ownership in the management and protection of natural resources and makes the management of land in the Necedah area a community venture.

Conservation Easements: Conservation easements will be considered individually to accommodate the unique needs of each landowner and the varying ability for land and wildlife within the Yellow River area to support different uses. Uses that may be permitted include ecological research, grazing, timber harvest, prescribed fire, mowing, wetland restoration, and planting wildlife food plots. All residential and commercial development will be prohibited.

Necedah Refuge will allow latitude in compatible uses to accommodate landowners that want to protect land and still maintain residence and other land use rights. Uses will only be permitted if they can be supported sustainably by the resource base.

The Refuge is approaching land protection in the Yellow River area on the principle that having people as an integral part of the Yellow River ecosystem is an effective long-term strategy. Maintaining private ownerships protected by conservation easements within the Yellow River preserves the public's vested interest in sustaining the long-term of the services that the Yellow River provides.

VI. ESTIMATE DEMAND FOR PRE-EXISTING WILDLIFE-DEPENDENT RECREATIONAL USE PLUS OTHER WILDLIFE-DEPENDENT RECREATIONAL USES CONSIDERED IF LANDS BECOME REFUGE DOMAIN:

The demand for wildlife-dependent recreational uses in the Yellow River area is great. Independent of whether lands become Refuge domain, as Necedah National Wildlife Refuge conducts outreach efforts pertaining to the Yellow River, more people will become aware of recreational opportunities that the River has to offer, which will increase recreational demand. The technical assistance Refuge staff will provide to landowners will increase habitat quality, and thus opportunities and demand for wildlife-dependent recreation. Recreational use will be affected differently for the two categories of acquisition.

Fee Title Acquisition: Demand will increase on fee title properties once the land becomes Refuge domain and accessible to the public. Necedah National Wildlife Refuge had over 8,500 people use the Refuge for hunting, 8,700 for fishing, and 5,000 for wildlife viewing and other wildlife-dependent recreational activities. The Refuge anticipates increases in wildlife-dependent uses in the Yellow River that will approach the density (not actual numbers) of these uses on the Refuge proper.

Conservation Easements: Demand will stay the same or experience slight increases on conservation easements. Small percentages of land may be converted from grazing or agriculture, which may lead to increases in wildlife-dependent uses; however, most land is already high quality wildlife habitat and is already used for wildlife-dependent recreational activities. The Refuge does not anticipate an increase in demand on these lands due to lack of public access.

VII. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED USE/EXISTING USE ON REFUGE PURPOSE

(extent the use is consistent with sound fish and wildlife management principles, in the public interest, and direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on the refuge purpose):

The potential impacts of proposed uses enhance the Refuge's ability to fulfill its purpose. The project will provide additional focus for Refuge outreach and Private Lands efforts. It will allow the Refuge to be proactive in minimizing degradation of local water quality and quantity by taking a watershed approach that is impacted by, but not constrained by, political boundaries. The proposed use will increase outreach efforts in an ecologically important area that will have maximum benefit for populations of migratory birds, endangered and rare species, and other native fauna and flora. Other impacts will be considered separately for the two categories of acquisition.

Fee Title Acquisition: Fee title acquisition and associated uses will enhance the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge's ability to fulfill its purpose. They will allow greater access to habitats that are not currently contained within the Refuge proper. This will increase public recreational opportunities in the Central Wisconsin area by providing an additional public land and water base in a unique and high quality habitat type. It will also expand the Refuge's opportunities for environmental education and interpretation, especially concerning bottomland hardwoods. The proposed uses will allow the Refuge to directly manage lands acquired in the Yellow River for endangered species and a natural diversity of fauna and flora, including game and non-game species. Existing uses, because they are primarily residential and recreational, support the Refuge's purpose. However, protection of this high quality area is not guaranteed, and the Refuge cannot directly manage land and water to enhance habitat for desirable species.

Conservation Easements: Conservation easements and associated uses will also enhance the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge's ability to fulfill its purpose. Conservation easements will protect land from ecologically disruptive developments, such as monocultural cropping and additional residential and industrial development, while allowing landowners to maintain ecologically compatible land uses as listed in Section V. Conservation easements offer another venue of protection for species of concern to the Refuge and to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**VIII. STIPULATIONS THAT WOULD MAKE PROPOSED USE/EXISTING USE
COMPATIBLE WITH REFUGE PURPOSE:**

Proposed Uses: Proposed uses are compatible with Refuge purpose, as stated in the Refuge's enabling legislation and HR 1420, the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997.

Existing Uses: Existing uses are largely compatible with Refuge purpose. However, with trends toward agricultural, residential, and industrial development, future land uses will not be compatible with migratory birds, endangered species, biological diversity, and compatible visitor use.

IX. JUSTIFICATION (explain why proposed use/existing use is or is not compatible with refuge purpose(s). This justification must be biologically based):

Proposed Use: The proposed use benefits all components of the Refuge's purpose by providing outreach and technical assistance to landowners and preserving habitat for the Refuge's trust species.

Existing Use: Existing uses are largely compatible with the Refuge's purpose. However, land use developments that are not compatible are increasing in the Yellow River. Existing mechanisms for preserving the Refuge's trust species are not sufficient to maintain compatibility in the future.

X. FUNDING OR STAFFING CONSTRAINTS TO IMPLEMENTATION (availability of Service funding/staffing or other funding or cooperative assistance from the affected State, tribal, local, or private partners to provide appropriate oversight during the interim period (type and level of funding and staffing needed to administer use):

Available from the Service?

Yes

No

Discuss: Some funding will be provided from the Service as a result of the completion of the Refuge's CCP, although the Refuge does not anticipate that this funding will be sufficient to cover all outreach, technical assistance, and enforcement needs.

If no, is it available from Service partners?

Yes

No

Discuss: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Juneau County Forests are already contributing in kind and/or monetary support in the Yellow River area for land use documentation and endangered species monitoring. This funding is also limited by other priorities and commitments of Service partners.

XI. DETERMINATION IF USE IS OR IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE PURPOSE(S) FOR WHICH THE REFUGE WAS OR WILL BE ESTABLISHED:

IS

IS NOT

(circle one)

XII. WILL THE USE BE ALLOWED AFTER ACQUISITION: YES NO (circle one)

Discussion (Include any conditions under which the use(s) would be allowed and any explanation of why the use(s) would not be allowed):

Uses will be allowed according to current Refuge and Wisconsin State regulations.

Uses may not be allowed if they are determined to have significant negative impacts on a species of special management concern. If a determination of significant negative impact is made, additional information will be gathered about the use, its impact on the species of concern, and public opinion about changes in the scope of the allowed use.

Determined By (Project Leader):

Reviewed By (RFO):

Concurred By (ARW):

Larry L. Wengowaty

Mike M. Zehr

9-28-00.
Date

Date

Date