

§ 25.61

(a) Special admission permits for uses, such as group activities, may be issued.

(b) No entrance fee shall be charged for persons under 16 years of age.

(c) No entrance fee shall be charged for travel by private noncommercial vehicle over any road or highway established as part of the National Federal Aid System (defined in 23 U.S.C. 101), which is commonly used by the public as a means of travel between two places which are outside the Entrance Fee Area.

(d) No entrance fee shall be charged for travel by private noncommercial vehicle over any road or highway to any land in which such person has a property interest if such land is within any Entrance Fee Area.

(e) Persons accompanying the holder of a valid single visit permit, Federal Duck Stamp or Golden Eagle, Age, or Access Passport in a single, private, noncommercial vehicle shall be entitled to general entrance.

(f) Where entry is by any means other than single, private, noncommercial vehicle, the spouse, children, or parents accompanying the holder of a valid single visit permit, Federal Duck Stamp or Golden Eagle, Age, or Access Passport shall be entitled to general entrance.

Subpart F—Concessions

§ 25.61 General provisions.

Public use facilities may be operated by concessionaires or cooperators under appropriate contact or legal agreement on national wildlife refuges where there is a demonstrated justified need for services or facilities including, but not limited to, boat rentals, swimming facilities, conducted tours of special natural attractions, shelters, tables, trailer lots, food, lodging, and related service.

Subpart G—Safety Regulations

§ 25.71 Public safety.

Persons using national wildlife refuges shall comply with the safety requirements which are established under the provisions of this subchapter C for each individual refuge and with

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any safety provisions which may be included in leases, agreements, or use permits.

§ 25.72 Reporting of accidents.

Accidents involving damage to property, injury to the public or injury to wildlife that occur within the boundaries of any national wildlife refuge are to be reported as soon as possible, but in no event later than 24 hours after the accident, by the persons involved, to the refuge manager or other personnel on duty at the national wildlife refuge headquarters. This report does not relieve persons from the responsibility of making any other accident reports which may be required.

PART 26—PUBLIC ENTRY AND USE

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301; 16 U.S.C. 460k, 664, 668dd, 715i; Pub. L. 96-315 (94 Stat. 958) and Pub. L. 98-146 (97 Stat. 955).

SOURCE: 41 FR 9167, Mar. 3, 1976, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—Introduction**§ 26.11 Purpose of regulations.**

The regulations in this part govern the circumstances under which the public can enter and use a national wildlife refuge.

Subpart B—Public Entry**§ 26.21 General trespass provision.**

(a) No person shall trespass, including but not limited to entering, occupying, using, or being upon, any national wildlife refuge, except as specifically authorized in this subchapter C or in other applicable Federal regulations.

(b) No unconfined domestic animals, including but not limited to dogs, hogs, cats, horses, sheep and cattle, shall be permitted to enter upon any national wildlife refuge or to roam at large upon such an area, except as specifically authorized under the provisions of § 26.34, § 27.91 or § 29.2 of this subchapter C.

§ 26.22 General exception for entry.

(a) Any person entering or using any national wildlife refuge will comply with the regulations in this subchapter C, the provisions of any special regulations and any other official notification as is appropriate under § 25.31.

(b) A permit shall be required for any person entering a national wildlife refuge, unless otherwise provided under the provisions of subchapter C. The permittee will abide by all the terms and conditions set forth in the permit.

§ 26.23 Exception for entry to the headquarters office.

The headquarters office of any national wildlife refuge is open to public access and admission during regularly established business hours.

§ 26.24 Exception for entry when accompanied by refuge personnel.

A permit is not required for access to any part of a national wildlife refuge by a person when accompanied by refuge personnel.

§ 26.25 Exception for entry to persons with an economic use privilege.

Access to and travel upon a national wildlife refuge by a person granted economic use privileges on that national wildlife refuge should be restricted to a specified area in accordance with the provisions of their agreement, lease, or permit.

§ 26.26 Exception for entry for use of emergency shelter.

A permit is not required for access to any national wildlife area for temporary shelter or temporary protection in the event of emergency conditions.

§ 26.27 Exception for entry on designated routes of travel.

A permit is not required to enter, travel on, and exit from any national wildlife refuge on public waters and roads, and such roads, trails, footpaths, walkways, or other routes and areas which are designated for public use under the provisions of this subchapter C.

Subpart C—Public Use and Recreation**§ 26.31 General provisions.**

Public recreation will be permitted on national wildlife refuges as an appropriate incidental or secondary use, only after it has been determined that such recreational use is practicable and not inconsistent with the primary objectives for which each particular area was established or with other authorized Federal operations.

§ 26.32 Recreational uses.

Recreational uses such as, but not limited to, sightseeing, nature observation and photography, interpretive centers and exhibits, hunting and fishing, bathing, boating, camping, ice skating, picnicking, swimming, water skiing, and other similar activities may be permitted on national wildlife refuges. When such uses are permitted the public will be notified under the provisions of this subchapter C.

§ 26.33 Special regulations.

(a) Special regulations shall be issued for public use, access, and recreation within certain individual national wildlife refuges where there is a need to amend, modify, relax or make more stringent the regulations contained in this subchapter C. The issued special regulations will supplement the provisions in this part 26.

(b) Special recreational use regulations may contain the following items:

- (1) Recreational uses authorized.
- (2) Seasons, period, or specific time of use.
- (3) Description of areas open to recreation.
- (4) Specific conditions or requirements.
- (5) Other provisions.
- (6) Special regulations for public use, access, and recreation are published in the daily issue of the FEDERAL REGISTER and may be codified in the Code of Federal Regulations. They shall be issued in compliance with procedures contained in the Departmental Manual.

§ 26.34 Special regulations concerning public access, use and recreation for individual national wildlife refuges.

VIRGINIA

Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge

ACCESS

(a) *Access qualifications and specifications.* (1) As provided for in Pub. L. 96-315, permanent, full-time residents who can furnish to the refuge manager, Back Bay NWR, adequate proof of continuous and continuing residency, commencing prior to December 31, 1979, on the Outer Banks from the refuge boundary south to and including the village of Corolla, North Carolina, as long as they remain permanent, full-time residents. The south boundary of the area for access consideration is defined as a straight east-west line extending from Currituck Sound to the Atlantic Ocean and passing through a point 1,600 feet due south of the Currituck lighthouse. "Residence" means a place of general abode; "Place of general abode" means a person's principal, actual dwelling place in fact,

without regard to intent. A "dwelling" means a residential structure occupied on a year-round basis by the permit applicant and shall not include seasonal or part-time dwelling units such as beach houses, vacation cabins, or structures which are intermittently occupied.

(2) As provided for in Pub. L. 98-146, "Up to 15 additional permits shall be granted to those persons meeting any one of the following conditions:"

(i) A resident as of July 1, 1982, who held a valid Service access permit for improved property owners at any time during the period from July 29, 1976, through December 31, 1979.

(ii) Anyone in continuous residency since 1976, in the area bounded on the north by the refuge boundary, and on the south by a straight line passing through a point in the east-west prolongation of the centerline of Albacore Street, Whaleshead Club Subdivision, Currituck County, North Carolina.

(iii) Any permanent, full time resident as of April 1, 1983, residing in the area outlined in paragraph (a)(2)(ii) of this section and not otherwise eligible, who can substantiate to the Secretary of the Interior that access is essential to their maintaining a livelihood; so long as they maintain full-time continuous employment in the Norfolk, Virginia, area may qualify for access.

(3) The burden of proving that the prospective permittee meets these criteria shall be on the applicant by presentation of adequate documentation to the refuge manager. Permittees may be required to submit additional documentation of their eligibility to the refuge manager in order to maintain access. Permits will be issued only to those who legally qualify for them.

(4) Only one permit will be issued per family. All permits issued will be terminated in the event that alternate access becomes available during the permit period.

(5) Permits are issued for the purpose of providing ingress and egress across the refuge beach to the permittee's residence. Personal access is limited to permittees, their families, relatives, and guests while being transported in the permittee's vehicle. "Personal access" means private, non-commercial

use. Permits are not transferable by sale or devise.

(6) All vehicle occupants must provide positive identification upon the request of any refuge official.

(b) *Routes of travel.* Access to, and travel along, the refuge beach by motorized vehicles may be allowed between the dune crossing at the key card operated gate near the refuge headquarters, and the south boundary of the refuge only after a permit has been issued or authorization provided by the refuge manager. Travel along the refuge beach by motorized vehicle shall be below the high tide line, within the intertidal zone, to the maximum extent practicable. This may require permittees to adjust their travel times to avoid high tides which would require the use of the emergency storm access/evacuation route over the east dike.

(c) *Number of trips allowed.* Permittees and members of their immediate families residing with them are limited to a total of two round trips per day per household.

(d) *Hours of travel.* Travel along the designated route is permitted 24 hours per day from October 1 through April 30. Travel is restricted to the hours of 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight from May 1 through September 30.

(e) *Medical emergencies.* Private vehicles used in a medical emergency will be granted access. A "medical emergency" means any condition that threatens human life or limb unless medical treatment is immediately obtained.

The vehicle operator is required to provide the refuge manager with a doctor's statement confirming the emergency within 36 hours after the access has occurred.

(f) *Military, fire or emergency vehicles.* Military, fire, emergency or law enforcement vehicles used for emergency purposes may be granted access. Vehicles used by an employee/agent of the Federal, State or local government, in the course of official duty other than for emergency purposes, may be granted access upon advance request to the refuge manager. Continuous or recurring use of the refuge beach for other than emergency purposes shall require the issuance of a permit from the refuge manager.

(g) *Public utility vehicles.* Public utility vehicles used on official business will be granted access. A permit specifying the times and types of access will be issued by the refuge manager. A "public utility vehicle" means any vehicle owned or operated by a public utility company enfranchised to supply Outer Banks residents with electricity or telephone service.

(h) *Essential commercial service vehicles.* (1) Essential commercial service vehicles on business calls during the hours of 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday will be granted access, only upon prior approval of the refuge manager when responding to a request from a permittee. Such requests may be verbal or in writing. Access by essential commercial service vehicles will be granted only after all other reasonable alternatives to access through the refuge have been exhausted as determined by the refuge manager.

(2) "Commercial service vehicle" means any vehicle owned or operated by or on behalf of an individual, partnership, or corporation that is properly licensed to engage entirely in the business of furnishing emergency repair services, including but not limited to plumbing, electrical, and repairs to household appliances.

(3) Emergency situations. The refuge manager, upon reasonable notification, will be able to authorize essential service/emergency repair access, outside the prescribed time periods, for emergency situations should they arise.

(i) *False Cape State Park employees.* False Cape State Park and Virginia Game Commission employees who are residents in the park will be considered as permanent, full-time residents as defined in §26.34(a) with access privileges identical to those of other permittees with beach access privileges.

(j) *Commercial fishermen, businesses and their employees.* (1) Commercial fishermen who have verified that their fishing operations on the Outer Banks of Virginia Beach, Virginia, or Currituck County, North Carolina, have been dependent since 1972 on ingress and egress to or across the refuge are granted permits for access. Travel through the refuge by commercial fishermen from Currituck County, North Carolina, will be permitted only when

directly associated with commercial fishing operations. Drivers and passengers on trips through the refuge are limited to commercial fishing crew members. A *commercial fisherman* means one who harvests finfish by gill net or haul seine in the Atlantic Ocean, and who has owned and operated a commercial fishing business continuously since 1972. Commercial permits are not transferable by sale or devise. The level of commercial permittee travel across the refuge shall not increase above the average yearly levels maintained in the 1985-1987 period.

(2) Other businesses who have verified that their business operations on the Outer Banks of Currituck County, North Carolina, have been dependent since 1972 on ingress and egress to or across the refuge will be granted permits for access in accordance with the limitations outlined in paragraph (j)(1) of this section.

(3) Each commercial fisherman or other business may be granted a maximum of five designated employees to travel the refuge beach for commercial fishing or other business-related purposes only. Commercial fishing employees may carry only other commercial fishing employees as passengers. Other business employees may carry only other employees of that business. The hauling of trailers associated with the conduct of commercial fishing or other business activities is authorized.

(4) Employees of commercial fishermen and/or other businesses who apply for access permits shall have the burden of proving, by the presentation of appropriate documentation to the refuge manager, that they are an "employee" for purposes of this section of the regulations. Appropriate documentation is defined as the submission of standardized and verifiable employment forms including: Signed W-2 and W-4 forms, IRS form #1099, official earnings statements for specified periods, employee income tax withholding submissions to State and Federal tax offices (e.g., IRS form W-3 with W-2s attached), State unemployment tax information or other proof of actual employment. Documentation for each employee must be submitted in advance of access being granted, or, for new employees, within 30 days of their start-

ing date. Failure to provide verification of employment for new employees within 30 days will result in termination of access privileges.

(k) *Suspension or waiver of rules.* (1) In an emergency, the refuge manager may suspend any or all of the foregoing restrictions on vehicular travel and announce each suspension by whatever means are available. In the event of adverse weather conditions, the refuge manager may close all or any portion of the refuge to vehicular traffic for such periods as deemed advisable in the interest of public safety.

(2) The refuge manager may make exceptions to access restrictions, if they are compatible with refuge purposes, for qualified permittees who have demonstrated to the refuge manager a need for additional access relating to health or livelihood.

(3) The refuge manager may grant one-time use authorization for vehicular access through the refuge to individuals, not otherwise qualified above, who have demonstrated to the refuge manager that there is no feasible alternative to the access requested. Authorization for access under this provision will not be based on convenience to the applicant.

(4) Medical access waiver permits may be issued under the following conditions:

(i) The Regional Director may grant access to non-eligible permanent residents who can show proof that their physical health is such that life-threatening situations may result from more arduous travel conditions. The submission of substantiating medical records is required to be considered for a medical access waiver.

(ii) All medical access waiver permittees will be required to prove that their medical condition is or continues to be such that a life-threatening situation would result from more arduous travel conditions. Such proof shall be required prior to the issuance of an access permit, and at 3-year intervals thereafter.

(iii) A second medical opinion will be required by the Regional Director prior to the issuance or re-issuance of any such permit. This second opinion will be provided for at Service expense, by a government designated physician.

(iv) No additional medical access waiver permits will be issued after December 31, 1987.

(v) Previous holders of medical access waiver permits will retain access subject to paragraph (k)(4) (ii) and (iii) of this section.

(l) *Violation of rules.* Violators of these special regulations pertaining to Back Bay NWR are subject to legal action as prescribed by 50 CFR 25.43 and part 28, including suspension or revocation of all permits issued to the violator or responsible permittee. The refuge manager may deny access permits to applicants who, during the 2 years immediately preceding the date of application, have formally been charged and successfully prosecuted for three or more violations of these or other regulations in effect at Back Bay NWR. Individuals whose vehicle access privileges are suspended, revoked, or denied may, within 30 days, file a written appeal of the action to the Assistant Regional Director-Refuges and Wildlife, One Gateway Center, Suite 700, Newton Corner, Massachusetts 02158, in accordance with 50 CFR 25.45(c).

(m) *Other access rules.* (1) No permit will remain in effect beyond December 31 of the year in which it was issued. Permits may be renewed upon the submission of appropriate updated information relating to the permit, and a signed statement that the conditions under which the previous permit was issued have not changed. In the event of any changes of conditions under which the permit is granted, the permittee shall notify the refuge manager in writing within 30 days. Failure to report changes may result in suspension/revocation of the permit.

(2) Vehicles shall be operated on the refuge beach only by the permittee or other authorized drivers. Permit holders shall not tow, transport or operate vehicles owned by non-permit holders through the refuge. Non-commercial permit holders may tow utility and boat trailers when being used for their personal use only. Any towed vehicle shall have advance approval from the refuge manager prior to being brought through the refuge. This access privilege is not to be used for any commercial purpose.

(3) The refuge manager may prescribe restrictions as to the types of vehicles to be permitted to ensure public safety and adherence to all applicable rules and regulations.

(4) A magnetic card will be issued to each authorized driver only for his or her operation of the computer controlled gate. No more than two cards will be issued per family. Only one vehicle will be permitted to pass for each gate opening. Unauthorized use of the magnetic card may result in suspension of the permit. A fee will be charged to replace lost or misplaced cards. Malfunctioning cards will be replaced at no charge.

(5) Access is granted for the purpose of travel to and from the permittee's residence and/or place of business. Access is not authorized for the purpose of transporting individuals for hire, or for the transport of prospective real estate clients to or from the Outer Banks of North Carolina, or for any other purpose not covered in this rule.

GENERAL RULES

(n) *Entry on foot, bicycle or motor vehicle.* Entry on foot, bicycle, or by motor vehicle on designated routes is permitted one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset for the purposes of nature observation and study, photography, hiking, surf fishing, and bicycling.

(o) *Beach-oriented uses.* Designated areas of the refuge beach are open to wildlife/wildlands-oriented recreation only as outlined in paragraph (n) of this section. Entry to the beach is via designated access points only.

(p) *Parking.* Limited parking at the refuge office/visitor contact station is permitted only in designated spaces. Parking is available on a first-come, first-serve basis for persons engaged in wildlife/wildlands-oriented recreation only as outlined in paragraph (n) of this section.

(q) *Fires.* All fires are prohibited.

(r) *Pets.* Dogs and other pets, on a hand-held leash not exceeding 10 feet in length, are permitted from October 1 through March 31.

(s) *Other general rules.* (1) Pedestrians and vehicular traffic in the sand dunes are prohibited.

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(2) Use by all groups exceeding 10 individuals will require a Special Use Permit, issued by the refuge manager.

(3) Registered motor vehicles and motorized bicycles (mopeds) are permitted on the paved refuge access road and parking lot at refuge headquarters. All other motorized vehicular use is prohibited, except as specifically authorized pursuant to this rule.

(4) The information collection requirement contained in this rule has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501, *et seq.*, and has been assigned the number 1018-0014. The information being collected is used to determine eligibility for issuing a vehicular access permit and a response is required to obtain a benefit.

[52 FR 35715, Sept. 23, 1987]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations to regulations affecting temporary and special regulations on national wildlife refuges, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and on GPO Access.

§ 26.35 Cabin sites.

(a) There shall be no new private cabin site permits issued for national wildlife refuges. All appropriate provisions of 43 CFR part 21 apply to the phaseout of existing permits on national wildlife refuges.

(b) No new government owned cabin site permits for private recreational purposes shall be issued nor shall existing permits be renewed.

§ 26.36 Public assemblies and meetings.

(a) Public meetings, assemblies, demonstrations, parades and other public expressions of view may be permitted within a national wildlife refuge open to public use, provided a permit therefore has been issued by the refuge manager.

(b) Any application for such permit shall set forth the name of the applicant, the date, time, duration, nature and place of the proposed event, an estimate of the number of persons expected to attend, and a statement of equipment and facilities to be used in connection therewith.

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(c) The refuge manager may issue a permit on proper application unless:

(1) A prior application for the same time and place has been made which has been or will be granted; or

(2) The activity will present a clear and present danger to public health or safety, or undue disturbance to the other users or resources of the area; or

(3) The activity is of such nature that it cannot be reasonably accommodated in the particular national wildlife refuge; or

(4) The activity conflicts with the purposes of the national wildlife refuge.

(d) The permit may contain such conditions as are reasonably consistent with protection and use of the national wildlife refuge for the purpose for which it is maintained. It may also contain reasonable limitations on the time and area within which the activity is permitted.

§ 26.41 What is the process for determining if a use of a national wildlife refuge is a compatible use?

The Refuge Manager will not initiate or permit a new use of a national wildlife refuge or expand, renew, or extend an existing use of a national wildlife refuge, unless the Refuge Manager has determined that the use is a compatible use. This section provides guidelines for making compatibility determinations, and procedures for documenting compatibility determinations and for periodic review of compatibility determinations. We will usually complete compatibility determinations as part of the comprehensive conservation plan or step-down management plan process for individual uses, specific use programs, or groups of related uses described in the plan. We will make all compatibility determinations in writing.

(a) *What information do we include in a compatibility determination?* All compatibility determinations will include the following information:

(1) The proposed or existing use;

(2) The name of the national wildlife refuge;

(3) The authorities used to establish the national wildlife refuge;

(4) The purpose(s) of the national wildlife refuge;

(5) The National Wildlife Refuge System mission;

(6) The nature and extent of the use including the following:

(i) What is the use? Is the use a priority public use?;

(ii) Where would the use be conducted?;

(iii) When would the use be conducted?;

(iv) How would the use be conducted?; and

(v) Why is the use being proposed?.

(7) An analysis of costs for administering and managing each use;

(8) The anticipated impacts of the use on the national wildlife refuge's purposes and the National Wildlife Refuge System mission;

(9) The amount of opportunity for public review and comment provided;

(10) Whether the use is compatible or not compatible (does it or will it materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the National Wildlife Refuge System mission or the purpose(s) of the national wildlife refuge);

(11) Stipulations necessary to ensure compatibility;

(12) A logical explanation describing how the proposed use would, or would not, materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the National Wildlife Refuge System mission or the purpose(s) of the national wildlife refuge;

(13) The Refuge Manager's signature and date signed; and

(14) The Regional Chief's concurrence signature and date signed.

(15) The mandatory 10- or 15-year re-evaluation date.

(b) *Making a use compatible through replacement of lost habitat values or other compensatory mitigation.* We will not allow compensatory mitigation to make a proposed refuge use compatible, except by replacement of lost habitat values as provided in paragraph (c) of this section. If we cannot make the proposed use compatible with stipulations we cannot allow the use.

(c) *Existing right-of-ways.* We will not make a compatibility determination and will deny any request for maintenance of an existing right-of-way which will affect a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, unless: the design adopts appropriate measures to avoid

resource impacts and includes provisions to ensure no net loss of habitat quantity and quality; restored or replacement areas identified in the design are afforded permanent protection as part of the national wildlife refuge or wetland management district affected by the maintenance; and all restoration work is completed by the applicant prior to any title transfer or recording of the easement, if applicable. Maintenance of an existing right-of-way includes minor expansion or minor realignment to meet safety standards.

(d) *Termination of uses that are not compatible.* When we determine an existing use is not compatible, we will expeditiously terminate or modify the use to make it compatible. Except with written authorization by the Director, this process of termination or modification will not exceed 6 months from the date that the compatibility determination is signed.

[65 FR 62482, Oct. 18, 2000]

PART 27—PROHIBITED ACTS

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