



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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STATE GROUPS GET LONG-TIME LEASES TO DEVELOP WILDLIFE ON FEDERAL AREAS

A number of areas reclaimed by various Federal agencies are being leased to State Universities and State governments on long-time leases that permit those groups to develop the areas for the benefit of native wildlife, it was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

The Missouri Wildlife Management Area, a 2,242-acre tract in Boone County leased by the University of Missouri, and the South Carolina Wildlife Management Area, a 44,550-acre tract in Chesterfield and Darlington Counties, leased by the State Commission of Forestry, are two of what will be a series of areas established under this plan.

These areas have been established to give the States an opportunity to practice multiple land use. The areas can be developed for wildlife, forestry, recreational, and other social and economic uses.

While custody and title to the land will remain vested in the Federal Government, the State agencies will manage the areas with wildlife as a principal interest. Development of the area to improve the habitat for wildlife is a responsibility of the group leasing the land. Projects will be reviewed by officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service to determine that the plans are consistent with accepted management practices.

Now under consideration are the North Carolina Wildlife Management Area, a 58,900-acre area in Moore, Richmond, and Scotland Counties; the Necedah Wildlife Management Area, a 55,970-acre tract in Jackson, Monroe, and Wood Counties, Wisconsin; the Beltrami Wildlife Management Area, a 74,493-acre tract in Beltrami, Roseau, and Lake Counties, Minnesota; and the New York Wildlife Management Area, a 32,691-acre area in Jefferson and Oswego Counties.

Developing the areas in their States will be the North Carolina Commission of Conservation and Development, the Wisconsin Conservation Commission, the Minnesota Department of Conservation, and the New York Department of Conservation.

While details of the various leases differ, all Wildlife Management Areas will operate under the same general terms.

The Missouri lease is for 50 years, but most of the agreements will probably be for a 99-year period. In assuming the right to use the land, the University of Missouri agreed to four major points: 1) to use the area as an arboretum and wildlife refuge; 2) to use the area as an experimental ground for field investigation and research in the biological sciences and wildlife management, confining its studies to species of wildlife native to the State and not stocking any portion of the area with exotic species except by consent of the Federal Government; 3) to provide adequate fire protection, and 4) to endeavor to have the property proclaimed a wildlife refuge and take measures to prevent any hunting, trapping, or fishing inconsistent with the purposes of the area.

When the area has produced what is considered to be a huntable surplus of game animals, the developing agency may, with the approval of the Federal Government, declare an open season on the area. Hunting, however, is not to be permitted on more than 40 percent of the land, according to Fish and Wildlife Service officials.